

**MOTHERING CITIZENS:**  
ELITE WOMEN IN MONTREAL 1890-1914

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the activism of elite women in Montreal – Anglophone, Francophone, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox Jewish – between 1890 and 1914. In the form of a collective biography, I observe the twenty elite women who comprise this study in their homes, in the rituals of their class, in the work of philanthropy, and in active engagement with their local community and the world beyond Montreal. These women had a vision for society that went beyond social reform or securing the vote for women; one that was based on their experiences of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and religion. Maternalist ideology as adopted by these early activists, built a framework for a brighter future, a better city, and a stronger nation. I argue that elite women twinned their role as mothers with their identity as citizens in order to create a realm of social and political influence for themselves. They placed the family unit as the nuclear centre of society and extended this concept as a model to the community, nation, and international world. As maternalists, these women believed that they, as wives, mothers and especially as citizens, had an important role to play in shaping society. Through shared gender and class identities, they forged bridges across ethnic and religious divides which in turn provided them with influence and power in Montreal and beyond. What emerges from the sources is that these women were far from passive or content to stay in the shadows. They were intentionally political in the way they thought about and engaged their lives as citizens. But there were limits to their influence and the women studied here had to carefully navigate these boundaries. The onset of the First World War served to aggravate tensions that had long been simmering beneath the surface to the point that cooperation disintegrated and their power that had derived from their unity was markedly diminished.

## RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse porte sur l'engagement social et politique de femmes de l'élite montréalaise de 1890 à 1914. Pour ce faire, j'ai réuni vingt Montréalaises issues des communautés anglophones, francophones, protestantes, catholiques et orthodoxes juives en une biographie collective qui lève le voile sur leur vie domestique, les rituels propres à leur classe sociale, leur travail philanthropique, de même que sur leur engagement au sein de la communauté locale et élargie. Cet exercice de style m'a permis de mettre en évidence l'influence des identités de genre, de race, d'ethnie, de classe et de religion de chacune sur sa conception de la société. La mise en commun des expériences de ces femmes de l'élite montréalaise révèle également que leurs préoccupations étaient plurielles et qu'elles dépassent la seule question du suffrage féminin. L'idéologie maternaliste embrassée par ces activistes traçait les jalons d'un futur meilleur, d'une ville assainie et d'une nation plus forte. Ma thèse est que les femmes constituant ce corpus combinaient leurs rôles de mères et leurs identités de citoyennes afin de se tailler une place, un cercle d'influence, dans des sphères d'activité qui leurs étaient habituellement défendues, soit les sphères sociale et politique. Pour y arriver, elles ont placé la famille au cœur de leur conception du système social et ont transposé cette vision à la communauté, à la nation et au monde. En tant qu'épouses, mères, mais aussi en tant que citoyennes, ces maternalistes croyaient qu'elles avaient un rôle important à jouer dans la transformation de la société. Le fait qu'elles aient partagé les mêmes identités sexuelle et sociale leur a permis de se rapprocher. Ces similarités, jumelées à leurs différences ethniques et religieuses leurs ont conféré une influence et un pouvoir indéniable à Montréal et au-delà. Les sources consultées révèlent que ces femmes de l'élite montréalaise étaient loin d'être passives ou contentes de rester dans l'ombre. Leur engagement politique et citoyen était conscient. Leur influence comportait néanmoins des limites qu'elles durent apprendre à repousser avec doigté. Avec le déclenchement de la Grande Guerre, les tensions cachées qui existaient entre elles s'aggravèrent et il ne fut bientôt plus possible de coopérer. La séparation de ce groupe eut pour résultat de diminuer de façon notoire le pouvoir et l'influence que ces femmes de l'élite montréalaise avaient acquis en près de vingt-cinq ans.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Aberdeen Association
BANQ-M	Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec à Montréal
BHI	Baron de Hirsch Institute
CIL	Civic Improvement League
CJCCC	Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee (National Archives)
COS	Charity Organization Society
DPHND	Dames Patronesses de l'hôpital Notre-Dame
FNSJB	Fédération nationale St-Jean-Baptiste
IODE	Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire
ICW	International Council of Women
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
LHBS	Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society
LOC	Library of Congress
LSS	Ladies Sewing Society
MAA	Montreal Art Association
MLSBS	Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society
MLCW	Montreal Local Council of Women
MM	McCord Museum
MPPA	Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association
MSA	Montreal Suffrage Association
MUA	McGill University Archives
MWC	Montreal Women's Club
NCWC	National Council of Women of Canada
NCJW	National Council of Jewish Women
NCJWC	National Council of Jewish Women of Canada
PL	Primrose League
POA	Protestant Orphans Asylum
RCSC	Red Cross Society of Canada
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SSJB	Société St-Jean-Baptiste
VL	Victoria League
VON	Victorian Order of Nurses
WCCM	Women's Canadian Club of Montreal
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WPIS	Women's Protective Immigration Society
YLLA	Young Ladies Literary Society
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In a letter addressed to the International Council of Women in 1899, held in London, England, Julia Parker Drummond wrote: “By virtue of that very social position which seems to hinder, you can do much, more perhaps, than any other clique or class...Your opportunity for beautiful dressing and fine living gives you at once a peculiar power to lead; make the most of it...”<sup>1</sup>

This thesis is about rich, white, prominent women. These women lived in huge, sometimes opulent mansions along Sherbrooke Street in Montreal. They attended balls and wore expensive jewellery. They regularly travelled throughout Europe. They had servants and cooks engage in the hard labour required to maintain their elaborate homes and lifestyles. They have appeared in history as wives of high-powered businessmen, as daughters of politicians, and as heiresses of great fortunes. As the “great dames” of society, their role in history often has been tied to their relationships with men. While these relationships were important and certainly played a role in their social position and personal identities, this thesis considers elite women on their own merits. It refocuses the history of Montreal’s elite class on women and their experiences in the city and beyond. It is underpinned by the recognition that elite women in turn-of-the-century Montreal lived complex, active lives.

In the form of a collective biography, I observe elite women in their homes, in the rituals of their class, in the work of philanthropy, and in active

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Drummond, “Address Sent to Meeting of the International Council in London, England, 1899” *Some Addresses* (Montreal: The Gazette Publishing Company, Limited, 1907), 76-77.

engagement with their local community and with the world beyond Montreal. These women had a vision for society that went beyond social reform or securing the vote for women and was firmly rooted in their experiences of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and religion. Maternalist ideology as adopted by these early activists, built a framework for a brighter future, a better city, a stronger nation, and a more civilized world. I argue in the pages that follow that elite women twinned their role as mothers with their identity as citizens in order to create a realm of social and political influence for themselves in Montreal and beyond. They placed the family unit as the nuclear centre of society and extended this concept as a model to the community, nation, and international world. As maternalists and by virtue of their social position, these women believed that they, as wives and mothers and especially as citizens, had an important role to play in shaping society.

“Mothering Citizens” truly emerged out of the archives. When I began this project, it was my intention to write a biography of Lady Julia Parker Drummond. It was a compact and neat project that would have a clear beginning, middle and end. Two roadblocks emerged once I took this idea into the archives. The first was a lack of material, the other a plethora of material. While the Drummond Family fonds (recently deposited by the family at the McCord Museum in Montreal) was precious and fascinating, it failed to produce the much hoped-for personal writings of Parker Drummond. There were neither diaries nor extensive correspondence records. In order to fill these gaping holes, I began to search through the archives of those around Parker Drummond, her family, her friends, her neighbours, in hopes of finding her voice in the form of letters, cards,

recollections, etc. What I found was a rich body of untapped sources. Not all elite women followed in the footsteps of Parker Drummond who left little sign of her intimate thoughts. Rather, many kept careful track of their daily journals, letters, cards, visitors books, and scrapbooks, a practice that was carried on by their descendants who eventually deposited these memories into various archives across Montreal.<sup>2</sup> Of course, the sources were uneven, as they tend to be. Some fonds were more full of calling cards and garden maps than diaries and letters, while others were almost exclusively comprised of photographs and newspaper clippings carefully compiled in albums and scrapbooks. What was clear, despite this unevenness, was that, should I be willing to modify my game plan, here was an exciting look at elite culture and women's activism in turn-of-the-century Montreal. So, from a single woman's story to the story of twenty women, this project emerged without a neat and tidy structure. There was no clear beginning, middle, and end and there was no easy way to determine when to stop the mad scouring of archives. In the mishmash of private papers, associational papers, newspapers, and wallpapers, this project attempts to uncover the experience of elite women – as mothers, as activists, as citizens.

Methodologically it is difficult to categorize this study. It is not a traditional biography or family study nor is it an analysis of an institution or

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<sup>2</sup> Historians are well attuned to the fact that elites, victors, or other people of means and power were most likely to produce and retain these types of archival materials. Those who considered themselves and their works important were often committed to keeping records for future generations. With the New Social History of the 1960s and the emphasis on studying the underclasses, historians were confronted with the challenge of finding new types of historical sources. Their subjects rarely left the types of records that elites and prominent figures did. Though dated, Peter N. Stearns discussed the complications of primary source research among elites in Boston and New York in "Nineteenth-Century Elites in Boston and New York", *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn, 1972), 32-77.

association. Uncomfortably defined as a “collective biography”, this project has been influenced strongly by the work of British historians Patricia Jalland, Amanda Vickery, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall and by American historians Maureen Flanagan and Sarah Deutsch among many others.<sup>3</sup> These historians have produced coherent and vital portrayals of a group through the careful interweaving of individual stories and common group experiences. Choosing a smaller group of women (twenty rather than fifty, two hundred or even a town full of people), this study provides more opportunity to follow the individual lives of the eminent group while still facilitating a study of *interactions*. More intimate than prosopography, it is my hope that this study situates individuals within their community, permitting a view of their daily lives in relation to the longer narratives lived over two and a half decades.

The study covers the time period 1890 to 1914, with the ending date being more firmly fixed than the starting date. Industrialization had solidified many family fortunes by the 1890s and strong commercial and financial sectors had emerged in the city. This coincided with the first attempts at charity organization in Montreal. For women’s organizations this was most clearly demarcated by the formation of the Montreal Local Council of Women in 1893. The onset of the First World War in 1914 serves to close the time period. While the war itself pre-

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<sup>3</sup>Patricia Jalland, *Women, Marriage, and Politics, 1860-1914* (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press - Oxford University Press, 1986); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes : Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter : Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven [Conn.] ; London: Yale University Press, 1998); Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing with Their Hearts : Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton, N.J. ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002); Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

occupied much of life for four years, it also changed the tenor of elite culture in Montreal indefinitely. This, in turn, affected the ways women interacted with each other and exasperated new and existing tensions. In many ways, the Great War signaled an abrupt change in women's activism as it did in many other realms. For that reason, this study ends with the declaration of war in August 1914.

The division of the thesis into thematic chapters has allowed me to introduce the relevant historiography at the beginning of each section rather than to present it dissociated from the evidence at the beginning of the thesis. The introduction lays out the historiographical placement of the study in a general context, leaving specific historiographies on domesticity, philanthropy, women in politics and international networks to their respective chapters. I begin with a discussion of the ideological frameworks that have been created (and re-created in many instances) to explore and explain the experiences of women, noting the difficulties and the gaps in the literature that persuaded me to pursue this project in the first place. In particular, I believe this thesis contributes to the surrounding historiography in three main areas. First, this study contributes to a richer understanding of elite culture and elite class formation. Second, by viewing women as political actors, this thesis brings women's history and political history into dialogue and therefore contributes to the new political histories that are emerging in this vein. Third, as a study of Francophone and Anglophone women engaged in dialogue and interaction, the study contributes to building bridges between the two linguistic historiographic traditions in Quebec history.

There have been many political, economic, and traditional histories written about Montreal's elite world. Often taking the form of institutional studies or biographies (especially of great men), historians have traced Montreal's economic growth from settler community to industrializing urban centre and beyond. These histories have been constrained by the techniques and methodologies of traditional economic, political, and biographical history though. With a top-down approach to history, they have rarely explored the complexity of lived experiences among those who feature so prominently in their histories. More than being concerned with the process of identity formation or the construction of a class-consciousness, these histories have focused instead on the accomplishments and milestones of bourgeois Montreal. A rather unidimensional picture of Montreal's elite has emerged as a result.<sup>4</sup>

Where a very rich picture of the experiences and meanings of daily life in Montreal emerges is in the labouring classes. Social history, with its insistence on turning historical methodology on its head and attempting to understand the past from the bottom up, has produced profound and important studies of workers, women, minorities, and other marginalized groups. In Montreal, this is most clearly seen through the work of Bettina Bradbury, Denyse Baillargeon, Sherry Olson, Jean-Marie Fecteau among many others.<sup>5</sup> As historians (and geographers)

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<sup>4</sup>Brian Young stands out as one example of an historian who has attempted to unpack elite experience in the day-to-day life (and death!) of those who occupied real time and space in Montreal. See Brian Young and Geoffrey James, *Respectable burial: Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003); Brian Young, *George-Etienne Cartier: Montreal Bourgeois* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981)

<sup>5</sup> Bettina Bradbury, *Working families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993); Denyse Baillargeon, *De La Crise*. - , 1991); Danielle Gauvreau, Sherry Olson,

committed to understanding history as lived by “ordinary” citizens (and non-citizens), their work as a body has revealed the amazing complexity of life and survival in Montreal. Yet where these histories fall short is that they do not extend this same treatment to the elites.

Historians Sven Beckert and Julia B. Rosenbaum point to the ways bourgeois culture has been neglected in American historiography, something that could certainly be said of Canadian elites as well:

While the social history of the 1970s and 1980s has provided us with rich new insights into the history of subaltern groups—from workers to slaves to women—merchants, bankers, and manufacturers have largely escaped the attention of historians, who have worked to give voice and agency to the disenfranchised. Discussion of the bourgeoisie in much of that scholarship occurred as a foil—an undifferentiated group of people who in one way or another were responsible for the exploitation and repression of those below them.<sup>6</sup>

Much as historians have described the complexity of working-class life or life around the margins, so too was life complex for those who constructed a society where they themselves existed at the centre. Assumptions and generalizations that once masked the intricacies of working-class life, now are doing the same for elite social groups.

As Beckert and Rosenbaum outline in their 2010 edited collection of essays on American bourgeois life, European historians have been more aware of and sensitive to this problem. The result is that a much larger and stronger body of literature exists on the experiences of elite and middle-class life in Europe.

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Patricia Thornton, “The Harsh Welcome of an Industrial City: Immigrant Women in Montreal 1880-1900” *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, no. 80, (2007), p. 345.; Jean-Marie Fecteau and Janice Harvey.

*Historique De L'interaction.* - , 2005). ue

<sup>6</sup> Sven Beckert and Julia B. Rosenbaum, *American Bourgeoisie: Distinction and Identity in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 4.

Foundational in this was the work of Catherine Hall, Leonore Davidoff, and Adeline Daumard.<sup>7</sup> Beckert and Rosenbaum describe the way differences were first perceived and then understood in context by those European historians studying elites:

Struggling with the issue of what held together these economically heterogeneous and competing social groups, with their diverse political interests, historians increasingly focused on the social glue provided by the construction of a shared culture... These historians concluded that the building of this shared culture helped the bourgeoisie as a class to emerge and mobilize collectively. They realized that shared manners and habits, institutions, and the domination and definition of high culture are at the very core of understanding the history of the bourgeoisie.<sup>8</sup>

This rich body of work highlighted the importance of gender and as a result, studies of women were done in conjunction with it. Early social histories of middle and upper class women revolved around the concept of *separate spheres* – whereby women were relegated to the domestic or “private” sphere and men were free to move between the private and the public sphere. Initially, historians expressed an unabashed acceptance of this ideological construct. As Linda Kerber notes, historians (and scholars from various related disciplines) did not have a framework, a language, or an ideology to work with as they ventured into the unmapped world of women’s history and as a result borrowed the separate spheres metaphor from their subjects.<sup>9</sup> Barbara Welter’s “The Cult of True Womanhood” published in 1966 was a pioneering attempt to define the role

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<sup>7</sup> Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Adeline Daumard, *Les Bourgeois et la Bourgeoisie en France depuis 1815* (Paris: Aubier, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> Beckert and Rosenbaum, *American Bourgeoisie*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Linda Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” *Journal of American History* 75 (1988), 9-39.



of women within the private sphere.<sup>10</sup> Historians such as Nancy Cott, Aileen Kraditor, and Mary Ryan further highlighted the centrality of female domesticity in middle-class life, arguing, as Cott writes, that “women’s perception of ‘womanhood’” (womanhood defined here within the bounds of separate spheres) served as a necessary first step in the rise of feminism.<sup>11</sup> In *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century*, Bonnie Smith made a pioneering attempt to understand the lived experiences of elite women during the process of industrialization.<sup>12</sup> Her main argument was that women were removed (by men and by themselves) from productive activity in industrializing France and, in return, welcomed the refuge offered by the reproductive activity of the home and the Roman Catholic Church. Smith paints a picture of aristocratic women who scorned rationalism, equality, and liberty and in their place championed innocence in the form of the “cult of true womanhood.”<sup>13</sup>

In reaction to these early works, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall insisted on a more nuanced telling of the *experience* of women.<sup>14</sup> Their crucial study of the English middle class reveals that the boundaries between public and private were consistently being negotiated and traversed by men and women and

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<sup>10</sup> Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Part i (Summer 1966), 151–174.

<sup>11</sup> Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890–1920* (New York: Norton Press, 1981); Mary P. Ryan, *Womanhood in America* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975); Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Families of Oneida County, New York, 1790–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825–1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990)

<sup>12</sup> Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>13</sup> Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, 214–215.

<sup>14</sup> Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

that the ideology of separate spheres did not neatly transfer into lived experiences. Class identity and consciousness, they argue, were negotiated and shaped always within the context of gender and hence Hall and Davidoff highlight the importance of gender in relation to any study of class. “The principal argument rests on the assumption that gender and class always operate together, that consciousness of class always takes a gendered form.”<sup>15</sup> Since this study, scholars have recognized the shifting characteristics of women’s experiences – both within the home and out of it. Stepping further outside the ideological confines of separate spheres, Amanda Vickery has examined the ways women took advantage of both their domestic position and the expansion of the public sphere to define new identities and roles for themselves.<sup>16</sup>

As historians of women and gender have refocused their problematiques around women as active and public figures, the original relegation of women to social history has dissolved. Women first appeared in political history in studies of suffrage and suffrage campaigns. In 1950, using the fight for female suffrage as her lens, Catherine Cleverdon traced the geographical pattern of early feminist activity in Canada.<sup>17</sup> Thirty years later, Carol Bacchi added to the discussion by proposing a distinction be made between what she termed “true feminists” and “social reformers.”<sup>18</sup> More recently, the old understandings of political history as the history of men, suffrage, government and gamesmanship are increasingly being challenged by new concepts of agency, citizenship, and the relationship

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<sup>15</sup> Hall and Davidoff, *Family Fortunes*, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*.

<sup>17</sup> Catherine Lyle Cleverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

<sup>18</sup> Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

between politics and society, making room for disenfranchised women in a new political history.<sup>19</sup> This has been strongly influenced by the explosive scholarship on citizenship that has focused more on experiential retelling of history than a simple delineating of rights withheld and rights won.<sup>20</sup> While Smith's women of nineteenth-century Northern France were seen to be staunchly apolitical and completely removed from the "public sphere", more recently scholars have viewed the women in Chicago and Boston as being explicitly political and engaged in public discourses. Maureen Flanagan's work on Chicago Women after the Great Fire of 1871 is a well-executed study of more than one hundred women acting in cooperation across racial and class lines. She has convincingly argued that women, unified by their gender, acted out an agenda that often put them in conflict with male reformers who embraced different visions for the city of Chicago. Her sensitivity to the voices and actions of women has contributed to the repositioning of the history of female reformers as political history, moving women activists into a new paradigm of analysis.<sup>21</sup> In *Women and the City: Gender, Space and Power in Boston, 1870-1940*, Sarah Deutsch comes to similar conclusions. She maintains that women, as individuals and organized groups, effectively redesigned the city for their own purposes. Through an analysis of

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<sup>19</sup> Kathryn Kish Sklar, "The New Political History and Women's History: Comments on 'The Democratic Experiment'", *The History Teacher*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Aug., 2006), 509-514; Mineke Bosch, "Gender and the Personal in Political Biography: Observations from a Dutch Perspective" *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 21, No 4, (Winter 2009), 13-37.

<sup>20</sup> A very good summary of the discussion surrounding citizenship was provided by President Linda Kerber at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians in 1997. See Linda K. Kerber, "The Meanings of Citizenship", *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (December 1997), 833-854.

<sup>21</sup> Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts*.

space, Deutsch recognizes the power women created for themselves, first in their parlours, then in the street, and ultimately in the City Hall.<sup>22</sup>

Through the process of sorting through their private lives, I was struck by the centrality of religion and spirituality in the lives of elite women in Montreal. To some extent this came as a surprise because it is rarely present in the historiography of suffrage and women in politics, (other than to condemn the Catholic Church for Quebec's notoriously late enfranchisement of women.)<sup>23</sup> While religion served as the umbrella under which most philanthropic activity took place, historians have struggled to find the place of spirituality in these stories. Many historians have neglected religion completely while others have viewed religion as the structure women used to position themselves outside the home. Few have considered religion and spirituality as *motivation*, driving these women to do "good works" and carry out their visions of renewal for society.<sup>24</sup> The "women's movement" coincided temporally and thematically with the social reform movement and subsequently has suffered from the same assumptions made by historians – namely that the social reform movement meant the end of the Church's influence and the rise of secularization. Though charities and philanthropies often emerged under the aegis of the church, it is widely held that these organizations reached maturity when they had finally shrugged the control

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<sup>22</sup> Deutsch, *Women and the City*.

<sup>23</sup> Micheline Dumont et al, *L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec depuis Quatre Siècles 2<sup>ième</sup> ed* (Montreal : Le Jour, 1992), 347.

<sup>24</sup> The exception, of course, is in the history of female missionaries. While historians have explored mission work as an acceptable vocation for women seeking more than life as a wife and mother, they have also acknowledged that many women considered this their spiritual *calling*. An edited collection of essays on women's experiences within the Christian Church dedicates one main section to understanding women's roles as missionaries. See Elizabeth Gillian Muir and Marilyn Fardig Whitely, eds. *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

of the clergy.<sup>25</sup> Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie challenge this position in their tremendously important look at Protestant churches between 1900 and 1940.<sup>26</sup> *A Full-Orbed Christianity* argues that, in fact, Protestant Churches in Canada practiced a great deal of cultural influence prior to the Second World War. What has been perceived as a secularization of reform, they argue, was really the transformation of religion itself, following the shape of the social gospel ideology in particular.<sup>27</sup>

I argue throughout this thesis that religion and spirituality did matter to these women. They mattered so much that they went to great lengths to accommodate the religious convictions and practices of their fellow activists.<sup>28</sup> The friendships they formed, the organizations they established, the family traditions they instilled, the political agendas they pursued were all born out of a religious framework and, to a greater or lesser extent, sincere spiritual conviction. Accommodation, in this case, did not imply secularization.

How to access this spiritual conviction has not always been easy. While some women were explicit about their personal convictions, (especially those who kept diaries), it was often difficult to gain access to this “private” world. Graced with a plethora of written sources including novels, articles, poetry, and personal reflections, Joanna Dean’s study of Lily Dougall, serves as an example of the

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<sup>25</sup> Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1985)

<sup>26</sup> Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada 1900-1940*, (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001)

<sup>27</sup> Gauvreau and Christie, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, xi.

<sup>28</sup> The use of silent prayer at the beginning of meetings by the Montreal Local Council of Women serves as a particularly good example of this type of accommodation. See chapter three for more discussion on this topic.

remarkably rich world of religious experience among women.<sup>29</sup> As a collective biography, with uneven sources, however, this task has been more trying. To complicate things further, the women in this study did not have a singular religious association. Rather, they were Orthodox Jews, Protestants and Roman Catholics. Within these categories there was also a great deal of diversity. For example, Brian Young and Rosalyn Trigger's works on Protestant Montreal have demonstrated the complexity of the Protestant population in Montreal.<sup>30</sup> It is clear that Unitarians viewed the world through a very different lens than high Anglicans or Methodists, not to mention Roman Catholics or Orthodox Jews. Furthermore, spiritual conviction not only varies from denomination to denomination or person to person, its influence can also wax and wane over time in the life of a single individual. Getting a grasp on this ethereal element has proved to be challenging but very rewarding.

Hand in hand with the challenge of diversity comes the richness of comparison. Natalie Zemon Davis convinced historians that comparison is a valuable and productive exercise.<sup>31</sup> Her study of three women from different locations and times lacked none of the coherence one might anticipate from such an undertaking. Rather, her juxtapositions produced striking (and admittedly demanding) forays into life on the margins. While historians have used comparison to position class and gender (and to a lesser extent race) as crucial intersecting elements in the lives of women, few comparative works have probed

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<sup>29</sup> Joanna Dean, *Religious Experience and the New Woman: The Life of Lily Dougall* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

<sup>30</sup> Rosalyn Trigger, "God's Mobile Mansions: Protestant Church Relocation and Extension in Montreal, 1850-1914", (Thesis (PhD), McGill University, 2005); Young, *Respectable Burial*.

<sup>31</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-century Lives*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

the role of ethnicity and religion. For the most part, this is because there are few geographies that permit such an activity. Both Boston and Brussels are two examples of settings that yield fruitful comparative cases.<sup>32</sup> In the case of Boston, while the majority of the population was Protestant, there was a thriving Roman Catholic contingent. In Brussels, the constantly shifting relationship between the Flemish- and the French-speaking populations, has positioned ethnicity and religion (often hard to disentangle) at the centre of social and cultural relations. This study of twenty women from a shared class experience but with varied ethnic and religious backgrounds addresses this paucity in the literature. In effect, this thesis has the opportunity to ask new questions – to what extent was religion tied to identity and to activism? How were gender and class shaped by spirituality and ethnicity? What patterns emerge across class lines that are absent or transformed across gender or ethnic lines? To what extent did ethnicity, religion, gender, and class serve as barriers and when did they serve as conduits?

Traditionally, the history of Quebec and of Montreal in particular has been written from two different perspectives – that of Francophone historians and that of Anglophone historians. As a result, two parallel literature bases must be considered in a project that attempts to explain the interaction between Anglophones and Francophones. Canadian Anglophone historians often neglect Montreal altogether, neither willing to make the effort to understand Francophone women's experiences nor to untangle Anglophone women from the general

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<sup>32</sup> Serge Jaumain and Paul-André Linteau (eds), *Vivre en Ville : Bruxelles et Montréal au XIXe et XXe siècle* (Brussels : Etudes Canadiennes, 2006); T. Debroux, J-M Decroly, Chloe Deligne, M. Galand, Christopher Loir, M. Van Criekingen, "Les espaces résidentiels de la noblesse à Bruxelles (XVIII-XXe siècles), *Belgeo*, 2008. Deutsch, *Women in the City*.

population. Francophone historians have equally been concerned with writing the history of Francophone women, ignoring altogether or clumping Anglophones into one opposing group.<sup>33</sup> Written as either the history of English-speaking women (usually with Toronto positioned as the “centre”) or as the history of Quebec women (implying Francophone women), women’s history in Canada has only very tentatively attempted to bridge this divide, more often retreating to the comfortable world of writing the history of either one group or the other. For historians of Montreal, this complicates matters. Montreal’s women, being both Anglophone and Francophone, have often sat uncomfortably floating between these two worlds. Recent scholarship, however, has begun to bridge these two academic worlds, demonstrating that the supposed division between French-speaking and English-speaking communities was far from impermeable and that everyday interactions were occurring especially in Montreal.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the growing body of important research done by and on Allophone communities in Quebec has redirected historians away from the monolithic dichotomy of French versus English.<sup>35</sup> That being said, however, many general overviews, biographies, thematic and institutional studies have been produced within this traditional language divide and as such, construct two bodies of scholarship that

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<sup>33</sup> Micheline Dumont et al, *L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec depuis Quatre Siècles 2<sup>ième</sup> ed* (Montreal : Le Jour, 1992)

<sup>34</sup> Bettina Bradbury and Tamara Myers, eds. *Negotiating Identities in 19th and 20th-Century Montreal* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005); Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal*, (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010)

<sup>35</sup> See the recent edited collection by Stéphan Gervais, Christopher Kirkey, and Jarrett Rudy, *Quebec Questions: Quebec Studies for the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 2011).



serve as groundwork for this project. It is exciting to be part of a scholarship that brings these two traditions together.

Attempting to “find” the stories of these women has sharpened my detective skills and forced me to consider not only what traditional sources of diaries and associational minutes reveal but also what images of a dining room or a parlour can reveal about the experience of elite womanhood. Four main categories of sources have been consulted. First and most importantly, the private papers of the women and their families have been consulted. Already exposed as being uneven, these papers nonetheless provided an intimate view into the lives of women revealing their thoughts, hopes and dreams on an endless list of topics – marriage, birth, death, household management, city beautification, literature, local gossip, sin, and politics.

Complementing these personal papers are the minutes and archives of associations. This is one of the only other places that women’s own words are evident. They often recorded their meetings in great detail (though of course these glimpses are less intimate and more tempered than diaries or personal reflections.) As a result, studies of institutions and associations have also helped to frame this project. Veronica Strong-Boag’s early study of the National Council of Women of Canada set the standard for institutional studies within Women’s History.<sup>36</sup> National organizations (such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the Young Women’s Christian Association, and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire) have been explored by Sharon Cook, Phyllis Airhart,

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<sup>36</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, *The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929* (Ottawa: National Museum, 1976).

and Katie Pickles.<sup>37</sup> These studies have focused on the actions of women as groups and have questioned the impact of female networks at the national (and, in the case of Pickles, at the international) level. In general, while questions of definition have sometimes occupied these works (were the women feminists?), their most important contribution is that they have highlighted the agency of women both before and after enfranchisement. Linking religion to philanthropy and social action, these studies have begun the process of understanding the motivation and philanthropic engagement of women in English Canada.

Most directly connected to this work, however, are the studies that have been written on women's associations in Montreal and Quebec. One of the few studies of English Canada's women's organizations located in Quebec is Janice Harvey's work on the Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society.<sup>38</sup> Yolande Pinard *et al* and Karine Hébert's studies of the Fédération nationale St-Jean-Baptiste, along with the crucial study of women's Catholic religious orders by Marta Danylewycz, serve as important first steps in the process of understanding the experiences of Quebec's Roman Catholic women, both lay and religious.<sup>39</sup> This effort is being carried on by a new generation of historians including Amélie Bourbeau and Denyse Baillargeon.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); Sharon A. Cook, *Through Sunshine and Shadow: the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 18741-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995); Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

<sup>38</sup> Janice Harvey, "The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society: a Case Study in Protestant Child Charity in Montreal, 1822-1900" Thesis (PhD) McGill University, 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Marie Lavigne, Yolande Pinard and Jennifer Stoddart, "La Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste et les revendications féministes au début du 20e siècle" Marie Lavigne and Yolande Pinard, ed. *Travailleuses et Féministes* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983), 199-216; Karine Hébert,

A third type of sources are those that were produced for the general public – primarily newspapers and pamphlets. Montreal, again because of its cultural diversity, produced a variety of newspapers on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. *La Presse* and *La Patrie* along with *The Montreal Daily Star*, *Montreal Herald* and the *Standard* have served as the five main newspapers consulted in this project.<sup>41</sup> Social columns were particularly rich in tracing the day-to-day experiences of elite Montrealers. Stories of guest lecturers, grand banquets, deaths, meetings, and scandal were easy to follow across time. During this period, the increasing use of photographs in the newspapers added to their richness.

Finally, the fourth catch-all category that includes everything else. Photographs (of which an exceptionally rich trove exists in the form of the Notman Photographic Archives at the McCord Museum), architectural plans, city directories, census records, and insurance listings have a great deal to contribute to the study of elites in Montreal. These sources give a rich view of the material culture of this group. They also permit me to give attention to space, in how these women were placed and how they placed themselves in the city and beyond.<sup>42</sup>

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“Une Organisation Maternaliste: La fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste et la Lutte de Femmes pour le Droit de Vote”, *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française*, vol. 52, no. 3 (hiver 1999); Marta Danylewycz et al., *Taking the Veil: an Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987).

<sup>40</sup> Amélie Bourbeau. “La réorganisation de l’assistance chez les catholiques montréalais: la Fédération des Œuvres de charité canadiennes-françaises et la Federation of Catholic Charities, 1930-1972” (Thesis (PhD) Department of History - UQAM); Denyse Baillargeon, *Naître, vivre, grandir. Sainte-Justine 1907-2007*, (Montréal : Boréal, 2007)

<sup>41</sup> These were newspapers with the largest circulation in Montreal. Increasingly, they are being digitized and made searchable by tools such as Google News Archive.

<sup>42</sup> In this undertaking, I have found the work of Annmarie Adams and David Theodore to be immensely helpful. See Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses and Women, 1870-1900*, (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996)

These sources have helped to give shape to a city, a way of life, and a group of people in a specific temporal and geographical setting.

The assorted strands of sources that have been woven together in this thesis focus on Montreal women. While this project is about the way elite women identified as citizens and mothers and therefore hopefully has a reach beyond the specific experiences of these twenty women, their lives were very much framed in a spatial and temporal setting – Montreal at the turn of the twentieth century.

### **SETTING THE SCENE: MONTREAL AND ITS ELITES C. 1900**

Tourist guidebooks suggest to their twenty-first century readers a stroll through Montreal's "Golden Square Mile" in order to get a feel for life in turn-of-the-previous-century Montreal.<sup>43</sup> A walk along Sherbrooke Street, from University Avenue to Drummond Street, would take visitors of the city past many remnants of the so-called "belle époque" of Montreal. They would see mansions, churches, social clubs, museums and educational institutions that had been built during an era of explosive economic growth. They could read historical plaques listing the names of Montreal's famed elites, noting their major accomplishments and whether they had owned or simply paid for the building in question.

If the visitors continued north, up the sides of Mount Royal, they would be standing on land once owned by John Redpath, the Scottish entrepreneur who conquered the sugar world, amassing a huge fortune that he and his descendents bequeathed in various ways to Montreal. They would ramble through the park

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<sup>43</sup> See for example, Fodor's description of the Square Mile, available online at <http://www.fodors.com/world/north-america/canada/quebec/montreal/downtown/>.

that now covered the former Redpath estate and was designed by Frederick Olmstead, designer of New York's Central Park. They would pass by the very graves of those fortunate elites who had inhabited the Square Mile and now rest in Mount Royal Cemetery. And they would be afforded an unrivalled view of the city.

From the lookouts on Mount Royal, visitors would see all the way down to the Saint Lawrence River. The city was built along this waterway, gradually spreading north as the population grew. But if the visitors looked carefully at the city between the mountain and the river, they would see neighbourhoods other than the Square Mile that testify to life in turn-of-the-century Montreal. They would see Griffintown, now scarred through its centre by the Ville-Marie Expressway but once the home of a vibrant and remarkably poor Irish working-class community. They would also be able to see Pointe-St-Charles, a more heterogeneous but largely Francophone working-class community. The remnants of life in the "belle époque" cross the city and serve as a witness to the class division that characterized Montreal in this era, so concretely demonstrated by both geography/topography and urban planning.

Montreal at the end of the nineteenth century was a bustling, industrializing city. It was the largest city in Canada and an important urban centre in the British Empire. Between 1880 and 1900, the population of Montreal nearly doubled, the result of urban migration from rural Quebec and high rates of immigration from the British Isles, Western Europe and increasingly from Central

and Eastern Europe.<sup>44</sup> Its position on the St. Lawrence River and its proximity to the United States made Montreal an important transportation hub both in a continental and trans-Atlantic world. Elite Montrealers had made their fortunes in the fur-trade, the transportation industry, natural resource extraction, manufacturing, and later banking. By the 1880s, Montreal had consolidated massive wealth in the form of a self-made generation. According to Montreal historian Roderick MacLeod, 70 percent of Canada's wealth was controlled by families living in Montreal, mostly within the Square Mile.<sup>45</sup>

As Canada's chief cosmopolitan centre, Montreal was home to two major ethnic groups and multiple other smaller ethnic communities. In 1901, approximately 60 percent of the population was of French-Canadian origin. Grouping those of British origin together (including Irish, English and Scottish), historian Paul-André Linteau estimates the Anglophone population at a little over 30 percent.<sup>46</sup> The next largest group listed by Linteau is the Jewish population which made up approximately 2 percent of Montreal's population.<sup>47</sup> (Ten years later, in 1911, the Jewish population had grown to nearly 6 percent.) Small communities of Italians, Germans, "other Europeans", Asians and "Others" in combination comprised a little over 2 percent of Montreal's population.

Tourists to Montreal may be impressed by the remnants of high society life in Victorian and Edwardian Montreal but so too have historians in their own

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<sup>44</sup> Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération 2<sup>ième</sup> édition* (Montreal : Boréal, 2000), 40, 160.

<sup>45</sup> Roderick Macleod, "Salubrious Settings and Fortunate Families: The Making of Montreal's Golden Square Mile, 1840-1895." (Thesis (PhD), McGill University, 1997), 1.

<sup>46</sup> Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, 162. Clearly this grouping is problematic on multiple levels, especially in consideration of the social, cultural, and even linguistic differences of these groups of people.

<sup>47</sup> Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal*, 162.

way. Montreal's history is full of rags-to-riches stories that lend an air of romance and myth to the city's coming of age. The great families of Montreal left their mark not just in the houses they left or in the streets named after them but also in the way history has been written. Popular histories tend to glorify the "great men" of Montreal while academic histories have juxtapositioned them against the complex struggling of the underclasses.

In *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération*, Paul-André Linteau introduces the era here studied (1896-1914) by describing the economic and demographic make-up of the city.<sup>48</sup> The first people to be described by Linteau are the elites – a description that begins with Donald Smith, also known as Lord Strathcona. Linteau is well-served in the example of Smith who was one of Canada's wealthiest and most prolific public men. Representing what is often referred to as the Anglophone Elite of Montreal, Smith fits many of the aspects that accompany this narrative. Born in Scotland to a tradesman and his wife, Smith immigrated to Canada in 1838 after leaving school at the age of sixteen. Through hard work and an astute entrepreneurial spirit, Smith found his way through the Hudson's Bay Company to the upper echelons of management. An extremely shrewd businessman, he early on saw the potential of railways and banking, amassing great fortunes in both these fields. Smith eventually made Montreal his home base, settling with his family on Dorchester Boulevard in the Square Mile.<sup>49</sup> While his fortune was vast, so too were his philanthropic

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<sup>48</sup> Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération*.

<sup>49</sup> Alexander Reford, "Smith, Donald Alexander, 1st Baron STRATHCONA and MOUNT ROYAL", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. XIV* (Toronto-Quebec: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2000)

commitments and donations.<sup>50</sup> He made massive contributions over his lifetime, including almost single-handedly financing the founding of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Royal Victoria College (opening classes at McGill to women), Trafalgar Institute (also for girls), and raising a mounted regiment to fight during the South African War known colloquially as Lord Strathcona's Horse.<sup>51</sup> His reputation was truly empire-wide, and while his life was based in Montreal for many years, he spent his final years in London as High Commissioner. He died on the eve of the First World War, a Baron of the second peerage.

As Linteau posits by presenting him first among his peers, Smith was at the centre of Montreal's elite society. He provided the best, most lavish entertainments. He served in a plethora of functionary and honorary positions. Networks formed around him linking business, political, social, and cultural interests. He was a man with high social clout and an abundance of real power. The Scottish entrepreneur, the self-made man, the hard-working, devout Protestant, the builder of empire – these are the characteristics that have been used to describe Montreal's elites during this era.<sup>52</sup> Smith was surrounded by others with great wealth and great influence. There were those who were his colleagues at the Bank of Montreal (controlling 17 percent of Canada's banking interests in 1901)<sup>53</sup>, those who were members of the St. James Club, and those who lived in

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<sup>50</sup> Alexander Reford reports Smith's fortune as being valued at over \$28 000 000 at his death in 1914. Alexander Reford, "Smith, Donald Alexander, 1st Baron STRATHCONA and MOUNT ROYAL", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Vol. XIV* (Toronto-Quebec: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2000)

<sup>51</sup> Reford, "Smith, Donald Alexander, 1st Baron STRATHCONA and MOUNT ROYAL"

<sup>52</sup> Richard Feltoe, *A Gentleman of Substance : The Life and Legacy of John Redpath (1796-1869)*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2004); MacLeod, "Salubrious Settings and Fortunate Families"; "Simply Montreal: Glimpses of a Unique City", permanent exhibition, McCord Museum.

<sup>53</sup> Linteau, *L'Histoire de Montréal*, 150.



his neighbourhood, the Square Mile. An active and intricate high society had formed in Montreal. Lady Aberdeen, wife of the Governor-General frequently lamented in her diary that she wished she could settle in Montreal, at the centre of Canadian culture, rather than in Ottawa which she referred to as “exile”.<sup>54</sup> Montreal had elaborate homes, ornate churches, multiple theatres, shopping districts, museums and galleries. With a population large enough to support a true high society, there were fancy balls, afternoon teas, at homes and dinners during the season. Debutantes and young men were formally presented and royal visits always included significant celebrations in Montreal.

Unlike London, for example, where social status was firmly rooted in aristocratic traditions, creating divisions that had been in place for hundreds of years, Montreal had no firmly established aristocratic heritage. The elite class that was emerging in Montreal was a group that was shaping itself – not being bound by these traditional aristocratic customs that shaped elite culture elsewhere. Instead they borrowed from British, French, and American traditions and responded to the specific challenges of Montreal. Elite society in Montreal, as elsewhere, was dynamic and constantly in flux. Those like Smith and his nearly identical compatriot, George Stephen, clearly occupied the centre of elite circles but even they had negotiated their way into that position. Their influence was such that even when they were physically removed in England or elsewhere, their authority and presence were still very much part of elite culture in Montreal. The social circles that grew up around these figureheads were constantly being

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<sup>54</sup> 30 January 1895, *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898*, ed. J. T. Saywell (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1960).

negotiated as well. Like other class groupings, elite society was multi-layered and experienced differently by individual members.

The historiography has not always been sensitive to these fluctuations or complexities. Ethnicity has served to structure the history of Montreal's elites as much (if not more) than it has in working-class history. From exhibits at public institutions to broad surveys of Montreal and Quebec, the narrative of the Anglophone Fur Trader or Sugar King or Railway Baron has tended to represent "elite Montreal". While the historiography has identified the occasional exceptional Francophone as having crossed a class line into the world of elite Anglophones, in general Francophones have been relegated to the role of under-elites, with ethnic "others" placed even further away from the centre of elite Montreal. Little has been written to challenge this narrative and even less has been done to unpack the process of creating an "elite Montreal" world.

What does the example of Montreal reveal about class formation and the experience of elite society in the city? First, class formation was an ongoing negotiation where ethnicity and race, religion, gender, profession, economic position, and family make-up intersected and paralleled in the process. Elite identity was both relational and situational. By this I mean there were materials and physical settings (situational factors) that were complicit in gaining access to the elite world as well as family networks, friendship circles, and personal qualities (relational factors) that facilitated access in similar ways. For the historian, it verges on impossible to determine the exact formula for acceptance to Montreal's bourgeoisie. Inclusion in or exclusion from Montreal's high society certainly would have had very real implications for day-to-day life but attempting

to determine all the relevant factors from this historical distance is nearly futile. Elite society in Montreal was big enough that it comprised multiple circles that overlapped and intersected and each of the circles had different components.

Ideally, to be a member of elite society in Montreal as elsewhere, an individual had great financial means which were displayed in a big house in the heart of the Square Mile complemented with a full staff of domestic workers, beautiful furnishings, artwork adorning the walls, carriages and sleighs, and exquisite clothing. The male head of household was usually an entrepreneur, creating a career out of multiple prestigious positions in a variety of important financial and commercial institutions. Ethnicity and race were crucial to this picture as well. One's point of origin carried enormous weight. Those born in London, for example, brought with them an air of sophistication that was most concretely displayed in their language, accent, and styling. Questions of race would hardly have entered onto the radar of Montreal's elite consciousness yet was one of the barriers that was hardest to breach. As Constance Backhouse has argued in *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada 1900-1940*, Canadians have shrouded themselves in a cloak of "racelessness", especially in the ways they compared themselves to the United States, but a lack of public acknowledgement of race in no way diminished the very real impact and meanings of race.<sup>55</sup> Proper etiquette and sophisticated manners had to be adopted by those seeking entrance to high society. Being at ease in the rituals of elite socializing was crucial in building a network of support among peers.

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<sup>55</sup> Constance Backhouse, *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1940* (Toronto: Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, 1999), 13.

But what is also clear is that these factors could be weighted in different ways. Take, for example, Meldola and Katie Samuel deSola. From all accounts, they had very limited financial means. For most of their married life, they rented or lived in the houses of relatives. The census indicates that while they had two domestic employees living with them in 1901, there were none in 1911.<sup>56</sup> Certainly Meldola's salary as the chief rabbi at Shearith Israel Synagogue would hardly have provided the means for maintaining an elite lifestyle. However, the position held a different type of currency. The status and prominence that went along with that position had been nurtured and refined by his father before him, Abraham deSola. Shearith Israel was the "original" Orthodox Jewish congregation in Montreal and there was much clout associated with this. The marriage between Meldola and Katie created a network of clergy influence because her father, too, was an important rabbi (at Bayswater Synagogue) in London, England. Furthermore, Meldola's mother was a Joseph, one of the richest families in Montreal. When Jesse Joseph, the inhabitant of the Joseph mansion on Sherbrooke Street died, Meldola, Katie and their family moved into the house. Meldola and Katie maintained a solid footing in elite Montreal circles – not because they were wealthy and had great means, but because other aspects of their identity were able to buy them the social capital they needed to fit into high society. For others clearly making the transition from the middle class into the elite world of Montreal, profession enhanced status in ways that finances could not always replicate. Being a member of the clergy is one example. Another is politics. Raoul Dandurand was a lawyer by first profession. He made wise

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<sup>56</sup> Census of Canada 1901 and Census of Canada 1911.

investments and built himself (and his family) a (more than) comfortable life. But where his fortunes really took off was in his appointment as a senator. Political appointments and positions carried a great deal of influence and authority and could significantly propel one's climb up the social ladder.

The more of these factors one could align, the closer to the centre of elite society one would be positioned. Yet even those located in the centre of elite circles had complex lives that rarely fit a perfect mould of the public image of "elite". Lives could be messy and complicated in ways that did not always have a public face. The example of Donald Smith again is a case in point. Smith's marriage was always a sensitive point in high society. Isabella Hardisty was married and separated from her first husband when she and her son moved in with Smith in 1853. The couple conceived a daughter and continued to live as husband and wife until their marriage was formally enacted first in 1859 and then later in a more formal (and probably legally binding way) in 1896 in New York City. While Smith was known to be embarrassed by this unconventional relationship, what was more complicated was that Hardisty Smith's mother was of Aboriginal heritage. According to Alexander Reford:

she had endured derision and prejudice. She was privately dismissed as "a dour old hoddy doddy squaw," and "our lady of the snows," by the English aristocrats who accepted her hospitality. Smith and his daughter were protective of her reputation, and ensured under threat of legal action that passages regarding her native blood and her marital history were excised from several biographies.<sup>57</sup>

Even Smith, seen as an icon of the age, did not fit neatly into the prescribed identity of high society. He was not alone. The intimate lives of elite Montrealers

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<sup>57</sup> Reford, "Smith, Donald Alexander, 1st Baron STRATHCONA and MOUNT ROYAL"

had many unconventionalities and complications, including violence, homosexuality, and marital unfaithfulness among many others. Race had a public face in ways other issues did not though. Whiteness and being white were crucial to elite identity in Montreal. Those whose race was other than singularly white, did what they could to hide and erase their “otherness” in public.<sup>58</sup> The rituals of society were maintained and interactions occurred even if behind the scenes gossip was rife and commonplace.

The example of Montreal also reveals the way class boundaries were patrolled in this process. Dau’s Blue Book was published for the first time in Montreal in 1898. Identifying itself as an “Elite Family Directory”, the publication was a list of elite families in Montreal. Montrealers purchased the directory “at a low cost” and were instructed to use it as a “visiting list...a check placed before the names of your friends makes it an ideal visiting list.”<sup>59</sup> Between the blue covers of the directory the elite families of Montreal were brought together into a cohesive group in a way that is both problematic and enlightening for the historian. While all the women and families represented in this study are found in the pages of Dau’s (indicating clearly that elite society, though robed in English garments, included Francophones and Anglophones, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Protestants), there is a sense that the directory serves the purpose of exclusion just as much as it indicates inclusion. It also indicates that negotiation of inclusion and exclusion was ongoing and could be contested:

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<sup>58</sup> Hardisty was not a singular exception. A similar example is that of Edward Seaborne Clouston whose mother too was aboriginal. One of Clouston’s two daughters was dark-skinned yet this was not publically commented on as far as I could find.

<sup>59</sup> *Dau’s Society Blue-Book for Montreal: Elite Family Directory 1898* (Montreal-New York: Dau Publishing Company, 1898), 3

The Blue Book makes no pretense to drawing close social distinctions. It merely presumes to give a fairly accurate list of the prominent hosts and hostesses of the city. As society in all large cities is made up of numerous sets, each independent and distinct from the other, the reader will be sufficiently liberal to withhold criticism for the insertion of names which may seem unnecessary, for these may be the friends of your neighbor.<sup>60</sup>

Other means of exclusion were equally available to elites including complicated but clearly messaged invitation patterns, visiting schedules, and shared (or unshared as the case may be) intimate confidences. Gossip and social backstabbing too had roles to play in this process.

Finally, though the sources are significantly muted when it comes to women, they still provide a rich and detailed picture of the experiences of elite women and highlight the ways the specific social setting of Montreal informed and shaped their experiences therein. It was in this world that the twenty women involved in this study lived. While it is true that the twenty women who comprise this study were chosen first and foremost because of the records they left (without records there would be no way to trace their stories), they were also selected because they represent the shape of elite society in Montreal at the time. Montreal's general population had a larger Francophone than Anglophone component but elite Montreal society was reversed. There were more Anglophones among the upper classes than Francophones. Following from this, there were more Protestants than Roman Catholics among the elites. Though definitely present, Orthodox Jews were even less common among the elite. Therefore, I have taken into consideration the ethnicity, religion, language, as well

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<sup>60</sup> *Dau's Society Blue-Book for Montreal.*

as political and professional affiliations of the women (and their families) in the process of selecting the subjects and have attempted to make the group as representative of elite Montreal as possible.

Six of the women were Francophone, fourteen were Anglophone. Three of these women were born in the United States, two were born in Ontario, two were born in England, one was born in Poland, three were raised in Quebec towns outside of Montreal. The remaining nine women were born in Montreal. Two women were Orthodox Jews, eight were Roman Catholic and ten were Protestant, representing Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Unitarian denominations. With the exception of Ishbel Aberdeen who was never fully a resident of Montreal and Marie Globensky Lacoste who lived on St. Hubert Street, all the women lived within the Square Mile. Only two women remained unmarried and several experienced multiple marriage. Two unmarried and two married women never had children.

Listed in alphabetical order, the names of these women appear below.

Short biographical summaries of each woman can be located in Appendix I.

Ishbel Marie Marjoribanks, Lady Aberdeen  
 Caroline Dessaulles Béique  
 Annie Easton Clouston  
 Joséphine Marchand Dandurand  
 Belle Maud Goldsmith DeSola  
 Katherine Samuel DeSola  
 Lily Dougall  
 Julia Parker Drummond  
 Maria Raymond Forget  
 Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie  
 Margaret Macdonald Hingston  
 Marie Globensky Lacoste  
 Charlotte Smithers Learmont  
 Isabelle Brenda Allan Meredith  
 Eliza MacIntosh Reid



Amy Redpath Roddick  
Felice deKalisz Stephens  
Marguerite Lamothe Thibaudeau  
Adaline Hurd Van Horne  
Mary Van Horne

Unpacking their experience in this elite world is the purpose of this thesis. What emerges from the sources is that these women were far from passive or content to stay in the shadows. Their lives were rich and complex and their motivations were multi-levelled. Individual experiences of family and life course varied. Some women emerged as leaders, others were followers. Some provided material means, others provided vision and labour. Through shared gender and class identities however, these women forged bridges across ethnic and religious divides that provided them with influence and power in Montreal and beyond. Out of their identity as mothers they created an important and influential role for themselves first in charity and philanthropy and eventually in overt politics. That their world was larger than just their homes or their city is clearly evidenced in the ease with which they travelled beyond Montreal and the ways they viewed their identity within national and international networks. Where these identities first took root, however, was in the home, the location of family and maternity, and in the home is where the thesis will begin.

## CHAPTER 2

### ‘N’OUBLIONS PAS QUE LA FAMILLE EST LE *ROYAUME* DE LA FEMME’: MARRIAGE, MATERNITY, AND THE HOME.

No, believe me, home will ever be our chosen kingdom,  
but we shall order our homes with greater wisdom, and  
truer love, and more steadfast principle, for taking a woman’s  
part in helping the great world out of the sins and distresses  
which make the day of its redemption seem to us still a vision  
that tarries and a day afar off.<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Historians have been quick to categorize most of the members of the early women’s movement as maternalists, igniting a fiery debate that has revolved around the relationship between maternalism and feminism.<sup>2</sup> The question has often been “is maternalism a form of feminism?”<sup>3</sup> While this is a valid and important question and one that will certainly be addressed in this dissertation, it fails to unpack maternalism as an actual lived experience. The question historians have not adequately addressed is “how did these women experience maternalism?” Ann Taylor Allen, in her latest study of motherhood in western Europe, has noted that “despite the central importance of [motherhood] to the history of women and of feminism, it has often been ignored by historians, who are usually most interested in women’s entry into new areas such as politics, the

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Drummond, “Address to the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894,” in *Some Addresses* (Montreal: The Gazette Printing Company, Ltd, 1907), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986); Karine Hébert, “Une Organisation Maternaliste: La fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste et la Lutte de Femmes pour le Droit de Vote,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française*, vol. 52, no. 3 (hiver 1999) : 315-344.

<sup>3</sup> In Quebec, the question has been most overtly posed by Yolande Cohen, Karine Hébert, and the Collectif Clio. Marie Lavigne, Yolande Pinard and Jennifer Stoddart, “La Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste et les revendications féministes au début du 20e siècle.” In Marie Lavigne and Yolande Pinard, ed. *Travailleuses et Féministes*, (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983), 199-216; Karine Hébert, “Une Organisation Maternaliste”, 1999; Micheline Dumont-Johnson et al, *L’Histoire des Femmes au Québec depuis Quatre siècles*. 2<sup>ième</sup> ed. (Montreal : Le Jour, 1991)

professions, sport, and social life outside the home.”<sup>4</sup> If historians are correct in their assertion that maternalists manoeuvred from the inside of a “separate spheres” social paradigm, then it should be of eminent importance to understand their experience therein. It was, after all, their identity as mothers (of their own children and of the race) that ushered them out of the “private” and into the “public” realm. Julia Parker Drummond articulated this in 1897 when she pointed to a woman’s love of home as the starting place for a woman’s role as social activist:

She who does not love her own with a special devotion, to whom her home, her own home, is not most sacred and most dear, can have but a shadowy realization of the wider human affections, for it is from the sense of the peculiar ties of the family that the sentiment of the universal brotherhood has sprung.<sup>5</sup>

It was this understanding of home and motherhood that underscored elite women’s transition into Montreal’s political and public worlds that existed outside of the home. Chapters four and five will consider this transitioning in greater detail by examining the argumentation and strategies employed by women in their philanthropic and political activities. This chapter is concerned primarily with the experiences of women in the home, which could, in and of themselves, be philanthropic and political in nature. It will explore both the ideology and experience of elite motherhood in turn-of-the-century Montreal. The home served equally as the physical and the metaphorical location of femininity and motherhood. It was in the home that women were first exposed as children to

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<sup>4</sup> Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890-1970* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Julia Drummond, "1897 – Third Annual Meeting of the Local Council of Women", *Some Addresses*, 49.

the cultural expectations of femininity and motherhood and it was in the home that women as adults accepted, rejected, shaped, and re-created their own versions of femininity and motherhood.

Therefore, this chapter will examine the home and family life of Montreal's elite activists, keeping in mind that the home was a contested space, where public and private, secular and sacred, personal and communal, masculine and feminine, tragedy and happiness intersected. The home will be explored – both as a physical space and as an ideological construct. In the first section, the homes of Montreal's elite social activists will be considered as lived-in spaces. What were the physical surroundings of these women like? How did their homes reflect their understanding of society and their role in that society? Descriptions of the houses, though very important, only partially reveal the experience of living in the home and in order to understand more fully how women experienced the home, it is integral to examine their engagements therein. While I question the social and moral aspects of the home, I am especially interested in the way the space of the home could be positioned as a political space. In what ways did women use and re-conceive the space of the home in order to create a political and powerful role in society and in what ways did they express their identity as citizens in the home? In other words, what kind of political identity did women create and claim in the context of their home that they extended outside the home? The home carried crucial meanings beyond the physical walls of the building. It informed both the discourse and the behaviour of these women, providing a framework for activism that was acceptable and compelling to society at large. Both by being confined by and by themselves reinforcing the complex codes of

elite propriety that accompanied their social position, the home became an important symbol for elite social activists seeking to extend their influence.

## THE HOME

At the end of the summer of 1898, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand and Raoul Dandurand moved with their daughter Gabrielle and two live-in servants to 914 Sherbrooke Street.<sup>6</sup> Previously living in various rental properties on the outskirts of the Square Mile, this move solidified their status as wealthy, influential (elite) Montrealers. This migration across the city was part of a larger pattern evident among many other elite families in Montreal, where upward social mobility was physically replicated in the housing situations of the growing upper class.

All the female activists composing this study lived in relative or abundant comfort though not all had begun their married lives in this fashion. The upper-class was a growing phenomenon in Montreal and many of the women had married men who were still consolidating both their financial and social affluence. For the most part, these socially mobile families lived in a series of increasingly large rental properties, culminating in the purchase of a large home in the Square Mile. Tracing their moves across the city of Montreal, a north-westerly pattern (with some variation) emerges. Raoul and Joséphine Dandurand, for example, originally lived in the modest Dandurand family home at 43 Beaver Hall Hill with Raoul's widowed mother. In 1890, the family moved for a short time to Mackay

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<sup>6</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, 10 octobre 1898, *Journal intime, 1879-1900*, (Lachine : les éditions de la pleine lune, 2000), 219.

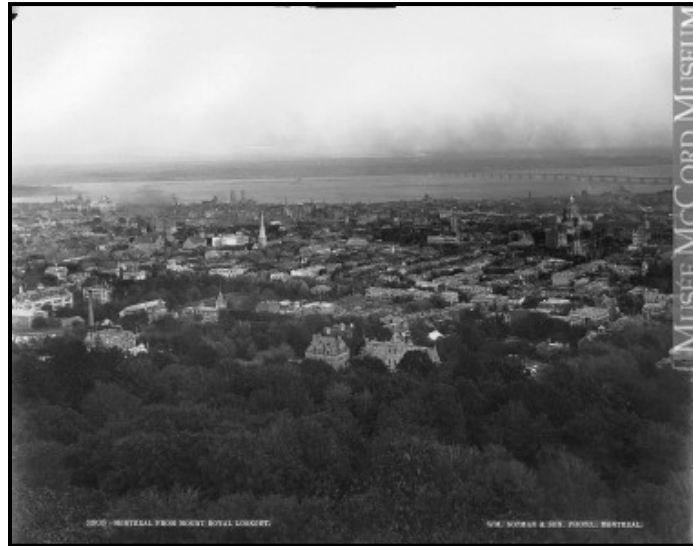
Street before settling at 34 Berri Street in 1892. In 1895 the family moved to 29 Bishop Street, in 1896 to 130 Crescent Street, and finally settling for the last time at their Sherbrooke Street house in 1898.<sup>7</sup> Katie Samuel DeSola's and Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie's families carved similar lines across the city, both eventually settling on Sherbrooke Street just west of University Street.

Montreal, like countless other cities, was initially built along its primary waterway, the St. Lawrence River. As the population grew and wealth increased, the city expanded. The wealthy moved to what were then suburbs, the side of Mount Royal. Known as St. Antoine Ward or the Square Mile, elite and middle-class families had been moving into this suburban neighbourhood located northwest of the city centre since the mid-1800s. During the late nineteenth century, Montreal gave birth to a new class of increasingly wealthy residents who were deriving their fortunes from profitable fur trading, transportation, natural resource extraction, production and banking. Roderick MacLeod has convincingly argued that the construction of the Square Mile (also known as the Golden Square Mile in some histories), was a physical symbol of class formation: "To live high above the city, away from its clutter and noise, in a spot with clean air, rolling grounds, and a beautiful view, had always been a mark of social and economic achievement."<sup>8</sup> Residents were literally "moving up", with Mount Royal providing an appropriate topographical setting.

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<sup>7</sup> The *Lovell's City Directories* provide a way to track individuals and families within the city of Montreal. This is a very rich tool but can only be used as such when the Head of household is both known and visible to city authorities.

<sup>8</sup> Roderick MacLeod, "The Road to Terrace Bank: Land Capitalization, Public Space, and the Redpath Family Home, 1837-1861." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* Vol.14 (2003), 165-166.



*Montreal from Mount Royal lookout, QC, about 1890*  
 Wm. Notman & Son  
 VIEW-2505  
 © McCord Museum

As the jewel of the Square Mile, Sherbrooke Street was a wide, tree-lined avenue. What one saw immediately upon looking at the street was a statement of wealth and power. While Dorchester Boulevard had been the first of the prestigious Square Mile streets, Sherbrooke Street was firmly positioned as the crown jewel by the turn of the century. The avenue of tall trees, palatial houses, and wrought iron gates was more than a place to live – it was a place to assert wealth, power and control. This phenomenon, well-studied by others, is especially significant in the “New World” where old family money was virtually non-existent. Generally considered the nexus of Anglophone Quebec, the Square Mile was home to families controlling approximately 70 percent of Canada’s wealth.<sup>9</sup> While historians have noted the presence of non-Anglophone elites, Francophone and Jewish families living in the Square Mile have remained largely

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<sup>9</sup> Roderick MacLeod, “Salubrious Settings and Fortunate Families: the Making of Montreal’s Golden Square Mile, 1840-1895” (Thesis (PhD) McGill University, 1997), 1.

invisible. It is my contention that this ethnic diversity was an important component in the creation of a social class, and more specifically, that it shaped and was shaped by the activism of Montreal's elite women in profound ways, a theme that will recur throughout this study.



*Sherbrooke Street, Montreal, QC, about 1900*  
 George Barrat & Son  
 MP-0000.1912  
 © McCord Museum

There were, of course, elite families that lived outside of the Square Mile. A large population of wealthy Francophone families settled in the east end, clustering around Berri, St. Denis, and St. Hubert Streets. The Lacoste family was one such francophone establishment family that did so, with the family home located on St. Hubert Street. Yet, while the family had local neighbourhood connections, much of its formal socializing took place in the Square Mile and focused on Sherbrooke Street. With the Lacoste family's increasing engagement in and belonging to elite Montreal circles, the next generation of Lacoste children ended up settling in the Square Mile, with Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie moving onto Sherbrooke Street itself upon her marriage to Henri Gérin-Lajoie.



As François Rémillard notes in his study of Montreal's Square Mile, the neighbourhood's domestic architecture was an eclectic mix of styles including Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Scottish Baronial, Richardsonian Romanesque, Beaux-Arts and English Renaissance revival.<sup>10</sup> Hiring architects primarily from Britain, but also from the United States, Europe and eventually Canada, residents of the Square Mile mimicked, integrated, and adapted international architectural trends, a pattern that echoed the process of class-formation that took place in Montreal and Canada at large.



*George A. Drummond House (right hand side)  
Sherbrooke Street from Drummond Street,  
Montreal, QC, about 1890  
Wm. Notman & Son  
VIEW-2524  
© McCord Museum*

With a move into the Square Mile, families were ushered into the world of elite social customs and display that were as adopted and adapted from other places as their homes. Their houses, which were designed to impress, attracted attention from their neighbours and from visitors to the neighbourhood. The

<sup>10</sup> For a full description of these styles, see: François Rémillard, *Mansions of the Gold Square Mile, 1850-1930* (Montreal: Meridian Press, 1987), 34-41.

Drummond house attracted immediate international attention as well. The *Canadian Architect and Builder* followed its development: “Mr. A.T. Taylor is engaged on a large residence for Hon. Geo. Drummond, on Sherbrooke St., which is of a very high order of design. This house...ought to convince any impartial mind that there is no absolute necessity for importing foreign talent.”<sup>11</sup>

With these mansions and bastions of display came an immense social responsibility. The bigger and more ornate the house, the more social obligation there was for its inhabitants. Moving from less grand surroundings into these new social obligations did, at times, cause some anxiety for new Square Mile residents. Joséphine Marchand Dandurand recorded the move in her journal with some trepidation:

Nous habitons le numéro 914 , rue Sherbrooke; pour longtemps, j’espère! Notre nid est gentil, peut-être pas banal, ce qui fait dire à quelques-uns, peu habitués à l’originalité, qu’il est *superbe*. Y serons-nous plus heureux qu’avant ?...Notre vie, dans une maison plus grande, est plus compliquée; par conséquent, plus sujette aux tracasseries domestiques, dont l’influence assombrit pourtant la sérénité du ciel conjugal.<sup>12</sup>

Nowhere else were the social obligations related to life in the Square Mile as acute as in the Drummond house. The Drummond home, designed by Andrew T. Taylor (cousin to George Alexander Drummond), dominated the corner of Sherbrooke Street and Metcalfe Street. Its castle-like appearance, a carefully planned exhibition of wealth, power, good taste, and imperial extension was built beginning in 1888. George Alexander Drummond had lived in a smaller house just east of the new mansion with his first wife and seven children. His marriage

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<sup>11</sup> *Canadian Architect and Builder*, January 1889, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, 10 octobre, 1898, *Journal intime, 1879-1900* (Lachine : les éditions de la pleine lune, 2000), 219.

to Julia Parker (Hamilton) in 1884 coincided with his solidification as one of Montreal's most prominent businessmen. As the President of the Montreal Board of Trade, the Vice-President and later President of the Bank of Montreal, and a newly appointed senator, Drummond's move to the new house in 1890 was more than just a move of one hundred metres west, it was a testament and reinforcement of his family's mounting status. Four stories tall with turrets topped by gargoyles and finials, the mansion towered over the former Drummond house.



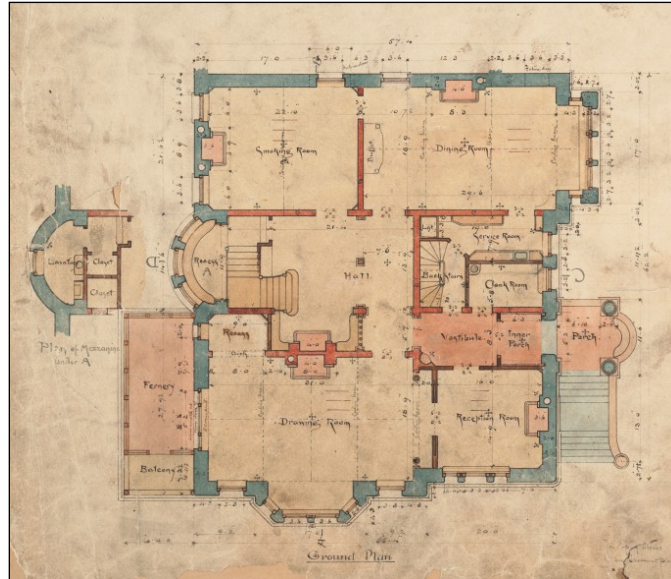
*Hon. George Drummond's house*  
*Sherbrooke Street, Montreal, QC, 1891*  
 Wm. Notman & Son  
 VIEW-2458  
 © McCord Museum

As in most homes large and extravagant enough to permit such distancing, elite homes in Montreal were physically divided into rooms and areas based on

gender, class, age and even religion in some cases.<sup>13</sup> The floor plans of the Drummond house indicate that there were seven bedrooms for domestic staff divided between the basement and the attic of the home and one more in the coach house. Most of the work involved in running the household took place in the basement which housed the kitchen, scullery, laundry rooms, store rooms and wine cellar and was accessed probably exclusively by domestic employees. The main floor, on the other hand, was designed to impress the most discerning of guests. Upon entering the house one would walk up the twelve outside steps, through the outdoor porch, the main door, the inner porch into the vestibule where the cloak room was located on the right hand side and the reception room on the left hand side. Stepping into the hall, one was presented with an open space robed in rich, dark wood panelling allowing a view up the staircase to the fourth floor. The large dining and drawing rooms were for lavish entertaining, with huge fireplaces and one of Montreal's most sophisticated art collections adorning the walls. A smoking room was located at the rear of the dining room, conveniently located for male smoking sessions after meals, while women traditionally moved to the drawing room or parlour. Located to the rear of the drawing room was a long fernery leading to an outdoor porch at the south-west corner of the house.

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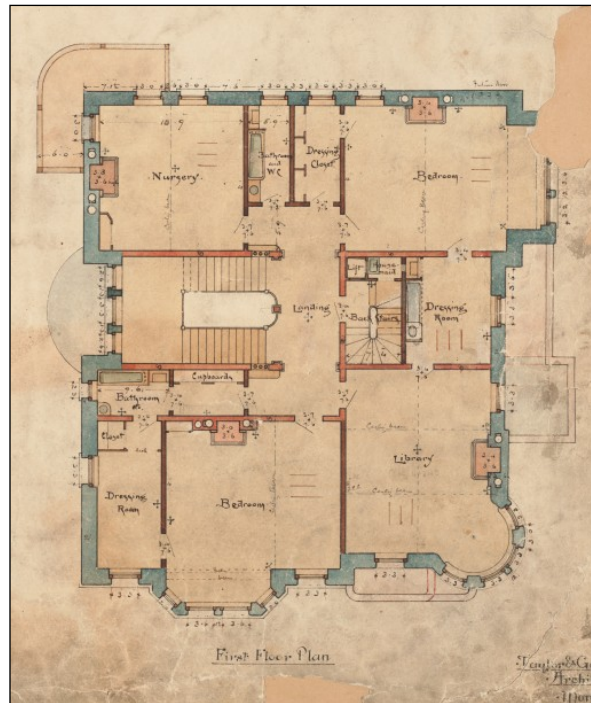
<sup>13</sup> The following description is based on a reading of the architectural plans of the house as well as photographs and various descriptions found in newspapers and journals. Very brief descriptions of the house are also found in the diary of Amy Redpath Roddick.



Drummond House: Ground Floor<sup>14</sup>  
 Taylor and Gordon, Accession #7  
 Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University

On the second floor were two bedrooms (his and hers) which sat in opposite corners of the house, both bedrooms accessible through the library (via dressing rooms), located in a third corner of the house, allowing for private entering and exiting of the rooms. Each bedroom had an accompanying bathroom. A large nursery occupied the fourth corner of the floor surrounded by a veranda. The third floor was comprised of seven bedrooms for children, guests and long-term residents, one bathroom, and several closets, including a cedar closet. Along with bedrooms for domestic employees on the fourth floor was an enormous lumber room (or storage area) and a stairway to the roof. Two separate staircases connected the floors, one for staff and one for the family and guests. While the staff stairway went from basement to attic, the formal staircase only connected the first to third floors, physically reinforcing the class division within the house.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 2 for larger copies of the Drummond House plans.

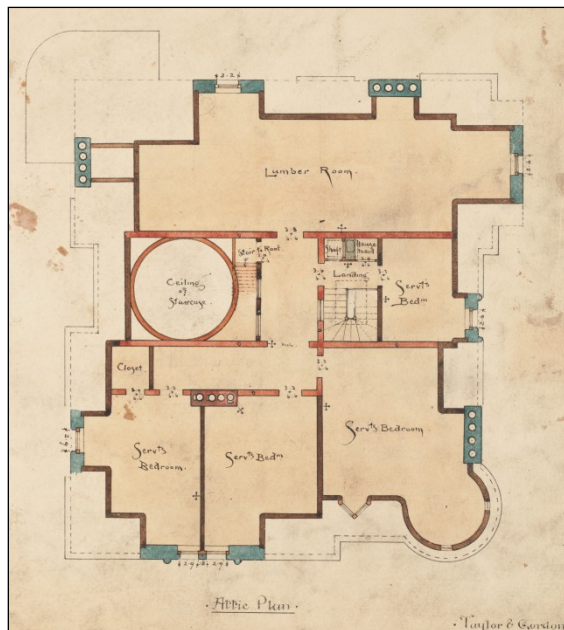


Drummond House: First Floor  
 Taylor and Gordon, Accession #7  
 Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University



Drummond House: Second Floor  
 Taylor and Gordon, Accession #7  
 Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University





Drummond House: Attic  
Taylor and Gordon, Accession #7  
Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University



Drummond House: Basement  
Taylor and Gordon, Accession #7  
Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University

The Drummond house, impressive in location and design was neither the largest nor the most elaborate of the elite homes in Montreal. Mary Van Horne and Adaline Hurd Van Horne lived several blocks to the west also on Sherbrooke

Street at Stanley Street. Upon their move to Montreal from the United States, the Van Horne family originally lived in a duplex (though the term duplex could be deceiving in this case for it was an elaborate duplex) located on Dorchester Boulevard, a house that was sold to Thomas Shaughnessy when the Van Horne's made the move up to Sherbrooke Street.<sup>15</sup> Referring to the first house in a letter to her father from Berlin, Adaline Van Horne Jr, makes the following observation: "I have seen no house or palace in Europe which compares to yours in beauty and elegance and where in every detail are evidences of a perfect and cultivated taste."<sup>16</sup> The second home, previously owned by John Hamilton, (evidence that the Van Horne's were members of the "second generation" of elite families in Montreal), was renovated and expanded to include fifty-two rooms. According to Donald Mackay, Van Horne is reported as having told the New York architect Bruce Price that he liked his homes "fat and bulgy like myself."<sup>17</sup> Though less obviously mimicking a castle in external appearance than the Drummond home, the home was a masterpiece nonetheless. The many interior photographs provide glimpses of life within the extravagant home. Elaborate rooms with the tallest of ceilings, ornate wood panelling and an eclectic assortment of furnishings from all corners of the globe provided the setting for the extensive entertaining of the railway baron and his family. An extraordinary art collection adorned the walls and was famed throughout Montreal and Canada as one of the best in the new

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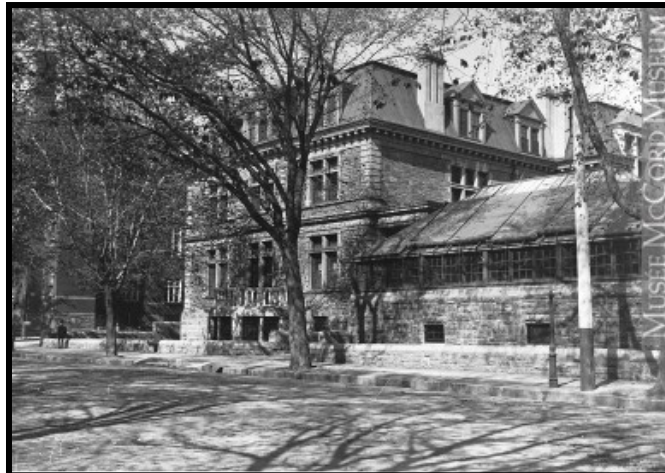
<sup>15</sup> This home, which was subsequently owned by Thomas Shaughnessy, is now part of the Centre Canadien d'architecture.

<sup>16</sup> Adaline Van Horne Jr. to William Van Horne, 1 April 1889, Correspondence, MG29 A60 Vol. 87, LAC.

<sup>17</sup> Donald Mackay, *The Square Mile: Merchant Princes of Montreal* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd, 1987), 141. This book provides delightful anecdotes about families, individuals and houses in the neighbourhood though it causes frustration for researchers by not including references.



world. Up and down Sherbrooke Street, impressive art collections were being accrued, combining to make Montreal an important hub in the world of art. The Van Horne house, one of the last Square Mile homes to be torn down in a flurry of controversy in 1973 was one example of a home being designed to fit its inhabitants' personalities.



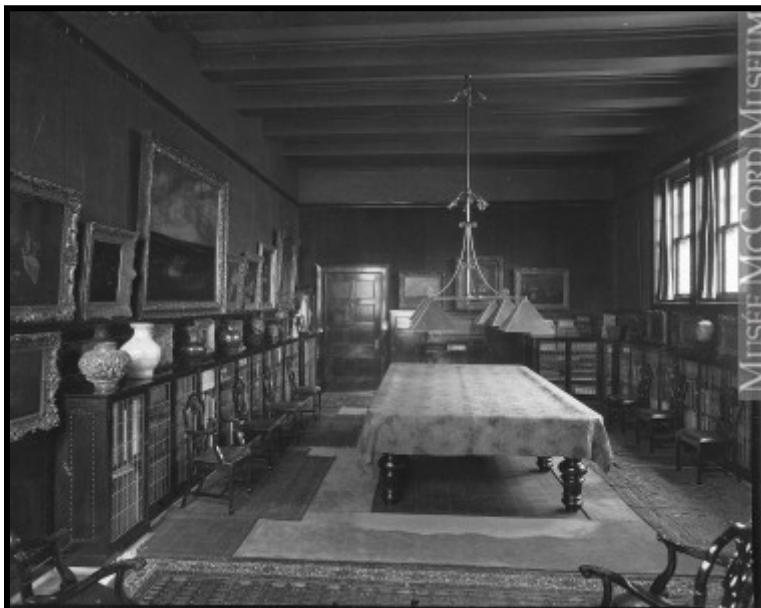
*Van Horne's house, Sherbrooke Street, Montreal, QC, about 1900*  
MP-0000.27.3 © McCord Museum



*Hallway, Van Horne house, Montreal, QC, 1920*  
Wm. Notman & Son  
VIEW-19337© McCord Museum



*Living room, Van Horne house, Montreal, QC, 1920*  
 Wm. Notman & Son  
 VIEW-19338© McCord Museum



*Billiard room, Van Horne house, Montreal, QC, 1920*  
 Wm. Notman & Son  
 VIEW-19336© McCord Museum

In a similar mimicry of its inhabitants' personality was the house of Clarence Isaac and Belle Goldsmith DeSola. Cyril Yaldwyn of the *Montreal Herald*

described the house in a 1913 article: “Montreal boasts many a proud mansion, charming villa and cosy cottage, but it certainly has nothing in the home line more beautiful and entrancing, and so absolutely unique, as the delightful home of Monsieur and Madame de Sola at 594 Pine avenue.”<sup>18</sup> Built later than the others, the DeSola house towered over Sherbrooke Street from the upper vantage point of Pine Avenue. Having been the first to purchase land from the Redpath family after the break-up of the family estate known as Terrace Bank in 1910, Clarence DeSola, looked not to his neighbours for architectural inspiration but rather to a by-gone era that stirred his own personal imagination:

I had long formed fixed ideas as to the characteristics which were to distinguish my house and I was determined that it should bear the impress of my own personality. I wished to make it such a house as a Sephardic might have lived in when the Sephardim were at the height of their power in Spain, and I wanted to make it oriental. So I selected the Saracenic architecture of Andalusia, the luxuriant art of Southern Spain, as best fitted for my purpose and developed my ideas on that basis.<sup>19</sup>

The execution of this vision, which was clearly designed both to fit into the elite world by the mere nature of its size and grandeur but also to set apart this family as different and separate due to the remarkably unique architectural style, was far more complicated than he could have imagined originally. After finding an architect who could adequately adopt his vision for a Spanish villa, there came the very real problem of designing a Spanish-style villa that could withstand and support the climate of Montreal.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the property itself was staged on

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<sup>18</sup> "Oriental Home of Mr. de Sola: House of Hebraic and Saracenic Design on Pine Avenue", *Montreal Herald*, 19 Oct, 1913.

<sup>19</sup> CI Desola Diary, 14 May 1913.

<sup>20</sup> DeSola hired architect Charles Jewitt Saxe who was in a partnership with John Smith Archibald at the time. Saxe was also responsible for the design of the Montefiore Club.

the side of Mount Royal and required deep excavation to solidly perch the house on this kind of gradient.<sup>21</sup> The final result was an impressive display both of social status and religious heritage. Being committed to fitting into Montreal's elite social class, Clarence and Belle DeSola did so not at the cost of their religion but by reinforcing memories (whether created or real) of a golden age of Sephardic culture.

While the initial vision for the Spanish-inspired mansion clearly originated with Clarence DeSola, he was careful to give credit to his wife Belle Goldsmith DeSola for her role in the planning, altering, and final execution of the plans. On a consistent basis, the husband and wife made trips to the building site in the evenings to watch as the plans progressed. While Clarence was intimately involved with every detail of the building, so too was Belle DeSola. Her comments seem to have been taken seriously and her tastes taken into account. She accompanied Clarence to the architect's office to discuss alterations and changes as they came up. "Belle and I were most of the morning at Saxe and Archibald's office arranging certain modifications to our Pine Ave house...."<sup>22</sup> Clarence also credited Belle with having many "excellent suggestions regarding several features which were adopted."<sup>23</sup> When it came to decoration and the placement of furniture, Clarence handed over the reins to Belle. Though he thought the process of furnishing and decorating the home to be progressing

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<sup>21</sup> Clarence's diary recorded the day he and his builders realized they would have to dig out an extra level beneath the kitchen, providing the house with not one but two levels of sub-basement to be used for storage in order to reach the rock bed. The trick was to make sure the main level lined up with Pine Avenue so that the main entrance maintained its prestige and accessibility. 5 May 1911, Diary entry, Clarence and Meldola DeSola. P1064, CJCCC National Archives

<sup>22</sup> Clarence DeSola Diary, 1 November 1911.

<sup>23</sup> Clarence DeSola Diary, 14 May 1913

slowly, Clarence commented more than once on Belle's thorough commitment to the work: "With Belle at Hees's a greater part of the day selecting portiers, curtains, wall hangings, and furnishings for some of our rooms...The other work is nearly finished but there is a lot of furnishing yet to be done."<sup>24</sup>

This sizeable mansion, ushering in another wave of moving further up the mountain, totalled eight stories. From its clay-tiled roof with square tower to its balconies and ornate Spanish-inspired mouldings, the DeSola house was hard to miss in the Square Mile landscape. It was a careful symbol of both affluence and the established position of Orthodox Judaism within Montreal's elite world. The DeSola's saw their house as more than a mere social statement, however. Their house and their practices within the house were arranged around the central tenets of their faith and religious culture. Nearly a year after moving into the house, Clarence's brother Meldola oversaw the official dedication of the house (Chinuch) and this commitment to maintaining the house in the strictest of Orthodox Jewish traditions continued throughout their tenure there.<sup>25</sup>

Religion was very frequently woven into the fabric of the homes adorning Sherbrooke Street, with religious themes, artwork, sculpture and readings surely to be found there. While most of the houses did not set aside specific space within the house as "sacred" space, there were exceptions to this. As devout Roman Catholics, Louis-Joseph Forget and his wife Maria Raymond Forget

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<sup>24</sup> Clarence DeSola Diary, 17 December 1913

<sup>25</sup> Clarence DeSola Diary, 21 December 1913

carefully planned an addition to their Sherbrooke Street home in 1902<sup>26</sup> Placed at the back of their house and still present today was a small, consecrated chapel where the couple practiced their lived religion from the comfort of their own home. Their spiritual practices were so entrenched in their daily living that they desired a sacred space within the walls of their home, creating a spiritual intimacy that would have been hard to create elsewhere. While religion and spirituality were integrated in other ways elsewhere, both the DeSola and the Forget houses intended for religion to play a central role, both as displayed publicly and in private practice.

Elite houses were divided into feminine and masculine spaces, which were also constructed along class lines. For example, wives and husbands most often had separate bedrooms and bathrooms. They might each have had separate dressing rooms as in the case of the Drummonds. On the main floor too, houses were divided into feminine and masculine space. Parlours were the generally the domain of women, while smoking rooms were where men retreated after dinners and in the evenings. Parlours were often the most “feminine” in their decoration while smoking rooms were often darker and designed around what were considered male entertainments such as billiards or other similar games. These were the divisions by gender as experienced by the family of owners. However, there were divisions by gender for the domestic habitants of the house as well. The kitchen, laundry and scullery were usually feminine spaces with traditionally female domestic employees labouring there. Bedrooms for the domestic

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<sup>26</sup> To see plans and photographs of the renovation see *The Architecture of Edward and W. S. Maxwell: The Canadian Legacy*, “Hon. L.J. Forget House, Additions and Alterations, 1902.” Available at the Canadian Architecture Collection of McGill University.

employees too were divided by gender, with single employees likely sharing bedrooms with other same-gendered employees.

The houses of the Square Mile were homes that were designed to be displayed. Their owners, architects, builders and tradesmen cooperated in the act of class reinforcement by adding brick and mortar to the very real class formation that was taking place in Montreal. Simply inhabiting one of these bastions of prestige and *richesse*, however, was not enough to maintain one's social status. There was a complex social regime that depended necessarily on having the physical space to conduct these social rituals and the symbolism that accompanied that space. In keeping with the current social rituals, elite families entertained frequently in a continual cycle of reciprocation. The entertainments varied from the modest euchre luncheon to elaborate multi-course dinner parties and balls. The houses themselves featured very prominently in the types and quality of entertainments that could be executed. Amy Redpath Roddick, niece to George Drummond, recorded the following in her diary in 1899: "Musical at the Drummonds in the evening to which Cliff & I & Alice went. A most delightful evening. I should think some two hundred there...I remained on the outskirts, thus moving about & talking to many. The house is such a fine one for entertaining, the pictures an endless source of interest."<sup>27</sup> A simple, mid-week event at the Drummonds, therefore, involved hundreds of guests and became one more display of their social position.

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<sup>27</sup> Amy Redpath Roddick, Personal Diary, 19 January 1899, Rare Books McGill University, MSS 659. Mary Van Horne recorded this same event in her diary, also drawing attention to the art: "Addie and I went to a musical in the evening at Senator Drummond's. Saw the new Van Dyke and Velasquez." 19 January 1899, LAC, MG29 A60 Vol. 96.

Other events in the Square Mile were more elaborately planned, taking weeks of preparation. Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie's description of a grand fête at Lord Strathcona's house demonstrates the intricate play of social ritual, physical space, and wealth:

Ce soir nous allons à une grande fête donnée pour le Congrès Medical par Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal... Les jardins illuminés de lumières électriques a different couleurs produisaient un effet moyigne(sic). Des tentes avaient été dressées dans plusieurs parties. La maison s'était ni plus ni moins qu'un palais. Il y avait là le Gouverneur général Lord Aberdeen, le Lieutenant Gouverneur Chapleau et Lady Chapleau...J'ai reçu bon nombre de connaissances ce qui nous a fait passer une agréable soirée.<sup>28</sup>

More than just big houses, the homes of elite Montrealers served to display wealth and social prominence, they provided a physical location for the playing out of social rituals, and they physically reinforced class formation, bridging (some) ethnic and religious divides while highlighting a shared class experience.

## **WOMEN AS WIVES**

Serving as testaments of the rising status of Montreal's elite families, the mansions of the Square Mile witnessed the day-to-day playing out of elite female identity. Because elite social practices dictated that women spent most of their time in their own homes or the homes of other women, the home was a location of female identity in a very particular way. Returning to the initial goal of unpacking the maternalism of elite women through an examination of their activities within, their relationships to, and their thinking about the home, the following sections will explore the role of women first as wives, then as mothers, as house managers,

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<sup>28</sup> Marie Globensky Lacoste, Journal intime, 1 septembre 1897, ANQM, P76/7 12.8q



and finally as social hosts. At the core of this examination is an attempt to problematize power relations. Did women, in fact, have and exercise power and authority within the home? What were the tensions surrounding authority and how did women deal with these tensions?

While the rhetoric of both men and women tended to grant authority to the male head of household, authority was not as neatly distributed as might be expected. Men and women often shared, over-rode, and yielded authority to their spouses, families, and, in some cases, staff members. In some cases, the obvious reason was that there was no clear head of household. In such families, husbands or fathers were deceased or, as in the case of Mary Van Horne prior to her move into her brother William's home, some unmarried women lived without a male family member. Sibling relationships also provided a complicated division of authority and power. Before her later marriage to Thomas Roddick, Amy Redpath Roddick shared a house with her ailing mother and four brothers who moved in and out depending on circumstance. Amy served in many capacities as the head of household despite the fact that she was both a woman and a daughter. She was, however, tied to this role of house manager and family protector until the death of her mother, two of her brothers, and her eventual marriage to Thomas Roddick. Another reason for the sharing of authority within the home, more delicate in its construction and manifestation was found in the rhetoric of separate spheres itself endorsed by both men and women of the era. The separate spheres paradigm constructed a barrier between the "private" and the "public" realms and relegated women to the private sphere and men to the public sphere. In so doing, the establishment of females in authority within the home

was solidified. The irony of this set-up was, of course, that elite women found and exercised extensive authority within these patriarchal visions of marriage and family within their homes, and that these homes were, in fact, far more “public” than the simplistic private/public rhetoric acknowledged.

While not all women began their lives as chatelaines at the point of marriage, most did and therefore marriage is central to understanding relationships within and to the home. Historians of the early women’s movement in Britain, France, Germany, the United States, and elsewhere have noted the central role of marriage for women at the end of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries. In an age of strong societal pressure to marry, women from all classes existed in a world where it was assumed that marriage marked the “natural” commencement of womanhood. Historian Philippa Levine summarized it this way: “Marriage, for the nineteenth-century woman, was perhaps the single most profound and far-reaching institution that would affect the course of her life...Class position aside, marriage had a far greater effect on the lives of women than of men, and the pressures for women to marry were correspondingly far greater than those brought to bear upon men.”<sup>29</sup> In studying “first-wave feminism”, historians have not always agreed on the specific experience of marriage for feminists. In turn, historians have argued that feminists avoided marriage, glorified marriage, and rejected marriage as an institution. Many of the histories written in the 1980s presented single women as “the backbone of the feminist movement in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century”,

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<sup>29</sup> Philippa Levine, “‘So Few Prizes and So Many Blanks’: Marriage and Feminism in Later Nineteenth-Century England.” *Journal of British Studies* 28 (April 1989): 150.

often overlooking the presence of married women in similar organizations.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the initial understanding of the early women's movement positioned single women as "feminist" and assumed that marriage meant (more or less) the end of political and social activism for women, who would logically be busy with marital and maternal responsibilities. This discourse, therefore, also neglected to consider marriage and motherhood in discussions of ideology and motivation in the women's movement. When historians' attention focused on the social purity and moral reform movements, married women emerged as primary actors. As a result historians repositioned marriage and motherhood as primary subjects of study.<sup>31</sup>

The only book-length study in Canada of the subject of courtship and marriage, Peter Ward's work outlined (to some extent) the patterns of practices adopted in English Canada during the nineteenth century (despite the fact that his main case study is of the courtship between a French-Canadian woman and an Irish-French Canadian man!)<sup>32</sup> Ward has argued that society had a vested interest in the intimate or private practice of courtship because courtship led to marriage, marriage typically led to the creation of a family, and the family was the base unit of society – that which underscored the vitality of society. His case studies show that "elaborate public constraints hedged them in while they pursued their private

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<sup>30</sup> Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality, 1880-1930* (London: Pandora Press, 1985), 86. A similar stipulation was made by Judith Walkowitz in *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) and by Ruth Freeman and Patricia Klaus, "Blessed or Not? The New Spinster in England and the United States in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Family History*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1984): 394-414.

<sup>31</sup> For a Canadian example see Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991).

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation-Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008) is a recent example of the impact of marriage on one portion of the country and the ways marriage intersected with ideas of nation and empire.

interests,” and that religion, specifically Christianity, provided the context for marriage.<sup>33</sup> Ward’s study lays the groundwork for further examination of these complex social arrangements but this chapter, while taking the rituals under examination, will save a full-fledged study of elite courtship practices for another venue, instead questioning the impact of marriage on the identity and activism of elite women.

Although there are examples of what can be considered “traditional” courtships, such as the first example of Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, other relationships demonstrate that there was, in fact, no “typical” relationship among elite couples. Elite women in Montreal experienced late marriage, childless marriage, second marriage, short and long marriage, intimate marriage, and seemingly distant marriage. While there was no exact marriage mould, no cookie-cutter definition of the experience of marriage, there were some common features. In the examples that follow, it is clear that marriages were much larger than the union of two individuals – they, in fact, united families, fortunes, and commercial empires and as such, were shaped by external factors. As part of the process of defining elite culture, marriage provided continuity of family lines and the cementing of elite social conventions. Second, there is evidence that romantic love seems to have been an important factor in bringing couples to the point of marriage though romantic love was not always confined to marital unions. Third, women tended to describe marriage as the commencement of their lives as “women”, directing us to question the relationship of femininity, matrimony, and

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<sup>33</sup> Peter Ward, *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 169.

maternity. Finally, relationships tend to be described by women in patriarchal terms, assuming leadership and submissive roles for men and women respectively and highlighting the complementary ideal of marital unions. Observations of marriage practices suggest that the practice did not always imitate the discourse, however. This complex interplay of femininity, marriage, and maternity was negotiated most importantly within the home. Although there were “public” displays of these identities and although these identities were shaped by society at large, the home, in its allocation as the “private sphere” and hence, female space, was where the practices of femininity, marriage and maternity emerged and, therefore, the experience of courtship and marriage is the place to begin in understanding this threefold expression of womanhood. Respectable maternity could only be found within respectable marriage and respectable marriage could only be the result of a respectable courtship.

Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, having one of the most traditional courtships of the women in this study, left a long record of the development of her relationship with Raoul Dandurand in her *journal intime*. As a young woman, Marchand Dandurand frequently mentioned her apprehensions about marriage, not wanting to fall into it as a matter of course. Receiving her first marriage proposal in 1879 at the age of seventeen from a “vieux célibataire”, Joséphine Dandurand recorded in passing her quick dismissal of the proposal noting that “[j]e n’ai pas brisé son coeur, car le vieux célibataire, enfant d’Albion, d’une nature peu impressionable, est retourné à Hamilton où il trouvera peut-être des

coeurs plus sensible."<sup>34</sup> Wanting desperately to avoid the sentimentality of childish love and the capriciousness of her own emotions, Marchand Dandurand recorded in almost every diary entry between 1879 and 1886 thoughts on meaningful marriage. Expressing hope for the existence of romantic love while tempering this notion with a mature understanding of the challenges of marriage, she outlined her ideal marriage partner in August 1879: "Brun ou blond, peu m'importe pourvu qu'il ait des traits passables, des yeux expressifs, l'air distingué et un caractère parfaitement honorable."<sup>35</sup>

In his memoirs, Raoul Dandurand relates his impressions of the couple's first encounter during the summer of 1882:

J'avais lu des articles et des chroniques signées du pseudonyme 'Josette', quand je fis la connaissance de leur auteur. Tout de suite, je m'aperçus qu'elle était très courant de tout ce qui concernait la France ; elle lisait, m'expliqua-t-elle, les journaux français que recevait son père, M. Marchand. Nous avions le même âge. Le côté sérieux de la vie l'intéressait beaucoup plus que toutes les distractions mondaines dont elle aurait pu profiter. Sa pensée était très personnelles, elle savait la défendre avec douceur, mais fermeté. Au premier abord, je la trouvai un peu froide, indifférente, mais je compris que cette apparente froideur n'était qu'une sage réserve, et qu'on ne pouvait l'approcher qu'avec déférence.<sup>36</sup>

This retelling years later by Raoul Dandurand highlights their compatibility as intellectual companions. But theirs was more than just an intellectual partnership – it was one carefully anointed by romance as well.

At the time Dandurand was a law student at Université Laval in Quebec City and Marchand Dandurand was living with her family in St. Jean writing

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<sup>34</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, *Journal intime*, 20 juillet 1879, 16-17.

<sup>35</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, *Journal intime*, 5 Août, 1879, 19.

<sup>36</sup> Raoul Dandurand, *Mémoires du sénateur Raoul Dandurand, 1861-1942* édité par Marcel Hamelin. (Québec : Presses de l'Université Laval, 1967), 47.

articles, plays, and stories for publication and private use. Their courtship took place over the subsequent three and a half years. In typical fashion, most of their encounters took place in the home – either the home of Marchand Dandurand’s family in St. Jean or at the homes of various friends and family in Montreal or Quebec City. There were several factors that delayed their engagement. Perhaps the most obvious obstacle was Dandurand’s schooling. Coming from a middle-class family, Raoul was required to earn a living for himself and his potential family. While the Marchand family lived an upper-class lifestyle in St. Jean, the inherited wealth was running dry. Joséphine and Raoul agreed that financial stability (though not necessary affluence) was a mandatory precondition for marriage.

As the relationship unfolded, Marchand Dandurand struggled to identify the veracity of her love for him and his for her, noting early in the relationship that: “Je sais qu’il m’admire; il paraît qu’il m’aime, mais je crois qu’on peut aimer beaucoup plus qu’il m’aime!”<sup>37</sup> Beyond love, Joséphine questioned their compatibility, acknowledging her youthfulness and her strong character. She believed that “il faut que le mari soit d’une bonté paternelle...[et] il soit le maître par droit d’aînesse d’abord, de supériorité d’intelligence, d’expérience et de mari (droit que donnent d’ailleurs l’Eglise et la loi)...”<sup>38</sup> and worried that her strong personality may conflict with that of any future husband. Joséphine frequently expressed her desire to become more submissive and sacrificial in her role as a wife. While she desired an intellectual partnership where she could share in the

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<sup>37</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, *Journal intime*, 18 janvier 1883, 34.

<sup>38</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, *Journal intime*, 14 octobre 1883, 51.

affairs of her husband, she argued that a wife “doit être sensible et dévouée, avec une confiance aveugle dans la sagesse et la loyauté de son mari.”<sup>39</sup> This was the same language she used to describe her quest for spiritual authenticity – submission, consecration, and total devotion to Christ. At the age of twenty-three years, Raoul Dandurand proposed to Joséphine and she agreed. Their married life officially began on 12 January 1885.

Julia Parker was married for the first time in 1879 at the age of eighteen to an Anglican priest from Quebec City – Reverend George Hamilton.<sup>40</sup> Hamilton was evidently of very poor health and after their wedding in England, the couple moved to southern Europe in order to benefit from the mild weather.

Unfortunately, the weather did not prove to be the cure and Hamilton died less than a year into the marriage leaving Parker a widow at the age of nineteen. Little evidence of this short marriage remains and therefore it is difficult to ascertain the nature of the relationship. Parker returned to Canada, however, and after an appropriate time of mourning, met George Drummond, himself a widower.

According to family lore, the couple met on the train between Montreal and Quebec City, though it is probable that they knew of each other before, at least by reputation.<sup>41</sup> The courtship appears to have taken place quickly and without a great deal of publicity. The affection between the two of them seems to have surprised Drummond and he felt keenly a need to hold onto this second chance at love:

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<sup>39</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, *Journal intime*, 14 octobre 1883, 51.

<sup>40</sup> Henry Morgan, *Types of Canadian Women Past and Present Vol I* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1903).

<sup>41</sup> Both Patrick Stoker and Bruce McNiven, heirs of the Drummond family, related this version of the story.



My darling -- my soul doth indeed hold her constant so  
 absolute that I feel as if envious fate must have some rebuff  
 in store -- but let us hope that the special provenance which  
 has drawn us together will not desert us in the inevitable  
 storms of life.  
 Your own loving George.<sup>42</sup>

Drummond and Parker Drummond probably did not have the same anxieties as Marchand Dandurand expressed in her journal, having both been married previously. However, there were other hurdles to overcome. Drummond's first wife had died one year earlier (April 30, 1883), leaving him the sole parent of seven children.<sup>43</sup> Three of these sons still lived with Drummond on Sherbrooke Street. The reconstituted family of the nineteenth century, as Peter Gossage has pointed out, could be just as tenuous in its reconstruction as it can be today<sup>44</sup>. Upon their official engagement, Drummond indicated in an emotional letter to Julia Parker that he was very anxious about revealing their relationship to his sons and the family of his first wife:

My blessed Darling...Last night I put the letter I had written to my eldest boy Maurice at St. Hughes where he went to get it early this morning. He breakfasts at 6.30 and when I met him at the Refinery at 9.30 he came forward at once, so frankly and so lovingly and spoke about it -- said he never anticipated such a thing, did not know you much but liked you and in short he took the news in a perfectly unprecedented manner for him --we kissed each other over the bargain -- which we have not done for ages...I have written to my two sisters in law (sic). Mrs. T. M. Taylor and Mrs. Redpath and that is the extent of my share of the inevitable disclosures. But the main thing is now assured -- a loving foothold

<sup>42</sup> Letter George Drummond to Julia Parker Hamilton, "First letter for dear 'pater' after our engagement" P015, box 2, File: George A., McCord Museum.

<sup>43</sup> Richard Feltoe, *A Gentleman of Substance: the Life and Legacy of John Redpath, 1796-1869* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc, 2004), 125.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Gossage, "Tangled Webs: Remarriage and Family Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Quebec", *Power, Place and Identity: Historical Studies of Social and Legal Regulation in Quebec* (Montreal: Montreal History Group, 1998).

in my house and I am well aware how all must follow.<sup>45</sup>

In the same letter, Drummond, thirty years Parker's senior, makes comic reference to their age difference, noting that Parker was closer in age to his sons than to himself: "He (Maurice) is coming to see you tonight but wants to come with me. I would much rather he and Hunt saw you alone -- for one reason among others that your Abigail will have her reason unsettled as to which of the trio you are really engaged to!"<sup>46</sup> A contract of marriage between Julia Parker and George Drummond was more than the joining of two individuals. It was, in reality, the reconfiguration of a family and Julia was becoming more than just a wife. She was also entering the role of step-mother. In finding a companion in George, Julia could hardly have been oblivious to his desire to find a maternal figure for his boys. For he wrote to her: "Now my darling can I bespeak a kiss for each of the boys -- not for myself oh no not for worlds but a good motherly kiss for each of them..."<sup>47</sup> Although the youngest child, Huntly, was already nineteen years old and hardly required the kind of care younger children would, the role of step-mother accompanied her marriage to George, a role she appeared to accept with grace and happiness.

On 16 October 1901, Belle Goldsmith married Clarence Isaac DeSola in an elaborate home wedding with all the customs and traditions of a full Orthodox Jewish wedding. The wedding, which was held at Belle's family home in Cleveland, was reported in the major papers of Cleveland, Montreal, and New

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<sup>45</sup> Letter George Drummond to Julia Parker Hamilton, "First letter for dear 'pater' after our engagement" P015, box 2, File: George A. McCord Museum.

<sup>46</sup> Letter George Drummond to Julia Parker Hamilton, "First letter for dear 'pater' after our engagement" P015, box 2, File: George A. McCord Museum.

<sup>47</sup> Letter George Drummond to Julia Parker Hamilton, "First letter for dear 'pater' after our engagement" P015, box 2, File: George A. McCord Museum.

York, and afforded significant space particularly in the Jewish press. Their courtship was significantly different from that of either the Marchand-Dandurands or the Parker-Drummonds. While both of those couplings also represented a shared ethnicity, language, and religion (though George Alexander Drummond did make the small shift from Presbyterianism to Anglicanism), in the relationship between Belle and Clarence, religion and ethnicity played a central role in both the founding and furthering of the relationship. With such a small Orthodox community in Montreal, and with such a prestigious social position to maintain (being heirs to the DeSola and Joseph legacies), Clarence and his brother Meldola both sought out marriage partners in the larger Orthodox communities both in North America and abroad. Meldola's marriage partner, Katherine Samuel, was the daughter of the rabbi of the Bayswater Synagogue in London, England. Very little exists in the record to describe the courtship between Katie and Meldola, though their marriage is recorded in *Heritage of a Patriach*.<sup>48</sup>

Of Clarence's courtship with Belle, there is a little more. The courtship was described as a whirlwind romance and seems to have been most approved of by the press: "Where the waves of the ocean roll upon the sandy beach at Atlantic City a romance of more than usual interest occurred a few weeks ago, when Miss Belle Maud Goldsmith, of this city (Cleveland), was wooed and won by Clarence I. De Sola, of Montreal."<sup>49</sup> Belle is reported to have caught Clarence's attention with a paper on educational work among young women she delivered at the

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<sup>48</sup> Anne Joseph, *Heritage of a Patriach: Canada's first Jewish Settlers and the Continuing Story of These Families in Canada*, (Sillery, Québec: Septentrion, 1995).

<sup>49</sup> 13 August 1901, "Wooed and Won at the Seaside", unnamed newspaper clipping, Clarence and Meldola DeSola. P1064, CJCCC National Archives.

Jewish Chautauqua in Atlantic City. Clarence was visiting the city on Zionist business and was introduced to Belle following her speech. The two spent two days with each other and at the end of the two days, a marriage proposal and acceptance was announced publicly.<sup>50</sup> Seemingly both companionate and passionate, this couple also provided appropriate social capital for each other. It is unclear if the meeting was planned or not. Belle, a university graduate and active organizer for Jewish women and the Jewish community in general, had the pedigree and wealth that complimented Clarence's comparable pedigree, education and organizational interests. They formed a powerhouse relationship that positioned Jewish Orthodoxy up front and centre and tied it to an elite lifestyle that was impressive not just in Montreal but in an international context.

On the opposite end of the scale in terms of length of courtship is that of Amy Redpath and Thomas George Roddick with a courtship that seems to have developed slowly over the course of more than ten years. Amy's diaries are full of references to visits from and to "Dr. R", the Redpath family physician. Ada Mills Redpath, Amy's mother, was perpetually ill over the course of the last decade of her life and required an immense amount of care, not just from Amy and her brothers, but also from Thomas Roddick and other doctors. It is unclear from the diaries when the relationship between Amy and Thomas became intimate but increasingly his visits seem to have been more for social reasons than for professional reasons. Amy had also become quite close with the "Misses Roddicks", Thomas' spinster sisters who lived with him in Montreal. Roddick

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. See also 12 August 1901, "They Met, They Loved, and They'll Wed." unmarked newspaper clipping, Clarence and Meldola DeSola. P1064, CJCCC National Archives

had been married previously to Urelia McKinnon who died childless after ten years of marriage.<sup>51</sup>

Having lived through the horrible tragedy of a still unsolved murder-suicide involving her youngest brother Clifford and her mother Ada, Amy Redpath entered a long period of mourning in 1901. As part of her mourning, she accompanied her eldest brother Peter who suffered with poor health to Redlands, California. He died there of tuberculosis in 1902. These events rightly devastated Amy and she spent the next couple years travelling in Europe, Mexico and Cuba, away from Montreal and the memories there; yet the correspondence between Amy Redpath and Thomas Roddick persisted. The first mention of her marriage to Thomas Roddick recorded in her diary is 17 July 1906 “Roddick and I signed our marriage contract today...”<sup>52</sup> This was followed by a fast get away to England, where Amy set about the business of “express speed [trousseau] getting” in London and visiting her family there, including her beloved Aunt Grace who was entering the final stages of life.<sup>53</sup> While there were many congratulations offered to and received by the couple, there is no indication that this wedding took anyone by surprise. By the end of August, Roddick had arrived in England and their wedding took place in a small parish church 3 September 1906. Redpath was thirty-eight years old, Roddick was sixty years old. The couple left later that night to begin their honeymoon. Upon their return to Montreal, Thomas Roddick moved into 1065 Sherbrooke Street, the Redpath family home.

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<sup>51</sup> Joseph Hanaway, “Roddick, Sir Thomas George,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography 1921-1930, Vol. XV* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press/Université Laval, 2000).

<sup>52</sup> 17 July 1906, Diary Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books McGill University.

<sup>53</sup> 7 August, 1906, Diary Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books McGill University.

To what degree the relationship was intimate is hard to decipher from this historical distance. The marriage seems to have been a happy and comfortable one, with much travel and friendship between them. “We celebrated our wedding day by taking a beautiful two hours’ drive in the Forest with three happy years to look back upon.”<sup>54</sup> Whether there was passion or sexual zeal underlying the relationship is harder to ascertain. She wrote in her diary in obscure ways about the relationship. The night before her wedding she confided that she and Roddick had had a lovers’ talk under “the Judas tree” where she records that they also had a “good-bye one....a lovely moonlight night and !!!!!” That the two were sexually intimate before their marriage seems likely considering both the obscure comments in her diary and the length of the courtship itself.

A third party must at least be mentioned in the context of the Redpath-Roddick marriage, though. For more than fifty years, Redpath Roddick had as a companion Mary Rose Shallow, called Rose. She was a domestic employee of the Redpath family and shared a deep and intimate friendship with Redpath Roddick. Whether it was a physically sexual relationship is never clearly revealed in the remaining evidence. Shallow lived in the Redpath mansion for the majority of her life, after moving to Montreal from Newfoundland. She travelled with Redpath Roddick on all her voyages, including her wedding trip and subsequent honeymoon. In her will, Redpath Roddick left a sizeable annual allowance to Shallow as well as all Redpath Roddick’s own “wearing apparel”.<sup>55</sup> Following Thomas Roddick’s death, the two women maintained an extraordinarily close

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<sup>54</sup> 3 September 1909, Diary Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books McGill University.

<sup>55</sup> Amy Redpath Roddick, “Last Will and Testament of Amy Redpath Roddick”, January 29, 1925.

relationship and travelled more extensively, even travelling to Egypt in their later years.<sup>56</sup> Redpath Roddick's affection for Shallow was most clearly evident after Shallow's death, when she had Shallow's body disinterred and reburied in the Redpath family plot in Mount Royal cemetery. The plaque marking her place in the Redpath plot reads: Mary Rose Shallow, 1870-1943, Beloved Companion of Lady Roddick. Whatever the exact nature of the relationship between Redpath Roddick and Shallow, it is clear that the marriage between Redpath Roddick and Roddick would have been influenced and shaped by the presence of this third person, a constant intimate of Redpath Roddick.<sup>57</sup>

Joséphine Marchand Dandurand's first journal entries following her marriage to Raoul Dandurand suggest that physical intimacy and passion were yet new to her and caused her to blush even in her retelling of it:

Il y a de la passion dans ses yeux, qui me contemplent longuement, avec une persistance et une intensité sous laquelle je me sens rougir. Ses bras, qui s'ouvrent involontairement et spontanément comme pour m'envelopper; ces baisers ardents qu'il met sur ma main, quand je la lui prête un instant... Je me rappelle même le mot d'un philosophe qui déclare qu'il y a des mariages heureux mais qu'il n'y a en a pas de délicieux sans passion.<sup>58</sup>

Yet, as was befitting the social norms surrounding sexuality, there is little else to describe the physical or sexual relationship between Joséphine and Raoul.

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<sup>56</sup> A private family photograph of the trip to Egypt was lent to the *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History Project* by Amy Linda Redpath. It can be seen at:

<http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/redpath/images/view.php?id=5904&lang=en&size=3>

<sup>57</sup> Lily Dougall, who remained unmarried throughout her lifetime, maintained a long-term relationship with Sophie Earp. This relationship is similarly difficult to define. Dougall's biographer Joanna Dean, describes it this way: "Dougall and Earp's love could no more be a 'romantic friendship' in the asexual terms of the mid-nineteenth century, than it could be a 'lesbian' relationship in the highly sexualized terms of post-1928 modern lesbian identity. It was something in between." Joanna Dean, *Religious Experiences and the New Woman: The Life of Lily Dougall* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 72.

<sup>58</sup> 19 février 1885, *Journal Intime, 1879-1900*. Joséphine Marchand.

Where we do get a clearer glimpse of the intimacy of marriage is in the relationship between Belle and Clarence DeSola. After their marriage, the couple settled in the DeSola family house on McGill College Avenue, before moving to their new mansion further up the hill. Through the lens of Clarence's diary (albeit one written by a male), the relationship appears to have remained both companionate and passionate throughout the years. In the first place, both during the construction of the new house on Pine Avenue during which Clarence frequently refers to "our bedroom"<sup>59</sup> and in various mentions elsewhere in the diary, it is clear that the couple shared not just a bedroom but also a bed regularly.<sup>60</sup> Unlike the Drummonds or the Cloustons who may have shared a bed or a bedroom from time to time each retreating to their own respective bedrooms, the DeSolas did not build this practice into their relationship.<sup>61</sup> Sleeping side by side, night after night, the couple shared the most intimate of spaces, indicating a deep closeness between the two. Their house with its eight floors surely had enough space and rooms to facilitate separate bedrooms for each of them as elite custom seems to have followed in other relationships but this was not the shape of their relationship. Furthermore, for what could be many reasons including Orthodox Jewish customs of cleanliness and for fertility reasons, Clarence kept careful track of Belle's menstrual cycle. Orthodox Jewish custom does not permit a man and woman to have sexual relations during menstruation or until the woman has properly cleansed herself following menstruation. But more than that,

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<sup>59</sup> 1 November 1911, Clarence and Meldola DeSola. P1064, CJCCC National Archives.

<sup>60</sup> Recording the death of his Uncle Jesse Joseph in 1904, Clarence notes: "I sprang from my bed, Belle awaking and asking me what was the matter at the same time..." 24 February 1904, CI DeSola Papers

<sup>61</sup> Osla Clouston referred consistently to her "mother's bed" and "mother's room".



the careful record that Clarence kept seems to have included the occasional mention of sexual intercourse, implying that they were actively trying to conceive a child. For example, his diary of 1909 relates the following information:

Belle

P. Began about 25 June 09  
 P. Ended 7 ds 3<sup>rd</sup> July 09  
 First C on 22 July (mng)  
 Second C on 25 July (evg)  
 P. Began on 27 July (evg)  
 P. Began on 29 August (mg)  
 P. Began 27 Sept (mng)  
 P. Began 25 October (noon)  
 First slight flutter (not quite positive if it was one on 2<sup>nd</sup> March)  
 Certain on 4<sup>th</sup> March  
 Vigorous on 7<sup>th</sup> March<sup>62</sup>

For whatever reason or reasons, the information was shared so completely between the two that even the time of day that menstruation began was known by Clarence, indicating a level of intimacy between them that extended into the most private and personal details of female life.

Felice DeKalisz Stephen's marital relationship provides a different perspective on marriage in turn-of-the-century Montreal. Married to Sheldon Stephens who owned a large farm and was a brother to the better-known George Washington Stephens, Felice DeKalisz Stephens appears to have been in love with another man. Letters from a Francis Medwin indicate an intimacy so fierce that it nearly drove apart their respective marriages. Medwin's wife and DeKalisz Stephen's husband perhaps both suspected the pair of having an unusually close relationship, sending letters to each other in a way that made both DeKalisz Stephen and Medwin squirm. In a letter from Medwin to DeKalisz Stephen, the

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<sup>62</sup> 1909, Diary of Clarence DeSola, Clarence and Meldola DeSola. P1064, CJCCC National Archives.

writer acknowledged that his wife was jealous and suspicious of DeKalisz

Stephen:

Let me answer this by acquainting you with the fact that when I read your husband's letter, requesting to know my plans, the ejaculation made (by my wife) was 'Do not go near the Stephens.' Now this was not said from any dislike to you but simply because the speaker knows I like you: jealousy exists even of the Stick I Received (from you). Concerning this, only yesterday, the remark 'you are never separated from that stick', so you will think with me it is as well no date was engraved!<sup>63</sup>

Rarely able to make their paths cross, the extra-marital affair took place primarily through correspondence and the mutual exchange of gifts. Medwin wrote "This letter reads very badly, the ideas are disconnect: the fact is I cannot write as you and your husband can without fear of disturbance. I have to steal odd moments...About the silk handkerchief, I want one you have worn no matter how old, and if you do buy one, wear it first, will you do this for me?"<sup>64</sup> Medwin wrote about how hard it was to restrain himself from publicly declaring his love for DeKalisz Stephen and how heavy the cross was that he bore in being in love with a woman he couldn't be with:

I understand now that the prospect of seeing you is very remote not nearer than 1891 – well time will make no difference to me. I do not feel any the more reconciled to separation now than at the moment I caught the last glimpse of your face through the carriage window when your husband and I drove away. I was inclined to jump out and declare I would remain with you.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Date unknown, Letter from Francis Medwin to Felice deKalisz Stephens, P020-A/12 (Box 12 File 88) McCord Museum Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Date unknown, Letter from Francis Medwin to Felice deKalisz Stephens, P020-A/12 (Box 12 File 88) McCord Museum Archives.

<sup>65</sup> 4 June 1890, Letter from Francis Medwin to Felice deKalisz Stephens, P020-A/12 (Box 12 File 88) McCord Museum Archives.

Respecting the code of marriage and remaining with her husband in what was largely described as a joyless marriage, Felice deKalisz Stephens positioned respectability ahead of personal happiness, choosing to maintain her social position by remaining in her marriage. By and large, as far as the evidence indicates, the women in this study respected the bounds and obligations of respectable marriage. While there may very well have been other extra-marital sexual or intimate relationships among the women here studied, the fact that there remains no evidence of these types of activities reinforces their taboo nature.

Marriage relationships could be restrictive in terms of proscribing acceptable behaviour but marital relationships also created unions that could exponentially expand each partner's sphere of influence. When Julia Parker married George A. Drummond, each of them brought with them a certain degree of social capital. Their union, however, created a power partnership and seems to have launched them into a new sphere of influence. Their marriage coincided with their blossoming as leaders not just in their intimate social circle but on the larger philanthropic and political stage.<sup>66</sup> What is important in this discussion of marriage, however, is the way women conceived of respectable marriage as part of the template not only for their transition into more public roles, but also for complete societal regeneration. Embracing the idea that men and women had innate abilities as prescribed by maternalist discourse, the union of these complementary partners served as an example and map for fixing what was wrong with their world. Julia Parker Drummond articulated it this way:

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<sup>66</sup> A description of their activities can be found both in later chapters and in the appendix under the Biographical notes. The sheer number of their involvements and investments placed them in a category reserved for very few in Montreal and Canada.

not because women are better than men (oh! Foolish comparison!), but because, as I have said, only their combined judgement can solve the problems of this complex world...so it is with the man and the woman, who also in their perfect union are the type and expression of that unity which is the ultimate principle of all things, a unity which implies the differences which it harmonizes and transcends.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, throughout this study, there are many examples of interaction among ethnic and religious groups. We will see how groups worked together in various philanthropic endeavours, how they supported similar political action, and how social networks were based more on class than ethnicity. However, despite a shared understanding of marriage and family (i.e. patriarchal, lifelong relationships), it is clear that marriage was one area in which interaction was clearly absent. In other words, women chose marital partners from within their own religious and ethnic groups. There is not a single case of a Roman Catholic marrying a Protestant, nor a Jew marrying a Christian in this study.<sup>68</sup> If we accept that marriage and family are at the core of women's social activism, social activism that was cooperative in nature, then we are presented with a dissonance between public (or social) action and private (or intimate) practice. Envisioning the human race as a large family was important in creating unity of action and social networks but these barriers of ethnicity and religion were not breached at the most intimate levels.

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<sup>67</sup> Julia Drummond, "Address at the close of the meeting of the National Council of Women, 1896," in *Some Addresses* (Montreal: The Gazette Printing Company, Ltd, 1907), 34-35.

<sup>68</sup> This is not to say that interfaith marriages did not happen nor that religious conversion at marriage did not happen among the elite of Montreal. However, it happened so infrequently that it did not show up in this case study.

Similarly, while most members of the elite class had recently attained such a status, the marriages presented here do not demonstrate large class jumps. Unlike the aristocracy of England or France, Montreal was unique in its recent development of an elite class, particularly among recently immigrated Anglophones. Therefore, while marriages between members of “new money” families and titled-but-poor families were increasingly common during the Victorian era in England, a similar pattern did not necessarily exist in Montreal, there being no old titled families. As Roderick MacLeod has argued, Montreal’s upper-class marriage patterns often resulted in the consolidation of business interests, whether incidentally or intentionally.<sup>69</sup> For example, the Drummonds intermarried with the Redpaths spanning two generations, thus consolidating the interests in business such as the Redpath Sugar Refinery and various mining ventures. Henry Vincent Meredith’s marriage to Isobel Brenda Allan launched an upcoming financial tycoon into the mammoth multi-faceted Allan empire. In the marriage of Amy Redpath to Thomas Roddick, a doctor, university professor and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at McGill, the Redpath money was partnered with a profession that had provided a middle-class salary and a highly respectable social standing. This partnership boosted the social respectability of both spouses. For TG Roddick it certainly amplified his financial resources, but it most certainly aided Amy Redpath’s reputation by moving her out of “spinsterhood” at the late age of thirty-eight.

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<sup>69</sup> Roderick MacLeod, “Salubrious Settings and Fortunate Families: the Making of Montreal’s Golden Square Mile, 1840-1895” Thesis (PhD) McGill University, 1997.

Marriage, therefore, was considered the most important step an elite woman would make, for it determined her social status (as mother, wife, and hostess), as well as her happiness and personal fulfillment. Evidence from courtship experience reveals that romantic love surrounded the choice of a marriage partner though when romantic feelings were found outside the institution of marriage, the marital relationship seems to have trumped with both Amy Redpath Roddick opting for marriage at a late age and Felice deKalisz Stephens opting to stay in a passionless marriage. Patriarchal understandings of the sexes undergirded the marital relationship for these women, though this was particularly evident in Roman Catholic and Jewish marriages. While marriages created strong kinship networks that often provided both financial benefit and social reputation, each couple was also comprised of two very individual people. The couples studied here are examples of how two individuals, when joined in marriage, could grow into a force with such strong social capital and leadership that they could impact a city and its inhabitants the way some of these couples did.

#### **DEFINING THE *MATERNAL***

Once marriage was assured, motherhood became the next step for most women. Women activists considered their most important function as citizens to be within the home as mothers to the future generation. For members of Montreal's early women's movement, strongly influenced by maternalist thinking, the *home* was an ideal that shaped both their philosophy and their actions. Women, as mothers and caregivers, were thought to be endowed with a natural nurturing ability and a superior morality. A woman's part in societal

functioning was to care for and nurture the next generation, keeping the home intimately tied to women's role as citizens.

As Eileen Yeo argued in her overview of motherhood in Britain and France between 1750 and 1914, there existed a growing synonymy between 'femininity' and 'motherhood'.<sup>70</sup> Coinciding with this, historians during the 1990s resurrected the idea of maternalism (vs. "feminism") as a dominant current within early female activism. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel redirected the attention of scholars to the international importance of maternalist experience and discourse both in the creation of welfare states and in the expansion of women's citizenship rights.<sup>71</sup> Thus began the ongoing debate about the value of maternalism as a paradigm for historical enquiry and the appropriateness of the term "feminist" to describe those adhering to maternalist ideology.<sup>72</sup> Elevating the maternal nature of women and presenting it as an integral part of societal structure, maternalism assumes that men and women are complementary partners, that each sex has its own strengths and weaknesses that can be complemented by cooperation with the opposite sex, thus placing the vision of marriage at the centre of the discourse. Maternalism, according to Koven and Michel, could be applied to "ideologies that exalted women's capacity to mother and extended to society as a whole the values of care, nurturance, and morality."<sup>73</sup> Koven and Michel have

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<sup>70</sup> Eileen Janes Yeo, "The Creation of 'Motherhood' and Women's Responses in Britain and France, 1750-1914." *Women's History Review* Vol. 8, No. 2, 1999, p. 202.

<sup>71</sup> Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920." *American Historical Review* 1990 95 (4): 1076-1108.

<sup>72</sup> In 1993 the *Journal of Women's History* Vol. 5, No. 2, dedicated its entire Fall issue to the examination of maternalism and its use as an historical paradigm.

<sup>73</sup> Koven and Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920," 1079.

vehemently defended the intersection of feminism and maternalism, arguing that “[m]aternalism always operated on two levels: it extolled the private virtues of domesticity while simultaneously legitimating women’s public relationships to politics and the state, to community, workplace, and marketplace.”<sup>74</sup>

Other scholars, such as Molly Ladd-Taylor, have been more hesitant to equate maternalism as feminism. Ladd-Taylor characterizes maternalism in a way similar to Koven and Michel though she argues that one of the four benchmarks of maternalism must be “that ideally men should earn a family wage to support the ‘dependent’ wives and children at home”<sup>75</sup>, and she therefore disqualifies maternalism as a form of feminism. She recognizes that maternalists and feminists often co-existed and overlapped until the 1920s maintaining that “in contrast to maternalists, who framed women’s rights and responsibilities in terms of family obligations, feminists asserted women’s individual autonomy, challenged the idea of the family wage, and demanded economic – as well as legal and political – independence from men. Still, feminists frequently used the language of motherhood to improve women’s status and critique the male-headed family.”<sup>76</sup>

Ladd-Taylor differentiates between “sentimental maternalists” and “progressive maternalists”. The “sentimental maternalists” were those who used the belief in marriage and childrearing as a woman’s highest calling to seek protection for dependent stay-at-home mothers rather than pressure the

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<sup>74</sup> Koven and Michel, “Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920,” 1079.

<sup>75</sup> Molly Ladd-Taylor, “Defining Maternalism in U.S. History”, *Journal of Women’s History*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 1993), 110.

<sup>76</sup> Molly Ladd-Taylor, “Defining Maternalism in U.S. History,” 112.



government to aid working men and women and did not endorse suffrage.

“Progressive maternalists” were those who combined their maternalist discourse with appeals for social justice and democracy, stressed women’s obligation to raise competent, useful citizens, supported suffrage, and promoted the moral virtues of the male-breadwinner family structure.<sup>77</sup>

Ann Taylor Allen approaches the issue of maternalism from a slightly different perspective, challenging Ladd-Taylor’s absolute separation of maternalism and feminism. Referring to the German Feminist movement, she argues that “feminists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not find [maternalism and feminism] contradictory or mutually exclusive.”<sup>78</sup> To a great extent, it seems like an anachronistic endeavour to use these terms that emerged not out of this movement but out of subsequent women’s movements to classify members of the early women’s movement.

Maternalism was, in effect, the primary justification for women’s activism, a tenet that will be further explored and tested in the chapters on philanthropy, traditional politics and international networks. Maternalism as interpreted by social activists, though on the surface about motherhood and marriage, was also concerned with the construction of gender, the role of religion and authority, and class relations.

While the example of Montreal reinforces this meshing of identities, few of these elite women actually experienced motherhood as a daily grind of breast-feeding, diaper changing, or night time wake-ups, (there were nurses and

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<sup>77</sup> Molly Ladd-Taylor, “Defining Maternalism in U.S. History,” 110 - 112.

<sup>78</sup> Ann Taylor Allen, “Maternalism in German Feminist Movements”, *Journal of Women’s History*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 1993), 99.

governesses for those tasks.) This access to full-time childcare, however, did not diminish their identities as mothers nor did it lessen the level of maternal and moral expertise they claimed. Julia Parker Drummond and Joséphine Marchand Dandurand each presented clear descriptions of motherhood for their audiences. Marchand Dandurand reminds her readers: “N’oublions pas que la famille est le *royaume* de la femme.”<sup>79</sup> Motherhood, for them, was a responsibility far more noble than keeping their children fed and clothed. It was comprised of the tasks of training children morally and spiritually, of culturally enriching the lives of their family members, and of preparing them for lives of responsible citizenship outside the home. And it was a tenet that crossed religious and ethnic lines. Marie Globensky Lacoste recorded with apparent agreement the sermon given at a Roman Catholic women’s retreat in 1893: “Le prédicateur s’est surpassé. Il a montré comment la vraie mère était vraiment le support de l’Église en lui préparant des saints. Dans sa maison dit-il qui est son temple elle peut faire l’oeuvre du ministre du Seigneur.”<sup>80</sup> Intertwining religion and gender roles, Marie Globensky Lacoste focuses her interpretation (and the priest’s!) of a mother’s role firmly on religion and the Church. In preparing her children to be saints, it is assumed that not only will the church be glorified and renewed, so too will society under the leadership of the church.

In an article printed in the *Jewish Times* to Jewish women, elite and other wise, author Clara Holzmark Wolf, again asserted that women’s primary role took

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<sup>79</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, “La femme dans la famille,” in *Nos Travers* (Montreal: C.O. Beauchemin & Fils, 1901), 144.

<sup>80</sup> Marie Globensky Lacoste, journal intime, 25 octobre 1893 , P76/7 12.8 Archives nationales du Québec à Montréal.

place within the home and therefore Jewish women ought not to be suffragists. Rather than preparing her children to be saints, however, this Jewish interpretation seems somewhat broader, inciting the Jewish woman to use her intellectual and spiritual tendencies to breed the loftier ideals of “freedom, peace, temperance, and education”.<sup>81</sup> Wolf wrote:

The Jewish woman believes in her home, her husband, her children and her religion. She is not a suffragist. She is content to be queen and rule over her own domestic circle, over which she wields a scepter of influence as potent as the morning star. She firmly believes that the starting point of great men and good men begins at home, where training is taught by example by lofty ideals. Her mental and religious inclinations are the intellectual and spiritual tendencies, the noble pillars of her character around which are wreathed all her graces that prepare her to fulfill the lofty purposes of her existence. In the quiet of her home her brave spirit is forever at work for freedom, peace, temperance and education.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the common understanding of motherhood as a woman’s primary role, there is a subtle but important variance to note here. While all of these elite women used maternalist discourse to explain the importance of mothers at home and in society, the religious overtones were different and carried different meanings. Marchand Dandurand, a devout Roman Catholic, emphasized the sacrifice and resignation that good mothers demonstrated: “La mission de la mère est une mission de paix...La concorde absolue au sein de la famille est l’oeuvre de la mère. La première – quels que soient ses tracas et ses croix – elle doit donner l’exemple de la resignation sereine et digne.”<sup>83</sup> Clara Holzmark Wolf’s

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<sup>81</sup> Clara Holzmark Wolf, “The Jewish Woman Suffragist”, *Jewish Times* 4 June 1909, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives.

<sup>82</sup> Clara Holzmark Wolf, “The Jewish Woman Suffragist”

<sup>83</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, “La vie de famille,” *Nos Travers* (Montreal: C.O. Beauchemin & Fils, 1901), 138-139.

language presents a more assertive role for women using the image of a queen's far-reaching influences and "brave spirit". Furthermore, while Wolf's ideal is for women to create peace in her home, she also admonishes her readers to do so with her spiritual and intellectual gifts, adding a component not often seen in Roman Catholic ideals of a mother's role. Julia Parker Drummond borrowed from the social gospel a primary concern with the regeneration of society. In raising moral and engaged citizens, she saw a mother's role as central to restoring the world to its Eden-like state:

No, believe me, home will ever be our chosen kingdom,  
but we shall order our homes with greater wisdom, and  
truer love, and more steadfast principle, for taking a woman's  
part in helping the great world out of the sins and distresses  
which make the day of its redemption seem to us still a vision  
that tarries and a day afar off.<sup>84</sup>

While these ideals framed the discourse of women's place in society, in what ways did they solidify in their daily lived experiences as mothers? To what extent was their mothering influenced by ideals of maternalism and how did these ideals intersect with religion, class, and ethnicity?

Clarence DeSola, the husband of Belle Goldsmith DeSola, recorded the birth of his first child: "At twenty minutes past four o'clock this afternoon a daughter was born to us. Both Belle and the child are doing well, and all is well. Dr. A. A. Browne was in attendance. We had Mrs. Bordon engaged as nurse, but she was taken ill at the last moment and we had to call in Nurse Wilson." For Belle Goldsmith DeSola, as with most women at the time, child birth, the commencement of motherhood, took place within the home. Giving birth was

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<sup>84</sup> Julia Drummond, "Address to the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894," in *Some Addresses* (Montreal: The Gazette Printing Company, Ltd, 1907), 10.

still considered a potentially dangerous event, risking the lives of both the mother and the child and, therefore, elite women often had a full slate of professional and domestic help present for this event, unlike women in less fortunate circumstances. The danger, of course, continued into childhood as children were plagued with various illnesses and a plethora of opportunities for accidents.

Felice De Kalisz Stephens, Marie Globensky Lacoste, and Julia Parker Drummond all lost young children to disease.

Among the activists examined here, all but two women gave birth to at least one child. Marie Globensky Lacoste and Caroline Dessaulles Béique had what would be considered large families by today's standards but accurately mirrored the contemporary birth rate of French-Canadian Roman Catholic families. Globensky Lacoste gave birth to thirteen children, seeing ten survive to adulthood while Dessaulles Béique gave birth to and raised ten children. Most of the others had smaller families, strong evidence of the increasing implementation of family planning strategies that historians have noted elsewhere. Julia Parker Drummond, Katie Samuel DeSola, Annie Easton Clouston, Adaline Hurd Van Horne and Felice DeKalisz Stephens each had two children, while Joséphine Marchand Dandurand had only one daughter. Furthermore, as the result of the reconstitution of families, women often acted in lieu of a biological mother either as step-mothers or grandmothers. When Julia Parker married George Alexander Drummond in 1884, she moved into a ready-made family with the three youngest sons still living in the family house. These sons eventually married or moved from the house, ushering Julia Drummond into the role of grandmother while she herself was still in the midst of bearing her own two children.

It is important to note that physically giving birth to children was not the requisite for possessing maternal instincts. It was assumed that a woman naturally possessed maternal instincts, regardless of whether she had had children herself or not. Amy Redpath Roddick who entered a childless marriage in her late thirties and Mary Van Horne who remained single her entire life, did not experience childbirth, but their activities and attitudes demonstrate that they assumed maternal roles in various ways.

Historians such as Ann Ladd Taylor have noted the changing relationship between parents and children at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>85</sup> Hubertine Auclert, a French feminist, wrote in 1914 that “[f]or the savage, the child is an asset, but for civilised people, the child is a duty.”<sup>86</sup> Taylor argues:

The first sign of change in these attitudes emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when a wealthy middle class which could dispense with the labor of its children created a new kind of childhood involving education, age-appropriate play, and individualized nurture. This fortunate group redefined the care of its unproductive progeny as a work of selfless devotion, rewarded by emotional satisfaction rather than by economic gain. And, as an industrial economy removed fathers from the home, mothers assumed the task of child-rearing and human qualities that it required, which were declared to be natural to the female sex.<sup>87</sup>

The diary of Osla Clouston, daughter of Annie Easton and Edward Seaborne Clouston, provides a rich glimpse at life inside the Clouston household,

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<sup>85</sup> For further discussion of the changing nature of parent-child relationships see: Ann Ladd Taylor, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890-1970* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005); For a view of the other side of the social scale see, Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993)

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Ann Ladd Taylor, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890-1970* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 11.

<sup>87</sup> Ladd Taylor, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890-1970*, 10.

describing the layout of the home, recounting daily mini-dramas, and outlining the complex arrangements of social networking. In particular, this diary serves as one way to access the relationship between mother and daughter, shedding light on maternal practices in an elite household.

Osla was the older of two daughters. Marjory or “Daw” was the younger. Osla’s diary entries present a complex relationship with her mother, a relationship that was a mixture of formal and informal, distance and closeness. From the diary we get a feeling of physical distance between mother and daughters in the home. The daughters clearly slept and spent most of the day “upstairs” from the main activities in the house. On Christmas morning, 1899, Osla wrote: “Woke Marjory at 7 this morning & after looking at some presents that had arrived the night before we went down & woke the family.”<sup>88</sup> And on another occasion, “Mother came up and told me that Uncle Willie was take me (sic) to the dance tomorrow night. It will feel as if I were quite grown up.”<sup>89</sup> It appears that AEC spent time with her daughters most days. This scheduled meeting was frequently supplemented with impromptu events. On a Thursday morning in January 1896, Osla, Marjory, and Miss Sydenham (the governess) received a formal invitation to tea with their mother:

About twelve o'clock this morning while we were at lessons Louise came up with three notes one for each of us asking us to come and take tea with Mother downstairs from 4 to 7. At lunch Mother told us that she was going to have about twenty people. Of course we were all delighted to go.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Osla Clouston Diary, 25 December 1899, Clouston Family Fonds, P007-A/4, McCord Museum.

<sup>89</sup> Osla Clouston Diary, 05 January 1896, Clouston Family Fonds, P007-A/4, McCord Museum.

<sup>90</sup> Osla Clouston Diary, 30 January 1896, Clouston Family Fonds, P007-A/4, McCord Museum.

This short anecdote records several important revelations. First, in general, children were excluded from these types of social events, even within their own homes. The formal invitation suggests that this was an extremely special occasion and the daughters were being offered a privilege, not a right. Having her daughters at such an event would have a two-pronged benefit for Annie Clouston if the occasion went well. In the first place, it would provide an opportunity for her daughters to learn the customs of entertaining and engage in the practices of femininity that would eventually be expected of them as adult women. But secondly, it was an opportunity for her to demonstrate her own maternal role, not just in the view of her daughters but also in the view of her peers, other elite women who saw motherhood as the most important role for women.

The formality of the relationship between mother and daughters could be tempered with moments of tender intimacy and endearment. Osla Clouston, who adored her mother and sought out ways to connect with her, recorded in her diary: “Horrid weather...Thunder storm last night, went down to Mother and slept with her.”<sup>91</sup> Here is a picture of the most tender of mother-daughter moments. In her fear during a thunderstorm, Osla found comfort and a warm embrace in the bed of her mother, even if she did have to sneak past the governess and descend a set of stairs!

Annie Easton Clouston, as in most elite Victorian households, shared child care duties with a governess. Miss Agnes Sydenham lived in the home and travelled with the family on their many voyages. She was responsible for the daily care of the daughters and the core of their education. Osla confided in her diary that she

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<sup>91</sup> Osla Clouston Diary, 05 May 1895, Clouston Family Fonds, P007-A/4, McCord Museum.



had difficulty getting along with Miss Sydenham some days, despite a strong attachment to her: “Miss S is away in London, Ontario on a short visit to her friends there and I miss (her) very much although sometimes her presence is very disagreeable to me and sometimes she does not understand me a bit and others we agree perfectly.”<sup>92</sup>



*Mrs. Clouston's children and nurse,  
Montreal, QC, 1886  
Wm. Notman & Son,  
II-79936.1 © McCord Museum*

Of course, this is just one relationship and, as such, must serve as one expression rather than be taken as the norm. Other mother-child relationships exhibit similar complexities, showing signs of tension between intimacy and formality. Relationships between mothers and children appear to have been influenced by the relationship of the mother and father, the affluence of the family, the other inhabitants of the house (including relatives, guests, and staff

<sup>92</sup> Osla Clouston Diary, 06 September 1896, Clouston Family Fonds, P007-A/4, McCord Museum.

members), ethnic and religious practices, as well as the personal temperaments and health of the individuals among many other factors.

In the Van Horne household, Adaline Hurd Van Horne was aided in her role as mother by various relatives. Upon their marriage, Hurd Van Horne and William Van Horne invited their mothers and unmarried sister to share a house with them. This somewhat unconventional situation proved to be very helpful for a frequently ill Hurd Van Horne. By the time they moved to Montreal, only Mary Van Horne accompanied the nuclear family. There was a great deal of affection between the aunt and the children Addie Jr. and Richard (Benny). Mary Van Horne took care of much of the day-to-day grind of raising the children (with the help of a full staff of course). She took the children to church each Sunday, she took them on long walks on the mountain and she planned picnics and teas for them. She also served as chaperone to Addie Junior during her year in Europe. Mary Van Horne seems to have been given the role of third parent, frequently giving her opinion to William Van Horne and Adaline Hurd Van Horne about the needs of their children. From Geneva, Mary wrote to William:

...I have for some time thought it necessary that you should be impressed with the idea that you have a daughter twenty years of age, who needs more advantages, particularly in the way of travel, than have been provided for her in times past, consequently I decided she should see as much of Europe as possible before the time for her to begin her studies. I suppose you have intended she should travel here sometime but now is the time she needs it most as when she returns home next year she will have to go into society where she will meet people who have had all the advantages that travel can give and she has already had occasion to feel the contrast between the quiet retired way she has always lived and the advantages in the way of travel some of her friends have had. The experience of the past few weeks has already had its effects upon her and I know that her work for the year will be

done in a more intelligent and effective manner than it would have been without this experience.<sup>93</sup>

The educating and training of children usually implied the removal of children from the home in Roman Catholic households. Both Joséphine Marchand Dandurand and Marie Globensky Lacoste record their feelings of being torn by the subject of their daughters' removal from the home for schooling. Globensky Lacoste, who spent the better part of twenty years giving birth to children, was very attached to her children and seems to have spent much more time with them than other mothers in this study. She raised her children as she imagined the Church would have her raise them, accompanying them to weekly mass, encouraging sincere confession, and devout faith. She celebrated the various religious holidays with her children and made the Catholic calendar the regulator in their lives. She enjoyed being around her children and entertaining their friends in her home. She set up elaborate family entertainments that kept their house buzzing from dawn till dusk. But despite her close relationship with her children, she followed the practice of the day for Catholic families, and repeated what she herself had experienced as a child. She sent her children away to be educated by the religious orders. Her daughters were sent to the convent school in Hochelaga and her sons were educated at similar institutions leaving her in the home without school-aged children for most of the year.

From the first cries of birth (and possibly even before as demonstrated by Belle Goldsmith DeSola's example), mothers bore the primary responsibility for

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<sup>93</sup> Letter Mary Van Horne to William Cornelius Van Horne, undated, Library and Archives Canada, MG29 A60 Vol. 87.

childcare. Their maternal nature, presumed to prepare them for the role of motherhood, was what undergirded their identity both in the home and outside of it. Existing in separate spaces within the home, motherhood did not necessarily imply intimate relationships with children although it certainly could. Elite motherhood was complicated (and simplified) by the presence of nurses and governesses, as well as other adult female family members living in the home. The experience of motherhood was further shaped by religious convictions, family traditions, physical environments, the presence of domestic staff, and the individual personalities of those involved in the relationship.

#### **WOMEN AS MANAGERS AND SOCIAL CONVENORS**

The mansions and families of Montreal's elite society clearly dominated the city's landscape both physically and metaphorically. In order to continue the examination of life within the houses, it is important to dedicate some space for some quantitative information. The release of the 1911 census records allows a broader look at who lived in these houses. The manuscript census, aside from listing the family members, also lists any staff members living in the home. Information regarding nationality, ethnicity, age, sex, spoken languages, religion, and literacy are clearly listed in the 1891, 1901, and 1911 censuses, permitting a look at these households at three different moments in time.

Most households had at least one live-in domestic employee; most had several. However, there seems to be no exact correlation between family size and number of employees, thus indicating that financial resources served as the primary determinant for number of staff in residence. Most certainly there were

other domestic staff who lived outside of the house and therefore do not register on the census, making an exact picture of household size difficult to surmise. Yet it is important to understand that households included people of different classes living under one roof, albeit in very different degrees of comfort.

Management of the staff fell exclusively to women who hired, fired, and monitored the staff on a daily basis. Domestic labour was a difficult life with long hours, physically taxing tasks, low wages, and the removal from the staff member's own family home. Increasingly, working-class women were looking for other options. With the growth of industrialization and the eventual entrance of women into clerical positions, a shortage of domestic labourers became evident. Most of the elite women record their frustrations in keeping a fully trained and functioning staff. In the course of one year, Mary Van Horne, who shared the role of house manager with Adaline Van Horne (who was frequently referred to as ill and weak), sought out and hired no fewer than 4 kitchen maids: "Addie and I visited 3 registry offices in search of a kitchen maid", "...Kitchen maid engaged to come today ill so had to look up another", "...paid kitchen maid and she left," and "Did marketting and went to look up kitchen maid and a woman to help until we can get one." Amy Redpath Roddick's diary is filled with similar frustrations and the constant need to be searching out new staff. While some staff members became permanent household habitants, some even being considered as family members such as Rose Shallow in the Redpath house or Miss Sydenham in the Clouston, for the most part there was constant and rapid turn over among domestic staffs.

The relationship between the female head of household and the domestic staff could be tenuous at times. Being able to “handle” her household implied being a good delegator, an effective communicator, an organized scheduler, and a human resources manager of the best kind for elite women in Victorian and Edwardian households. Running a successful and efficient household depended on the relationship between the “mistress” and the “maid” to be smooth. Parker Drummond alluded to the fact the tensions that could exist in this relationship:

And so we turned some of our first thoughts as a Council towards the domestic problem, and we came to the rather humbling conviction that the fault lay largely in the ignorance of both mistress and maid – and the question, “How can they learn without a teacher?” set our thoughts towards the schools ...though it does not offer a panacea for the domestic grievance, [training] will tend towards happier homes by teaching mistress and maid how to make them.<sup>94</sup>

As Alison Light points out, though the mistress of the house was in a clear position of authority, she was very much dependent on her domestic staff.<sup>95</sup>

Without the hard work and cooperation of the servants, there would be no entertaining, no socializing, no meals.

Elite entertaining practices were complex and imbued with judgement at every turn. Whether you were invited, how quickly an invitation was extended, and with whom you were paired all served to indicate your social standing. It was an elaborate system to master and yet it served as the backbone of class formation in Montreal. Leonore Davidoff’s study of the social season in London teases out

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<sup>94</sup> Julia Parker Drummond, “1896” *Some Addresses*, 17-18.

<sup>95</sup> Alison Light, *Mrs Woolf and the Servants* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), xvii.

many of the intricacies involved in the British context.<sup>96</sup> As previously noted however, Montreal borrowed from British social culture but it developed its own rules and practices as social mobility was much more fluid and where wealth could buy a position among the elite. Entertainments were held to promote business ventures, to celebrate empire, to launch campaigns, and to keep astride their neighbours. There were often strict codes about gender and age surrounding entertainment. For example, balls were for both sexes but only for those who had officially “come out.” Euchre and bridge parties, which were traditionally held during the day, were usually for women only. Dinner parties could be for men, women or both while afternoon teas were usually for women only, though children were sometimes invited to the latter events.

Much of the burden of entertaining fell to the women who managed the process from the issuing of invitations to the post-event clean-up. Certain events took months to plan while other events were pulled together with virtually no notice. Mary Van Horne related an event in the midst of Spring cleaning that must have caused some harried moments: “About 5 pm a telephone message from Wm that Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins were coming in on the train from Vancouver and he would like them to come to dinner. We hurried and got the hall furniture out of the drawing room and tidied up in good time.”<sup>97</sup> Whatever the circumstances, it was important that women be always gracious in their entertaining.

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<sup>96</sup> Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season* (London: Croom Helm, 1973)

<sup>97</sup> Mary Van Horne, personal diary, 29 April 1901, Library and Archives Canada, MG29 A60 Vol. 96.

An examination of elite women in Montreal reveals that they used their roles as hostesses for their own interests as well as those of their husbands. In fact, the skills and practices of hosting often provided the means of networking that resulted in social and political activism among women. For example, in May of 1901, in honour of Mrs. McLeod of Ottawa, Julia Parker Drummond invited members of Montreal's elite to tea. Though a social setting, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the role of the Victorian Order of Nurses, a visiting association of nurses that was formed in 1898 by the wife of the Governor General, Lady Aberdeen.<sup>98</sup> This meeting was more than a social get together. Using familiar practices that were approved of by society, Drummond turned the common practice of sharing tea into a moment of political education and action. By incorporating the culture of the elite into the practical strategies of reform, Drummond and the women were actively creating a connection between their wealth and their activism. The social columns indicate that Drummond held such events on a weekly basis.

Though clearly of a social nature, the entertaining of elite women established powerful connections for political action, a theme that will be picked up in chapter five. The maternalist vision of the home as the foundational structure of society implied an important role for women as mothers and homemakers to the world and compelled women to engage a social network in the effort of bringing that vision of society to fruition. Using the practices of their day and the physical space of their homes, female activists used their positions in

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<sup>98</sup> Diary entry February 28, 1901. Miss Mary Van Horne papers, MG29 A60 Vol. 96, National Archives of Canada.



society to access others with similar positions and in effect created coalitions of power. They believed a public role would give them the opportunity to improve society and bring it closer to the “day of redemption”.

## CONCLUSION

Julia Parker Drummond believed that the expertise related to mothering one’s own children must be employed beyond the home; they were to be used for mothering the greater family of neighbourhood, city, nation, and Empire.

Surely, as homemakers for the race, we cannot limit our sympathies. In a broader sense this world is our home, and nothing is indifferent to us. Unless we learn to merge merely personal considerations in the larger contemplation of the general good, unless we widen our knowledge of the social questions that are pressing for solution today, unless we women do our part in solving those moral problems which so vitally concern our sex, the sin and sorrow of that outer world which we have not learned to recognize as in a wider sense our home will creep into that little world so dear to us, that home which we have lived and would have died to shield.<sup>99</sup>

Maternal feminists argued that it was precisely because of a woman’s nurturing, caring, and morally superior nature that she ought to be active both in the home and in the public realm. Drummond’s own beliefs, including her support of women’s suffrage, extended women’s roles as mothers and homemakers from the family and home to society at large.

The homes of Montreal’s elites provided the location of identity for women both as an imagined ideal and as experience in day-to-day life. The home was a physical embodiment of wealth and social status. It framed their role as

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<sup>99</sup> Julia Drummond, “Address to the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1896” in *Some Addresses* (Montreal: The Gazette Printing Company, Ltd., 1907), 18.

wives and mothers and it provided a place of authority and opportunity for elite women. Understanding the ways ideologies intersected with lived experiences reveals the ways women situated their identities around maternalism and how this maternalism in turn provided them with respectable authority that would underpin their lived experiences both in and out of the home. Though the experience of home life was shaped by financial means, family composition, religion, and individual characteristics, a common thread of the central role of maternalism emerges in this study of women and their homes.

## CHAPTER 3

### BRIDGES AND CHASMS: WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY AND REFORM IN MONTREAL

#### INTRODUCTION

In order to catch the rush of businessmen on their way to work, hundreds of women adorned with baskets, crisp white dresses, and flower-clad bonnets, bustled onto the streets of Montreal in the early morning of 23 May 1911. The canvassers offered a tag in exchange of a donation, large or small, hoping to raise a formidable sum. Covering the city from East to West, North to South, they were staging their first-ever cooperative Tag Day in support of the Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste, the Montreal Local Council of Women and all charities associated with these umbrella organizations. Though Tag Days had been held in the past for various causes, (indeed one had even been held earlier that month), *La Patrie* noted that “celui-ci a une portée beaucoup plus considerable que le Premier, puisque toutes les institutions de charité de la Ville en bénéficieront.”<sup>1</sup> As they travelled across the city in cars draped with ribbons, the chief organizers kept track of the canvassers, replenishing their depleted supply of tags as needed while the canvassers themselves traveled without charge on the tramways. Across the city, Montrealers were sporting their tags, creating a uniform sea of support for organized charity. “C’est un spectacle curieux de voir presque tous les citoyens d’une ville et nombre de citoyennes, décorées de l’insigne qui constitue le reçu de leur obole pour les pauvres et les déshérités...Le

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<sup>1</sup> 23 mai, 1911, *La Patrie*, 1.

soleil est aussi pour quelque chose dans le succès de la collecte d'aujourd'hui; il a permis aux jeunes femmes et jeunes filles qui sollicitent l'obole des passants de se parer de leur plus fraîches toilettes et de se montrer si gracieuses qu'il n'était vraiment pas possible de les refuser."<sup>2</sup>

Women's organizations were not, in and of themselves, a totally new concept in the age of Tag Days. These types of formal organizational efforts emerged out of a strong tradition of charity involvement in earlier times. The studies of Amanda Vickery, Nancy Cott, and Janice Harvey have revealed how very important charity was in the lives of elite women prior to the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> While charity dates back long before the age of industrialization and was rarely ever confined exclusively to societies' elites, it took on a new urgency and magnitude that coincided with industrialization and the formation of new business elites. Benevolence was positioned as a part of social responsibility for the elite and provided a very public means for reasserting power and status. Rooted in the humanism and rationalism of the Enlightenment and influenced strongly by American Progressivism, the Social Gospel, and urban reform movements, charity underwent a transformation that altered the means and motivations for charitable action. Taking a scientific approach to solving society's problems, philanthropy emphasized organization and the advancement of knowledge to address the very roots of social ills. This process, in turn, led to

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<sup>2</sup> 23 mai, 1911, *La Patrie*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Janice Harvey, "The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society: a Case Study in Protestant Child Charity in Montreal, 1822-1900" Thesis (PhD) McGill University, 2001; Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

an explosion of philanthropic activity in Montreal as elsewhere and signalled a significant change in the direction of women's organization in particular.

Charities and philanthropies were not the only kind of organizations to be affected by this sudden increase in organizational activity. Other types of women's associations were gaining momentum as well. Many of these grew out of the arts – fine art associations, handicraft guilds, musical clubs, and drama societies for example. Others were off-shoots of male sporting clubs such as women's golf, curling, and tennis clubs. But a new type of women's organization was emerging as well – those that intended to heighten the cultural and intellectual life of women through lectures, readings assignments, historical talks, and studies of fine art.

A particular group of women saw a common goal in all these activities and so began the process of mass organization, bringing women's associations and clubs into regular contact with each other and finding ways to coordinate efforts. Commonalities, they believed, could provide opportunities for cooperation that would have mutual benefits for all the groups involved and would augment their authority and influence in the city. Class and gender brought them together certainly but so did motivation and religious conviction. Recounted from separate linguistic perspectives, the history of women's organization in Montreal has often missed these points of contact, these moments of cooperation. In turn, the historiography has been frugal in its assessment of the real power and influence wielded by these women.

Michel Foucault defined power not as an innate possession or *thing* but rather as a technique or action: "Power exists only when it is put into action", he

wrote in "The Subject and Power."<sup>4</sup> The circular relationship between power and discourse implies that those creating discourses that assert power are doing so because they have the power and means of communication. Did philanthropy serve as a site of discourse creation and reaffirmation? Did elite women create and participate in a discourse of power? Where did their authority originate? Then secondly, was this a *parallel* power? Did their power parallel that of male power? If power is the means by which one body induces another body to do, say, be or act a certain way, to what extent did women's philanthropy exert influence on society at large? Were these parallel powers separated and, if so, by what margin? Did women's influence and power remain parallel or did they find ways to intersect and join traditionally male power structures?

Much of the early history written about women and philanthropy both in the period of this study and in an earlier era, has argued that philanthropy provided a means for women to access the 'public' sphere.<sup>5</sup> Kathleen McCarthy, in her introduction to *Lady Bountiful Revisited*, argues:

Women have traditionally used these activities to wield power in societies intent upon rendering them powerless. Unlike men, who enjoyed a host of political, commercial and social options in their pursuit of meaningful careers, women most often turned to non-profit institutions and reform associations as their primary points of access to public roles. In the process, they forged parallel power structures to those used by men, creating a growing array of opportunities for their sisters and themselves.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and Power" Afterword. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. 2nd ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> See Mary P. Ryan *Cradle of the Middle Class: the Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power*, (London: Leicester University Press, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Kathleen D. McCarthy, ed. *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy and Power* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 1.

Furthermore, it has often been argued that philanthropy (as power exercised) served as preparation for the age of political activism that emerged with the fight for women's suffrage.<sup>7</sup> While it is clear that women acquired skills and strategies through philanthropy that were useful for the campaign for the vote, as a means of gathering momentum, one must be wary of categorizing the suffrage campaign as 'political' and the world of philanthropy as 'pre-political.' Such generalizations reinforce the progressive stand that history is an unhindered march forward and neglects the complexity of women's experiences as activists – especially in their engagement with philanthropy.

At the crux of this discussion is the question of motivation. If it is true that women were creating parallel power structures that provided them with access to an expanded public sphere and the skills to exist therein, and the evidence seems to reinforce this, what are historians to make of their reasons for doing so? Was their motivation exclusively a quest for power? Were they carefully constructing an identity through their use of maternalist and religious language that was meant to mask a true, egalitarian feminism? Rather than pointing to one consistent motivation, the case of Montreal's elite women points to the reality that motivations were complex and overlapping. Self-interest (in many forms) and social obligation were often paired with genuine religious and moral conviction to care for those deemed less fortunate.

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<sup>7</sup> Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Naomi Black, Paula Bourne and Magda Fahrni, *Canadian Women: A History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2011); Kathleen McCarthy, "Introduction", Kathleen McCarthy, ed. *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 33.

The example of the Tag Day in 1911 reveals many of the characteristics that defined the philanthropic communities of Montreal – a significant dependence on male financial support, the difficulties of philanthropic coordination and cooperation across ethnic and class lines, the use of social pressure on donors, and the reinforcement of patriarchal structures. But the Tag Day also reveals the agency of women within philanthropy. As women extended their identity as mothers beyond the physical confines of the home to the world at large (what Anne Durst has referred to as the “expanded public realm”), they engaged in acts that still highlighted their role as mothers while positioning themselves in public.<sup>8</sup> The example of the Tag Day demonstrates the way they were able to stage massive public appeals that on the one hand meant stepping around barriers erected between public and private space and on the other hand meant forming bridges that spanned the divide between language and ethnic groups.

This chapter, therefore, will trace the shift from charity to philanthropy and will explore how this impacted organizational activity in Montreal, particularly in the ways women experienced this transition. It will examine both the activities of organizational efforts and the discourse that accompanied them. Using a case study approach, the Montreal Local Council of Women will be used as a lens to understand the extent to which philanthropy expanded women’s publics and the ways women used this to create parallel and intersecting powers.

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<sup>8</sup> Anne Durst, “‘Of Women, by Women and for Women’: The Day Nursery Movement in the Progressive Era United States”, *Journal of Social History*, vol. 39, No. 1 (Autumn 2005), 141-159.



## FROM CHARITY TO PHILANTHROPY

Philanthropy was an important component of elite life at the turn of the century in the major urban centres of North America and elsewhere. This was the age of the great philanthropic endowments of the Vanderbilt family, of Andrew Carnegie, and of the Baron and Baroness de Hirsch. In an age when great fortunes were being amassed through the expansion of an industrialized world, men like Andrew Carnegie were calling on the new business elite to continue their quest for wealth in order that this wealth might extend the philanthropic reach of the upper class.<sup>9</sup>

The philanthropic activity of this era emerged from a strong tradition of charity based on religious and civic duty. Biblical commands to tithe and to care for the widows and orphans provided a framework for benevolence that traditionally left charity and charitable works the concern of individuals. The Christian church often served as the principal advocate of charitable giving, determining both where the need was greatest and where charity was most deserving. While charity could address the needs of those on its receiving end, charity also issued social capital for those on the giving end. In her study of women in Georgian England, Amanda Vickery refers to the obligation of charity

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<sup>9</sup> Andrew Carnegie published in 1889 an article entitled "Wealth" in which he exhorted people of means to give of their wealth while they were still living, not just in order that they might see the great effects of their generosity but this system best served society on all levels: "Under its sway we shall have an ideal state, in which the surplus wealth of the few will become, in the best sense the property of the many, because administered for the common good, and this wealth, passing through the hands of the few, can be made a much more potent force for the elevation of our race than if it had been distributed in small sums to the people themselves. Even the poorest can be made to see this, and to agree that great sums gathered by some of their fellow-citizens and spent for public purposes, from which the masses reap the principal benefit, are more valuable to them than if scattered among them through the course of many years in trifling amounts." Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth" *North American Review*, Vol. 148, Issue 391, June 1889, 653-665.

as “fashionable benevolence.”<sup>10</sup> Donating to charities proclaimed that the giver was in possession of a surplus of money. Despite the biblical command not to “let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth”, charity was often a very public display.<sup>11</sup> The creation and shaping of an urban elite culture was strongly solidified by these very public displays of charity. By saddling affluence with authority and power, charity reinforced class differentiation with the potential of improving the social position of the giver as much if not more than the receiver.

Industrialization led to rapid urbanization and population growth. Unable to adequately house the number of migrants and immigrants settling in the city, Montreal, like many other urban centres of the age, experienced the growth of urban slums. The social and urban reform movements emerged in response to what was perceived as the “evils” of these working-class neighbourhoods. Poverty, infant mortality, disease, and family breakdown were identified as the symptoms of a moral depravity wreaking havoc in the “city below the hill.”<sup>12</sup> Reformers pointed to charity not as the solution to the problem of urban ills but rather as the crutch that maintained them. Charity, they proposed, responded to the symptoms rather than addressed the root causes of societal breakdown. Poverty, they believed, was far more the result of systemic rather than personal

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<sup>10</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 10.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 6:3 *The Holy Bible*, “But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.”

<sup>12</sup> This expression is made in reference to the early sociological study of Montreal's working class neighbourhoods by Herbert Brown Ames. See Herbert Ames. *The City Below the Hill: a Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada* (Montreal: Bishop Engraving and Printing, 1897).

failings.<sup>13</sup> They envisioned a new model for charity that was far more systematic and coordinated than ad hoc benevolence had been in the past.

Twenty years ago, Canadian sociologist Mariana Valverde proposed an important distinction between charity and philanthropy that has stood the test of time. Charity, she argued, “was largely individual and impulsive, and its purpose was to relieve the immediate need of the recipient while earning virtue points for the giver.”<sup>14</sup> Philanthropy, on the other hand, “sought to eliminate both the impulsive and the individual elements of giving.”<sup>15</sup> Philanthropists, she explains, did not believe that “the problem with charity was that it was never enough but, on the contrary, that there was too much of it and the poor were becoming ‘pauperized’ by dependence on abundant charity.”<sup>16</sup> Mark McGarvie and Lawrence Freedman identify the term “philanthropy” as having been coined in England during the late seventeenth century and as having been “associated with the Enlightenment, for it sought to apply reason to the solution of social ills and needs.”<sup>17</sup> The object of philanthropy, they argue, “is the promotion of progress through the advance of knowledge.”<sup>18</sup> Philanthropists judged traditional charities to be makeshift solutions to the symptoms of poverty and committed themselves to the overhaul of the charitable system into efficient and effective collective organizations geared at addressing the root causes of societal problems through

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<sup>13</sup> Shurlee Swain, “Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia”, in Kathleen McCarthy, ed. *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 161.

<sup>14</sup> Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 19.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Lawrence Jacob Friedman and Mark Douglas McGarvie, eds. *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 31.

<sup>18</sup> Friedman and McGarvie, *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, 31.

education, prevention and order. As this focus shifted, reformers believed that systemic changes were needed to effect true and lasting change. This necessarily politicized the issues and their actions. Above and beyond these political goals, however, was a desire to transform not just the way people behaved but, more importantly, the way people thought. In effect, philanthropists adopted *positive* visions for societal reform rather than simply implementing prohibitive or reactive measures.

American historians have situated the transition from ad hoc charity to organized philanthropy during the Progressive era, arguing that the implementation of scientific strategies coincided with the proliferation of new organizations around the turn of the century such as Charity Organization Societies.<sup>19</sup> But this transition was far from straight forward. What is clear in this study of Montreal, for example, is that the process was complex and did not follow a steady progression from one system of social action, charity, to the next, philanthropy. In the first place, certain actions and organizations are difficult to categorize as either one or the other. Amy Redpath Roddick, for example, was in the habit of having her clothing mended in exchange for food and money though on occasion, this strategy proved to be less than ideal:

Drove down town in the morning and looked a up (sic) poor woman. Dirty and hypocritical but undeniably poor. I did not like to think of any of our clothes going to such a house for mending as she asked so gave her food and money for the time being and suggested her finding work at the Industrial Rooms.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See for example Friedman and McGarvie, *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*.

<sup>20</sup> 1 June 1897, Personal journal, Amy Redpath Roddick, Rare Books Department, McGill University, MSS 659.

Redpath Roddick's daily experiences incorporated both charity and philanthropy. Julia Parker Drummond, one of the key supporters of philanthropic methodologies in Montreal, described having "thirteen men-beggars coming to [her] door in a single day!"<sup>21</sup> What becomes apparent is that women often engaged in both rational systematic philanthropy and emotional spontaneous charity as the situation required and as their consciences dictated. They employed a variety of strategies to deal with the cases of poverty and need that crossed their paths.

Women involved in charity were deeply affected by the social reform movement and the transition to philanthropic practices. Their participation in benevolence had expanded exponentially during the nineteenth century. Scholars have traditionally categorized women's charity and philanthropy as being concerned with "domestic, family and environmental aspects of urban life rather than on the political, administrative, and economic."<sup>22</sup> What determined the "gender" of charity depended a great deal on the object of the benevolence. The pattern of charity in Montreal (prior to 1890) largely supports this claim. Women were concerned with helping other women and children. In the early nineteenth century, participation in voluntary societies was as yet new territory for women (with the exception being women religious, of course.)<sup>23</sup> In a society that constructed and attempted to maintain the framework of separate spheres for men

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<sup>21</sup> Julia Parker Drummond, "Practical Idealism", *MLCW 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary, 1893-1915*. Montreal: Montreal Local Council of Women, 1915. Originally delivered at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, MLCW, 7 May 1912.

<sup>22</sup> Jeanne M. Wolfe and Grace Strachan, "Practical Idealism: Women in Urban Reform, Julia Drummond and the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association", in *Life Spaces: Gender, Household, Employment*. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 65.

<sup>23</sup> An in-depth examination of women's charitable roles in Georgian England, for example, can be found in Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1998).

and women, it required careful negotiation (and some courage) for women to make the transition into charitable work, which, for the most part, took place outside their homes. Women's concern for other women and children was considered non-threatening to the patriarchal order and provided access to a (very limited) realm outside of the home.

### **CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY IN CANADA AND MONTREAL**

In one of the earliest historical descriptions of charity and philanthropy in Canada, Veronica Strong-Boag maintains that large urban centres such as Halifax, Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver witnessed the first strongholds of formalized female activity.<sup>24</sup> Churches, she observed, offered women “their first opportunities for social action” in Canada.<sup>25</sup> Women's Missionary Societies began appearing early in the nineteenth century amongst Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others. Working primarily on the parish level, these Protestant organizations raised money for home and away with the goal of the conversion of souls to the specific denomination. With this experience, Protestant women began to be involved in other local institutions such as orphanages and hospitals. Though frequently restricted to auxiliary positions, women increasingly were engaged in charity work outside the home that was still very connected to their churches and religious groups.

Because charity was viewed as the ‘natural’ expression of one's faith and because society in Canada in this era was predominantly based on Judeo-Christian

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<sup>24</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, *A Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929*. (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976), 28.

<sup>25</sup> Strong-Boag, *A Parliament of Women*, 32.

ethics, early charity and philanthropy were almost exclusively “religious” in nature – either as a church organization or as an organization with a religious mandate. Elite women in particular, who considered themselves morally superior and more in touch with all things spiritual, found safety and opportunity in church-related organizations. Though these church committees and groups were designed by and for women exclusively, male supervision was present in the form of active clergy or lay churchmen who formed church government and subsequently oversaw the workings of all affiliated groups. Organizations outside the direct auspices of the church (such as soup kitchens, orphanages, and hospitals) were often intimately connected to individual parishes or denominations. Clergy frequently served as advisors and individual congregations often contributed financially to specific organizations.

Protestant church-based organizations were followed closely by the expansion of several local religiously based organizations into nation-wide organizations. The two earliest and largest were the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). Both were active by the 1870s in most urban centres including Montreal. The membership for these organizations tended to be drawn from evangelical churches, including Methodist, Baptist, (low) Anglican and Presbyterian congregations.

The WCTU of Canada was founded by Letitia Youmans in Ontario in 1874.<sup>26</sup> The Union believed that alcohol was the source of many social evils and called on governments to intervene in the form of full prohibition in order to save society from poverty, violence, corruption, immorality and the breakdown of the family. The Union also promoted the idea that full salvation was to be found in the individual and national return to religion – Protestant Christianity to be precise. Conversion and spiritual renewal, therefore, took a prominent position in both the activities and discourse of the WCTU<sup>27</sup>.

The YWCA, the sister organization of the YMCA, endorsed a similar religious mandate.<sup>28</sup> Mimicking the organizational structure of the Young Men's Christian Association, the YWCA was geared specifically towards young, single Protestant women who were considered to be at risk to be lured into the immoral activities that this new urban world was presenting. Like the YMCA, the YCWA had an active mandate to proselytize and bring young women into or back into the Christian family. The movement quickly became international and YWCAs emerged around the globe. The growth of these international movements served as an example of how philanthropy could be effective and successful beginning on a local level and spreading out from there. By the turn of the twentieth century, philanthropic activities covered a plethora of causes and organizational reform was present at local, national and international levels.

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<sup>26</sup> For a full history of the WCTU, see Sharon A. Cook, *Through Sunshine and Shadow: the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

<sup>27</sup> Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 153.

<sup>28</sup> Nina Mjagkij and Margaret Spratt, *Men and Women Adrift: the YMCA and the YWCA in the City* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).



By the sheer number of charities operating in the city, Montrealers appear to have been very charitable people at the end of the nineteenth century. Taking into consideration religious, social, health, and cultural philanthropic organizations, the City Directory of Montreal indicates that by 1901 there were literally hundreds of charities including orphanages, hospitals, nurseries, and institutions for deaf and blind children.<sup>29</sup> The role of charity and philanthropy in Montreal is particularly complex and uneven because of the size of the city, the diversity of religious affiliations, the presence of multiple ethnic groups, and the city's status as Canada's locus of cultural, social, and economic influence.

Prior to the 1890s, Montreal's charities were strictly divided along confessional lines. The dominance of the churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, meant that there was a rich tradition of religious charity by the 1890s. Charities tended to be administered and organized along confessional lines, with separate Protestant, Catholic and Jewish organizations. Within the Roman Catholic community, religious orders dominated charities, providing for needy parishioners from birth through death. In Protestant and Jewish communities, charity was principally administered through the laity. Often employing the same techniques and addressing the same social issues, these organizations can be said to have been working in parallel, non-integrative channels.

Janice Harvey's study of the Protestant Orphans' Asylum and the Montreal Ladies Benevolent Society lays out the pattern of Protestant

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<sup>29</sup> Twenty years earlier, the Directory listed less than half that number, indicating that the number of organizations was indeed ballooning.

Anglophone women's charity work in Montreal during the nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup>

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology provides a good sense of the rates of participation in various charities as well as the types of activities undertaken by these women. Protestant charity was dominated by a handful of elite families including the McCord, the Molson, the Ross, and the Lyman families and much of this charity work was done under the auspices of laywomen. She argues that while participation in charity was seen to be part of the duty of elite women, many used their affiliation for social appearances only and that the work of running the organizations was left to a relatively small group of women. In this way, a core group of activist women – those who were really committed to the causes themselves – emerged by mid-century in Montreal. She categorizes the women involved in the Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society as being influenced by restrictive gender ideologies and maintaining a very conservative approach to their role in society, including their charitable work. Despite the fact that this charity work provided women with influence in society and the opportunity to engage in social regulation, when push came to shove, elite "ladies" bent to male authority. Harvey's work outlines the ways this changed subtly over the nineteenth century.

Organization of Roman Catholic women took a rather different form. Among French-speaking Quebeckers, female religious orders dominated the world of charity, providing a full docket of workers mobilised for action. Women religious supported and managed homes for unwed mothers, orphanages,

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<sup>30</sup> Janice Harvey, "The Protestant Orphan Asylum and the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society: a Case Study in Protestant Child Charity in Montreal, 1822-1900" Thesis (PhD) McGill University, 2001.

hospitals, schools, daycare centres, and soup kitchens. Marta Danylewycz's study of religious orders, reveals the explosion of new postulants and (nuns) in Quebec over the course of the nineteenth century. Danylewycz argued that professions were limited in Quebec to men and religious orders and that Roman Catholic women used religious orders as a way to access professions such as teaching, nursing, administration, and management.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, participation in charity among the laity required both free time and the availability of (excess) financial resources. As Strong-Boag points out 'spare time' was hard to come by because "the higher French-Canadian birth rate and the smaller middle class, when considered in conjunction with different cultural directives, might have made it less important."<sup>32</sup> This is not to say that French Canadian women were completely excluded from the world of charitable activity but rather that the growth of women's philanthropic activity took place within the framework of the church. An integral part of the Catholic faith, charity had often taken the form of visiting the poor and sick, giving alms, and contributing to the parish itself. Catholic lay women were especially active in auxiliaries of hospitals and in individual parish organizations, usually under the supervision of local parish priests. More and more during this era, Catholic women (both lay and religious) were transforming traditional charity into systematized, integrated organizations.<sup>33</sup> By the 1890s, Catholic lay women were looking outside religious organizations to tackle the social problems they were

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<sup>31</sup> Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>32</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, *A Parliament of Women*, 38.

<sup>33</sup> Deirdre M. Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups and Transatlantic Social Reform in the Progressive Era*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

observing – a trend that is particularly evident through the life experiences of Joséphine Marchand Dandurand and Marie Globensky Lacoste.

The Jewish community had its own system of charity and philanthropy beginning with the Hebrew Philanthropic Society, founded in 1848. The community's internal organizational networks and patterns were very similar to those found in Protestant churches at the time. There were Ladies' Aid Societies for each synagogue, which were designed to raise money for their congregations. All congregations were represented within the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society though it was usually dominated by one particular congregation (initially the German and Polish synagogue and later the Reform synagogue.) There was a Young Ladies' Literary Society committed to "[t]he systematic reading of good books as a means of continued self-education."<sup>34</sup> A young Ladies' Sewing Society provided clothing for the poor and a sewing school was initiated as a means of countering those run by evangelical groups. In 1890, the Baron Maurice de Hirsch Institute was founded through a sizeable donation from its namesake. The Institute centralized charity within the Jewish community and was particularly concerned with meeting the needs of the large numbers of Jewish immigrants arriving in the city from Eastern Europe.<sup>35</sup>

For the most part, Jewish philanthropy met the needs of the Jewish community. However, there were members of the Jewish community who found a place within philanthropic projects and organizations outside of their community, including some elite Jewish women. As members of Montreal's elite

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<sup>34</sup> "Letter to the Editor", *Jewish Times*, 24 December, 1897.

<sup>35</sup> Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: the Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited, 1992), 119 ff.

social groups, Jewish women were active in non-sectarian or external organizations such as: the Montreal Local Council of Women (and its national body the National Council of Women of Canada), the Victorian Order of Nurses, the Red Cross, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, the Montreal General Hospital, Hôpital Notre-Dame, and the Montreal Women's Club. There were limits, however, to their engagement in what were seen as "Christian" organizations and no Jewish women were involved with organizations such as the YWCA or the WCTU. Basing their reform work on Christian principles, including the conversion of unbelievers to Christianity, such organizations precluded the participation of Jewish women. The organizations involving Jewish participants listed above, however, have often been associated with Christian principles and leadership as well. The fact that Christian organizations could envelope Jewish women, alongside Protestant and Roman Catholic women implies that conversion was not always at the centre of "Christian" philanthropy.

Ethnicity and religion played important roles in shaping benevolence in Montreal but so too did class. Charities and philanthropies were very often organized around specific groupings of those who financed and supported them. Like much of social life in turn-of-the-century Montreal, charity and philanthropy highlighted class differences. Indeed, the very act of benevolence reinforced the cleavage between social classes, demarcating those who "have" from those who "have not". But even within that first group of those who "have" there were graded distinctions that played out in various ways. Organizations and associations often targeted certain groups to act as their public representatives. Given the title of "patron/patroness" or "honorary president", these select

individuals were usually those with the highest social clout, often holding other prestigious titles that worked to reinforce the social status of the organization.<sup>36</sup> Their role was primarily that of a figurehead though some with a strong social conscience could take an active role in the organization as well. Supporting these figureheads and doing the vast majority of the work involved in philanthropy were the general board members or committee members. These people, too, needed to have the right credentials for the organization and more willingness to get their hands dirty in the workings out of the organization. At the base of these pyramidal structures were those who provided material and financial support. Drawing from a much larger population, donors were often rewarded by having their names published in newspapers or engraved on plaques, thus reinforcing the idea that benevolent action could earn social capital for the givers.

The further playing out of these class implications meant that associations and organizations were themselves classed and placed in a hierarchy. For the most part, this was determined by the religious and ethnic affiliations of those running and supporting the associations and mimicked the class structure of society itself. Because of the specific demographic make-up of Anglophone Montreal, for example, the WCTU and the YWCA were largely the domain of

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<sup>36</sup> This relationship was no doubt reciprocal with the individual's social status getting a boost with each honorary title added to his or her repertoire. The Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association offers a good example of the role of Honorary titles and patronages. In 1903, there were no patrons listed in the annual report of the MPPA. By 1906, the MPPA listed His Excellency Earl Grey, Governor-General of Canada as its only Patron. He maintained this position until he was replaced by the Duke of Cannaught, Governor-General of Canada in 1910. Underneath the Patron Category, however, was a listing of the "Officers" of the Board of Directors. In this category, the elite men of Montreal were listed including William Hingston, Alexandre Lacoste, and George A. Drummond. They retained their place in these prestigious positions until their death in some cases (Hingston and Drummond). See Annual Reports of the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association, McGill University Archives, M.G. 2079 C.9.

evangelical women, most of whom were middle-class rather than elite women. Unlike Toronto that had a large, thriving, and wealthy Methodist community, Montreal's elites were more likely to be Anglican or Presbyterian than either Methodist or Congregationalist. Therefore, organizations with an evangelical mandate appealed more to middle-class evangelicals than to elite female activists. With the exception of Charlotte Smithers Learmont, the elite women forming this study were neither members nor financial supporters of these two major organizations.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to class, gender impacted the shape of philanthropy and charity. Philanthropy was not the exclusive domain of women during this era. On the contrary, as elsewhere in patriarchal societies, men dominated much of the charitable and philanthropic activity in Montreal. Their expertise as businessmen positioned them as "ideal" candidates for organizational management. Elite men were embedded in well-connected networks growing out of their business and social interactions and these networks were often mirrored in their charitable work as well. Men served on hospital boards, controlled the Art Association, and dominated the City Improvement League. Although women were involved in many of these areas as well, they often took secondary, supportive roles. Hospitals serve as a good example of this. The Board of Governors of the Hôpital de Notre Dame was composed exclusively of men and was in charge of all major financial and managerial issues. The Ladies' Auxiliary, on the other hand, was responsible for the upkeep of the interior of the hospital (i.e. furnishings, basic

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<sup>37</sup>Smithers Learmont, a member of the Congregational Church and the only member of this community who might be titled an "evangelical", was active in the YWCA for several decades. She served as the Treasurer for many years and spearheaded the campaign for a Day Nursery.

repairs, etc.) and established a schedule of visitation ensuring that at least once a week patients were visited by a member of the Ladies' Auxiliary. They held bazaars or *kermesses* to raise funds as well as appealing for annual subscriptions.<sup>38</sup> Other organizations, such as the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds were structured so that those members with the highest status were in the highest positions. In turn-of-the-century Montreal, this relegation went to elite men. Occasionally their wives served as substitutes and many women were members of subcommittees. The committee women, however, undertook much of the daily grind.<sup>39</sup>

In general, the division of charity work between men and women mirrored the separate spheres ideology. While there was continued cooperative effort between male and female reformers, elite women felt particularly called to engage in philanthropy by nature of their sex combined with their class position. When a cause was connected to home life, mothering, women, or children, it was usually under the auspices of women. When a cause was seen to lie outside that "private" realm, then it became the domain of men. Charities and philanthropies, therefore, could be either single-sexed (separatist) or mixed. There were many specific women's-only philanthropic organizations and many fewer male-only philanthropic organizations. As new ideas of systematized charity shaped benevolence, men and women could be seen working side by side, either as organizations working together or within organizations themselves such as the

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<sup>38</sup> Catherine Braithwaite, "Let the Women Organize the Bazaar": Medical Philanthropy, Religion and Montreal Hospitals, 1840-1940". PhD in progress, McGill University.

<sup>39</sup> See Annual Reports of the Parks and Playgrounds Association, McGill University Archives, MG 2079.



Charity Organization Society. In general, male philanthropic involvement was supported and maintained by a significant body of women working on the ground.

### **A CATALYTIC YEAR: 1893**

1893 was potentially the most important year in the history of women's philanthropy in Canada and more specifically in Montreal. It would establish the organizational infrastructure that facilitated and supported women-led scientific philanthropy even to this day. It was the year of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the appointment of Lord Aberdeen as Governor General in Canada. These two events, though seemingly unrelated, combined to have an enormous impact on the shape and extent of philanthropy in Montreal.

In 1893, twenty-seven million people visited the Columbian Exposition. The fair was designed to serve as a witness to the success of modernism. Chicago, which had been devastated by a city wide fire in 1871, was now a completely rebuilt city that served as a stunning example of modern advancement. There were twenty main pavilions and buildings constructed alongside dozens of other smaller structures at the Exposition. They housed exhibits on machinery, agriculture, mining, transportation, manufacturing, livestock, forestry, fisheries, children, and women. The first Ferris wheel and magician Harry Houdini were introduced to the world at Chicago. It was a taste of the future and a celebration of human accomplishment.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing, *The World's Columbian Exhibition: the Chicago World's Fair of 1893* (Champaign, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 2002), vii.



World's Columbian Exposition: Woman's Building, Chicago, United States, 1893.  
 (Long white building on the left)  
 Photo Brooklyn Museum<sup>41</sup>

Unlike previous World Fairs, women played a vital role in the execution of this international event. Not only did they create and maintain a two-acre Women's exhibition as well as a Children's exhibition, they were also prominent as speakers and experts during the various World Congresses that took place throughout the year on topics such as education, medicine, temperance, literature, and others.<sup>42</sup> More than simply exhibiting the accomplishments of American women, the Women's Pavilion was designed to be a location of international exchange. In 1893, women in Chicago asserted their position as engaged citizens

<sup>41</sup> Photograph available through Brooklyn Museum Flickr Photostream. Available at: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/brooklyn\\_museum/2784216205/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/brooklyn_museum/2784216205/)

<sup>42</sup> Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing, *The World's Columbian Exhibition: the Chicago World's Fair of 1893* (Champaign, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 42.

with important contributions to make to the world at large. At the opening of the Women's Building, president of the women's organizing committee Berthé Honoré Palmer announced that:

The Exposition will...benefit women, not alone by means of the material objects brought together, but there will be a more lasting and permanent result through the interchange of thought and sympathy among influential and leading women of all countries now for the first time working together for a common purpose and an established means of communication.<sup>43</sup>

The Quinquennial meeting of the International Council of Women (ICW) held during the fair would have been foremost in Honoré Palmer's mind. The idea of a "woman's council" first emerged in Europe (France and England) and was implemented in the United States in 1888 by feminists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. It marked a significant break from traditional women's benevolence practices. Women's Councils, at the local, national, and international levels, were designed as umbrella organizations, bringing independent societies into contact and communication with each other. A Council, governed by the women themselves, further secularized charity. While councilwomen could seek the advice of clergy and often asked clergy to speak to them on various topics, the Council was under no obligation to any religious body. Among Roman Catholics, this was an acutely important moment both in terms of fulfilling their charitable duties outside the direct control of the church (and its priests) and in terms of working alongside non-Catholic women in common effort.

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<sup>43</sup> Mrs. Potter Palmer, "Address as President of the Board of Lady Managers," delivered 1 May 1893, at World's Columbian Exposition, 17, The Newberry Library, Chicago. (#289) as quoted in Joan Margaret Fisher, "A Study of Six Women Philanthropists of the Early Twentieth Century", PhD Dissertation, The Union Institute, 1992, 36.

On one level, the Council served a very practical purpose. There was the underlying belief among reformers that charity had become ineffective because of its uneven distribution. The solution to this, many believed, was charity organization. The charity organization movement originated in Germany and was quick to pick up steam in Britain and in key American centres such as New York and Chicago.<sup>44</sup> The formation of Women's Councils and the International Women's Council in particular, was borne out of this same movement. The organization of charity was of utmost importance for councilwomen looking to ensure that recipients of charity were neither double-dipping nor being overlooked. Beyond this practical purpose, however, local, national, and international councils served as support systems for women, reinforcing the idiom that there is strength in numbers.

At the 1893 meeting of the ICW in Chicago, five years into its existence, the Council elected Lady Ishbel Marjoribanks Aberdeen as its President. Lady Aberdeen, born Ishbel Maria Marjoribanks on 14 March 1857, was the fourth daughter of an old wealthy Scottish family. Her father, a Liberal member of parliament, and her mother, of Irish descent, spent the season in London and the rest of the year in the Scottish highlands.<sup>45</sup> In 1877, Ishbel married John Hamilton Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen. They were an extremely active couple. Their strong religious and moral beliefs undergirded their commitment to putting faith into action. In England, Scotland and Ireland, they served in a variety of political

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<sup>44</sup> Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: a Social History of Welfare in America Revised Edition*. New York: Basic Books, 1996), 75.

<sup>45</sup> John T. Saywell, "Introduction", *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898*. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960), xiii.

positions (including Lord Lieutenant of Ireland) coinciding with their wholehearted support of William Gladstone. In 1890, the couple travelled through Canada, fostering a love for the people and the land. Upon Gladstone's re-election in 1892, he gave the Aberdeens three options for service: Secretary for Scotland, Viceroy of India, or Governor-General of Canada. Aberdeen accepted the Canadian post, to be taken up upon the resignation of Lord Stanley. In the meantime, the Aberdeens attended the opening of the World's Fair in April 1893. While in Chicago, they received word that Stanley had resigned. Before their return to England to prepare for their new tenure in Canada, Ishbel Aberdeen attended the meeting of the International Council of Women.<sup>46</sup>

Canadian visitors were also present at the meeting in Chicago, including Mary Petrie Carus-Wilson of Montreal, though Canada had no official tie to the ICW at that point. According to Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canadian spectators in Chicago could hardly avoid some awareness of their own relative immaturity in feminist matters."<sup>47</sup> Upon returning to Canada, the female spectators, most of whom were from Toronto, were eager to initiate their own national branch of the ICW. The first branch of the National Council of Women of Canada was formed in September 1893 in Toronto, with much help and encouragement from Lady Aberdeen who had just arrived in Canada to take up residence in Ottawa. Aberdeen enthusiastically took up the position of first President of the NCWC.

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<sup>46</sup> Biographical information of Lady Ishbel Aberdeen can be found in two major sources. The first, John T. Saywell, "Introduction", *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898*. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960) is a short scholarly work, largely focusing on the political and philanthropic work of the Aberdeens. A biography of Lady Aberdeen has also been published by Dundurn Press and is less rigorous in its approach. Doris French, *Ishbel and the Empire. A Biography of Lady Aberdeen* (Toronto: Dundurn Press Limited, 1988).

<sup>47</sup> Strong-Boag, *A Parliament of Women*, 74.

The synchronicity of the meeting in Chicago, Aberdeen's election as President of the ICW, and the appointment of Lord Aberdeen as Governor-General of Canada had an enormous impact on Canadian women's organizations.

Following the establishment of the NCWC and its Toronto branch, Lady Aberdeen looked to extend the movement in Canada. Montreal was her first priority. Lady Aberdeen, who engineered the formation of the original Montreal Executive, set the tone for the organization. She was well aware that commitment to cooperation would require the elite women of Montreal to be creative, energetic, and most of all, committed to finding a middle ground. Just after her arrival in Canada, Aberdeen consulted with Dr. Rev. James Barclay, Minister at the prestigious St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, for recommendations of ideal candidates to take the lead in the formation of a Montreal branch. Though not a member of his congregation, Barclay identified Julia Parker Drummond as the woman for the job. Lady Aberdeen met with Parker Drummond to introduce the idea to her. Aberdeen records that Parker Drummond, "the wife of Senator Drummond and a very distinguished charming looking woman...readily accepted and spoke a few words saying Yes in a v. dignified pleasant way."<sup>48</sup> Two leading Francophone Catholic women were recommended to Aberdeen as ideal vice-presidents, Marguerite (Loulou) Lamothe Thibaudeau and Marie Globensky Lacoste who were clear leaders within elite Francophone charity circles. Aberdeen was convinced that if the council was going to be effective in Montreal

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<sup>48</sup> 30 November 1893, *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898*. ed. John T. Saywell, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1960), 36.

it must be a collaborative endeavour, to the point that she wished the idea to be presented to the archbishop of Montreal so that his favour might be procured.<sup>49</sup>

On 30 November 1893, Ishbel Aberdeen presided over a meeting in the Victoria Rifles Armoury in Montreal. Drummond was seated beside her on the platform along with other women from various societies across the city. The hall was reported as having been “crowded with those interested in the subject.”<sup>50</sup> After a rousing and eloquent speech by Aberdeen on the “origin, progress and method of work of a Women’s Council”<sup>51</sup>, a proposal was made to form a branch of the National Council of Women of Canada in Montreal. As Aberdeen had anticipated and indeed planned for, Julia Parker Drummond was elected as the first President of the Montreal Local Council of Women with Marguerite Lamothe Thibaudeau elected as Vice-President. The following year, Katherine Samuel DeSola (an Orthodox Jew), Joséphine Marchand Dandurand (a Roman Catholic French-Canadian), and Eliza McIntosh Reid (an Anglophone Unitarian), were added to the executive council.<sup>52</sup>

Though they were members of religiously, ethnically, and politically diverse social groups, the original executive was composed of members of the Montreal elite and therefore these women knew each other. In fact, they were neighbours, occupying homes in Montreal’s Square Mile. As discussed earlier, a

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<sup>49</sup> Getting the approval of the clergy may have been less daunting than it appears at first glance. Much like Protestant practices, Catholic women were accustomed to entertaining clergy in their homes in order to explain philanthropic plans and secure their support. Her diary indicates that by 1897, Lacoste, for example, was entertaining Archbishop Bruchesi on a frequent basis. Personal journal, Lady Lacoste, Fonds Famille Lacoste, P 76, BANQ-M.

<sup>50</sup> “Synopsis of First Annual Report Submitted December 6<sup>th</sup> 1894” found in “Second Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, January 1896.” (Montreal: Morton, Phillips and Co., 1896).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

social network was in place in Montreal that linked families and individuals of the upper class together. Business partnerships, political appointments, neighbourhood formation, and kinship patterns presented these women with opportunities to interact with other elite women at dinners, balls, teas, etc. But more than being familiar with each other, these women were committed to work with each other. They believed that through collaboration they could be more effective and wide-reaching in their goals than as individual entities.

The MLCW did not wait to put their ideas into practice. As Parker Drummond wrote in her first President's report (she herself could not read the report because she was in Europe at the time though Lady Aberdeen graciously agreed to fill the Chair): "The Local Council of Women may now be said to be fairly established in Montreal...we are strengthened in the hope that our Local Council will be a permanent power for good in the community."<sup>53</sup> Within the first year, four general meetings were held. The thirty-two affiliated societies (see Figure 3.1) were divided into four Committees of Report: Committee on Music, Art, and Education; Committee on General Philanthropy; Committee on Work for Women and Children; Committee on Church Societies.<sup>54</sup> These committees evolved over the years as categories of interest changed though the purpose of them remained the same: to bring organizations with similar interests into better communication with each other and to find ways to coordinate their efforts. In addition to reports from these committees and from the societies themselves,

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<sup>53</sup> Julia Drummond, "To the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894", *Some Addresses*, 7.

<sup>54</sup> "Synopsis of First Annual Report Submitted December 6<sup>th</sup> 1894" found in "Second Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, January 1896." (Montreal: Morton, Phillips and Co., 1896).



papers were discussed at the meetings on the topic of “Hospital Work”, “Charities”, “Co-operative Philanthropy”, “Cooking schools and their Necessity”, “The Domestic Problem”, and “Manual Training.”<sup>55</sup>

**FIGURE 3.1: LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AFFILIATED WITH THE MLCW IN 1896**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative to the MLCW</b>
Women’s Protective Immigration Society	Mrs. Gillespie
Decorative Art Society	Mrs. G.W. Stephens
Montreal Musical Club	Mrs. A.H. McKee
Cathedral Branch of Women’s Auxiliary	Mrs. Norton
Church of Messiah, Samaritan Society	Mrs. Barnes
The Harvey Institute	Mrs. Sumner
The Ladies Benevolent Society	Mrs. John Savage
The Protestant Infants’ Home	Mrs. Davies
The Protestant Orphan Asylum	Mrs. Henshaw
Young Women’s Christian Association	Mrs. Learmont
Montreal Foundling Nursery	Mrs. McArthur
St Margaret’s Home	Mrs. Sutherland Taylor
The Mackay Institute	Mrs. Wolferstan Thomas
Alumnae Society of McGill University	Miss Binmore
The Ladies Morning Musical Club	Mrs. S. Greenshields
Montreal Maternity	Mrs. Miller
The Women’s Club	Mrs. Reid
Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society	Mrs. Lichtenheim
American Presbyterian Foreign Missionary Soc	Mrs. Lindsay
Women’s Guild of St. Andrew’s Church	Miss Perkins
St. Paul’s Church Dorcas and Ladies’ Aid	Mrs. Barclay
Ladies Sewing Society of Spanish and Portuguese Jews	Mrs. Leo
Ladies’ Aid Society of Spanish and Portuguese Jews	Mrs. De Sola
Guild Ste. Anne, St John the Evangelist	Miss Stikeman
Ladies’ Aid, Temple Emmanu-el	Mrs. Veld
Notre-Dame Hospital	Mme. Thibaudeau
Montreal Diocesan Branch of Girls’ Friendly Society	Mrs. George Redpath
Montreal Homeopathic Hospital	Mrs. Hector MacKenzie
The Western Hospital	Mrs. George Armstrong
Montreal Onward and Upward Society	Mrs. Learmont
Montreal Branch of Woman’s Art Association of Canada	Miss Stikeman

<sup>55</sup> “Synopsis of First Annual Report Submitted December 6<sup>th</sup> 1894”.

Two main issues occupied much of the council's energies that first year: "the advisability of a Woman Factory Inspector...and Manual Training". The council sent six delegates to the annual conference of the National Council of Women of Canada, three of whom gave papers including Drummond, Carus-Wilson, and Dandurand. The year was deemed to have been highly successful as Parker Drummond wrote: "and let me emphasize the fact that all the members of the Council are in this truest sense of the word reformers; each is working in some way for the improvement and regeneration of the race; each is understood to be working with and not against, the eternal tendency that makes for Righteousness."<sup>56</sup>

What emerges in an examination of the Montreal Local Council of Women in the first decades of its existence is an ongoing and complex negotiation by elite women in Montreal. First, the women of the MLCW created a bridge across ethnic and language divides based on shared experiences of class and gender. But, in addition, these commonalities were reinforced by a shared motivation that was based both on maternalism and religion (ironically enough!) Second, through much hard work and careful positioning, the MLCW found a lens for justifying their engagement with public and political issues that went beyond the home. This they did in ways that were deemed non-threatening to the established patriarchy, yet reasserted their right to engage in an expanded public realm. Finally, the individuals, the various associations, and the MLCW as a whole accumulated many skills and strategies that they would carry forward into the political and social activism that emerged from these philanthropic endeavours

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<sup>56</sup> Julia Drummond, "To the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894", *Some Addresses*, 12.

including effective communication procedures, refined public relations techniques, in-depth research methods, massive group coordination, and financial management skills.

The membership of the Executive Council and of the individual organizations testifies to the ways the MLCW intended to act as a bridge right from the start. As the Executive Committee changed slowly over the first decades of the Council, the leadership maintained its ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity. In 1899, for example, the first year that Parker Drummond stepped down from the Presidency, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, Eliza McIntosh Reid, Katie Samuel DeSola, Marguerite Lamothe Thibaudeau, Charlotte Smithers Learmont and Adaline Hurd VanHorne were all members of the Executive. They were a picture of religious diversity: Parker Drummond was an Anglican, Marchand Dandurand and Lamothe Thibaudeau were Catholics, MacIntosh Reid and Hurd VanHorne were Unitarians, Smithers Learmont was a Congregationalist, and Samuel DeSola was an Orthodox Jew. Five years later, in 1905, those same six women were still on the Executive and they had been joined by Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie and Margaret Macdonald Hingston, both Roman Catholics. More than ten years after its founding, the original Executive members were still very much involved in the Council, not just as figureheads but also in the day-to-day workings out of the Council. The Executive met at least once a month, frequently bi-weekly and these women did not just limit themselves to Executive Committee membership. They were also involved in the various sub-committees formed by the MLCW. It is clear that not just for show but also in the

working out of their philanthropy, women were able to work across ethnic, religious, and linguistic lines.<sup>57</sup>

Yet every single one of the women mentioned here lived in the Square Mile. They were neighbours, they were members of an elite class. They shared the bond of womanhood and also the bond of class. There was no attempt to create bridges that spanned class divides; the women did not seek cooperation with working-class women. The topics chosen for consideration and action also unmistakably demonstrate that the MLCW was positioned in a specific class identity. Their concern over immigration was intimately connected to the shortage of domestic workers in Montreal and the challenge this caused for their elite households. Their interest in parks and playgrounds was undergirded by the idea that while children from the under-classes deserved safe and clean play areas, these areas ought to keep them firmly planted within their own working-class neighbourhoods. Never was there a sense that the work of the MLCW was about the eradication of class divisions. Rather, in the words of long time council executive member Mary Petrie Carus-Wilson:

Throughout we have to recognize a duty not only to the destitute and degraded, but to those who ask not alms but help of human fellowship, and appeal less to our pity than to our sympathy. It is through the co-operation, and not

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<sup>57</sup> It must be pointed out that this chapter is using the Montreal Local Council of Women as a case study. In fact, there were many organizations across the city that functioned in similar fashions. The Historical and Antiquarian Society, the Red Cross, the Victorian Order of Nurses, the Dame Patronesses de l'Hopital Notre-Dame, the Charity Organization Association, and the Parks and Playgrounds are examples of organizations that were inclusive of both Francophones and Anglophones as well as Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Most women involved with the MLCW were also involved in many other organizations. Historians such as Susan Chambré have framed this as elite women creating "invisible careers" for themselves. Certainly the women in this study are examples of the way philanthropic involvement could be fashioned into full-time work. Susan M. Chambré, "Parallel Power Structures, Invisible Careers, and the Changing Nature of American Jewish Women's Philanthropy", *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 169-190.

through the conflict of classes, that progress will be made, and the amount of this co-operation will depend upon the degree in which each class realizes what are its special responsibilities and what are the true interests and the highest aims of the human race.<sup>58</sup>

Were shared class and gender experiences strong enough to overcome religious differences? What explains both their desire to build these bridges and their ability to do so? Was it a secularization of philanthropy that moved religion away from the centre of discourse and action, much as Ramsay Cook posited about other social reform in Canada in *The Regenerators*?<sup>59</sup> Or did they align more with Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie's argument that this transition had little to do with the removal of religion from social action but rather signalled a transition within religion itself?<sup>60</sup> The answer, I believe, has to do with a shared motivation that was deeply steeped in Judeo-Christian ideas of charity and societal regeneration.

The MLCW began every meeting with silent prayer. It was the first Council to do so in Canada and it stayed in practice throughout the entire era studied. The MLCW functioned within a certain frame of tolerance. It was hardly a tolerance that spanned all differences, but it did allow for religious diversity. Adopting Aberdeen's ecumenical approach, Drummond's insistence on tolerance right from the start did not mean that the Council was nonreligious or secular, but rather, that mutual respect was integrated into the Constitution and

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<sup>58</sup> Mrs. Charles Ashley Carus-Wilson, "Serving One Another." *The Congress of Women: Held in the Woman's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, U. S. A., 1893.* (Chicago, Ill: Monarch Book Company, 1894), 658-659.

<sup>59</sup> Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1985).

<sup>60</sup> Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau. *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

practice of the Council. Drummond asked the Council for “the perfect freedom of expression, with but one proviso, -- there shall be no attack. Let the light that guides each one of us shine clearly before all, but let no one try to put out her neighbour’s candle. Two words will sum up our aim, to love and to understand.”<sup>61</sup> Her language resonates with religious imagery yet her message is one of inclusion rather than exclusion. Lady Aberdeen notes in her diary that while other cities were struggling over the issue of silent prayer at Council meetings, Montreal had adopted it naturally, “feeling that this conduced to more reality and real prayer on the part of the Jews [and Catholics].”<sup>62</sup> The Local Council, like the Victorian Order of Nurses, the Red Cross, and the Montreal Women’s Club, had a vision for society that emerged from class-based Judeo-Christian principles of charity and generosity. The belief in a divine ordinance and the hope for perfection were guiding principles for their work. By providing public lectures and clean milk, by providing health care to working people, by expanding minds to art and literature, by supporting the Empire through fundraising and education, the work of these organizations was to improve the individual and regenerate society.

These principles fit well with two main facets of Judaism. The first is the Jewish mitzvah of charity. This command to provide for those less fortunate than yourself is one of the cornerstones of the Jewish faith and the means of salvation. Tzedakah, based on the command to love your neighbour as yourself (a Jewish as

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<sup>61</sup> Julia Drummond, “To the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894”, published in *Some Addresses by Julia Drummond*. (Montreal: The Gazette Printing Company, Ltd, 1907), 13.

<sup>62</sup> Ishbel Aberdeen, *Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen*, (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960), 11 May 1895.

well as a Christian command), is broken down into various levels such as giving with recognition, giving anonymously, and, the highest level, helping a person to become self-sufficient to the stage of being able to perform the mitzvah of charity himself. As Timothy Smith wrote in 1984, “[t]he preoccupation of the champions of social Christianity with what they have usually called Christ’s law of love paralleled the revitalization of the Mosaic ethic of love by Jewish philanthropists.”<sup>63</sup> As social Christianity began to reconstruct its pattern of giving, from charity to philanthropy, the purpose shifted from providing temporarily to providing for the long term. The goal of social regeneration was completely consistent with Jewish principles of the ultimate act of charity, that of becoming no longer dependent on charity.<sup>64</sup> The act of philanthropy and its Biblical justifications, therefore, were compatible among Christian and Jewish social reformers.

The second area of compatibility concerns the issue of conversion. While evangelical Christianity had conversion of “lost souls” (i.e. all those not adhering to an evangelical form of Christianity) as its central premise, there were few evangelicals among Montreal’s elite. Rather, those who were Protestants were members of Anglican, Presbyterian, and Unitarian congregations. Unlike

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<sup>63</sup> Timothy Smith, “Biblical Ideals in American Christian and Jewish Philanthropy, 1880-1920.” *American Jewish History*, (1984 74(1): 3-26), 25-26.

<sup>64</sup> In the minutes of the Triennial meeting of the National Council of Jewish Women held in 1896, the following statement on charity and philanthropy was made: “True philanthropy, the study of which is urged in our Council, does not consist of paying one’s dues and subscriptions to philanthropical committees or agents, but rather to learn how best to assist the indigent and needy and to find a way that the recipient shall almost imperceptibly become self-supporting – philanthropy whose noble mission embraces the globe and scatters beneficent influence broadcast; philanthropy that ennobles the bestower and does not degrade the receiver. With such ideals well inculcated, we shall secure the development of proper motive, for motive is a center to which all things eventually tend.” *First Triennial Meeting of the National Council of Jewish Women, 1896*, 112. Library of Congress, Box 34.

Toronto, Methodism and other evangelical ideologies had made few inroads into elite culture, and as wealth and social status increased, families were often seen making the move up the “religious social ladder.”<sup>65</sup> The argument here is that Catholics and Jews, (neither of which were particularly proselytizing sects), were not seen as objects of potential conversion by the Protestant elite. Therefore, elite Protestants, Catholics, and Jews were not in competition for each other and, sharing a common vision for social renewal, were philanthropically and organizationally compatible.

In Montreal this break from sectarian division had great implications. In a city where sectarian and ethnic differences had maintained parallel (i.e. not intersecting) charity structures and practices, the Local Council of Women stood apart in its insistence on cooperative action amongst all women’s organizations, regardless of creed, ethnicity, or political affiliation.

Not all women were comfortable with the non-sectarian nature of the council in its early years. Two major organizations refused to join the National Council in 1893 because the council did not espouse a distinctly Christian mandate – the Young Women’s Christian Association and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. Charlotte Smithers Learmont played an important role in bringing the Montreal YWCA under the umbrella of the MLCW within three years of its founding. It took a few more years for the local chapters of the WCTU to join the council.

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<sup>65</sup> For a further discussion of this point, see Roslyn Trigger, “God’s Mobile Mansions: Protestant Church Relocation and Extension in Montreal, 1850-1914”, PhD Thesis, McGill University, 2005.



In the case of Francophone Catholic women, the formation of the Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste in 1907, fourteen years after the founding of the MLCW, has been described as a parting of ways and the establishment of their own, separate women's organization.<sup>66</sup> Quebec historiography has frequently positioned the MLCW as being an "Anglophone-only" institution with the FNSJB emerging as its "Francophone-only" counterpart.<sup>67</sup> Certainly the FNSJB was strictly a Francophone organization and it was formed with the object of "grouper les Canadiennes françaises catholiques en vue de fortifier par l'union leur action dans la famille et dans la société."<sup>68</sup> Yolande Pinard maintains that an era of cooperation was over despite the fact that she argues: "La question sociale et la question des femmes unissent en dernière instance les francophones aux anglophones et leurs intérêts sont souvent identiques à ce sujet."<sup>69</sup> A closer examination reveals a significant amount of cooperation that was nurtured between these two umbrella organizations in the years before the First World War, in many ways extending the influence of women rather than limiting or dividing it. The two founders of the FNSJB, Caroline Dessaulles Béique and Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie remained in Executive positions on the MLCW. Second, the reports of each organization indicate that the groups sought out opportunities to coordinate and cooperate on important issues. Each approached the other with various concerns and project

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<sup>66</sup> Karine Hébert, "Une Organisation Maternaliste: La fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste et la Lutte de Femmes pour le Droit de Vote", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 52, no. 3 (hiver 1999), 315-144.

<sup>67</sup> Karine Hébert, "Une Organisation Maternaliste".

<sup>68</sup> "La Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste veut avoir sa maison", *La Bonne Parole*, 11, 12 (December 1923), 4.

<sup>69</sup> Pinard, "Les débuts du mouvement des femmes", *Les femmes dans la société québécoise* (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1977), 82.

ideas and consistently the groups found ways to combine female influence as opposed to divide it.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to religious differences, Montreal had the very real challenge of dealing with language differences. Though most members of the MLCW would have been fluent in English and French, the MLCW held most of their meetings in English. Some formal speeches were given in French – most notably at annual meetings and public lectures. In addition, annual reports were printed exclusively in English. Most of the Francophone members were conversant in English and most elite Anglophone women were equally at ease in French.<sup>71</sup> In effect, English was normalized as the language of the MLCW and, for elite Francophone women at ease in both languages, this appears to have been tolerated.

While the women carefully navigated internal complexities that had the potential to limit their effectiveness so too did they navigate external complexities. Responding to what they perceived as critiques or as indifference in some cases, especially issued from their male co-citizens, Parker Drummond and others established a public relations campaign that justified their transition into a

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<sup>70</sup> The Tag Day is one example of this but there are many others. See for example the request of the FNSJB to the MLCW to support a Liquor restriction amendment. This resulted in a petition being submitted to the government with over 70,000 signatures. “Fourteenth Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1907-08” (Montreal: D. Bentley & Co. Printers, 1909), 8-9. BANQ, P653.

<sup>71</sup> Being trained in English and French was a regular aspect of upper class education for young women. Many of the women in this study wrote at ease in both languages as evidenced by their correspondence. Others, such as Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, were equipped to give speeches in both English and French. This information is gathered both from personal papers and also from the Census returns of 1901 and 1911 which indicated the spoken and written languages of all members of households. Julia Parker Drummond is described by G.B. Clarke in the papers of the Montreal Family Welfare Association as being perfectly at ease in conversational French as well. Of George and Julia Drummond he wrote: “Both of them spoke excellent French, both had many friends among the French group...” “Recollection of G.B. Clarke”, Montreal Family Welfare Association Papers, McGill University Archives, MG 4172.

world of public and social influence. It is clear, here again, that there was an assumed intrinsic relationship between maternalism and philanthropic duty. Speaking at the first annual meeting of the National Council of Women, Lady Aberdeen lauded: “And how can we best describe this woman’s mission in a word? Can we not best describe it as ‘mothering’ in one sense or another? We are not all called to be the mothers of little children but every woman is called on to ‘mother’ in some way or another. And it is impossible to overlook what a great work of ‘mothering’ in a special sense is committed to the women of Canada.”<sup>72</sup> It was as mothers that women were engaging in the work of the council. As mothers they claimed a specific social and political identity, with rights, duties, and responsibilities, both for their families and society at large. They approached both their choice of issues and their means of addressing these issues as mothers.

Responding directly to male (and possibly female) critiques that this was a club designed to pursue overtly feminist issues, Parker Drummond tackled the issue head-on at the first Annual General Meeting of the MLCW: “Now men have a particular antipathy to any thing that even approaches the Club Idea amongst women...It may be that they are simply reluctant to go shares...or it may be that they suspect danger in this outward and visible proof of woman’s growing self-reliance, and of her ability (long questioned) to join forces with other women in organized ways for the furtherance of a common object.”<sup>73</sup> Drummond was adroit at fielding these concerns and publicly framing the Council in non-threatening terms without sacrificing the potential impact and breadth of the

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<sup>72</sup> Lady Aberdeen, “Our First Annual Meeting” National Council of Women of Canada, (Toronto: s.n, 1894), 5.

<sup>73</sup> Julia Drummond, “To the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894”, *Some Addresses*, 8.

organization in the fields of politics, reform, and philanthropy: “We claim no kinship with her who meanly depreciates and slanders her own sex, nor with the woman who...indulges in exaggerated tirades against man.”<sup>74</sup> A femininity of language flavoured the speeches of Parker Drummond:

the aim of our society is not primarily or directly, more work, fresh reform, but that we should have the joy of sympathy, the help of counsel, in the work we are severally striving to fulfil. Our purpose is that we should grow in love and mutual understanding, in mental breadth and range of vision; that we should by association with others lose all the narrow provincialism of self. And this is to be done at no sacrifice of individuality in matters of belief or opinion.<sup>75</sup>

Yet it would be inaccurate to say that Drummond’s language was timid. She boldly announced at first Annual General meeting that women were “[claiming their] right to talk from the platform and in the assembly, as well as over tea cups; to talk on questions affecting the great world in which [they] lived, as well as on the problems of the little world called ‘Home’”<sup>76</sup>

At that same first annual meeting of the MLCW, Parker Drummond built a strong case for the power that could be found in common effort. Through the MLCW, women were extending and fortifying their networks, presenting themselves to society as a formidable, unified work force. With continued eloquence, Parker Drummond made this clear:

For in the power of our union we shall be able to make a determined stand against any injustice or wrong...For we begin to realize that we women, too, are citizens, and having learned by sad experience how awful is the tie that binds us together in our cities, so that the moral shame and bodily disease of the

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<sup>74</sup> Julia Drummond, “To the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894”, *Some Addresses*, 13.

<sup>75</sup> Julia Drummond, “To the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894”, published in *Some Addresses by Julia Drummond*. (Montreal: The Gazette Printing Company, Ltd, 1907), 12.

<sup>76</sup> Julia Drummond, “To the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894”, *Some Addresses*, 9.

lowest amongst us reacts upon the highest, we are resolved to bear our part in the regeneration of our cities as we have never done before... But the perfect law waits for the perfect man. And we women shall best fulfil our part as subjects and as citizens by working for the regeneration of the individual. It is ours to teach, to strengthen, and to save...<sup>77</sup>

Drummond believed in the attainability of perfection. In an oratorical crescendo, Drummond built the case for the eventuality of societal and individual perfection. Referring first to prophets and then to poets, Drummond announced with unwavering confidence that “now science has come to tell us that those dreams were true visions... And history, lighted by science, traces the evolution of the nations from barbarism to political order, from a state to anarchy and oppression to the perfect freedom of a willing obedience to the laws of justice and right.”<sup>78</sup>

But ever present in this unabashed optimism of Parker Drummond was the idea that women must always work in partnership – both with each other and with men. Asserting the maternalist idea that the two sexes were designed to be complementary, Parker Drummond insisted that women had much to offer men and vice versa in the work of philanthropy:

Yet in this, as in other causes common to both, the man and the woman must work side by side – the man with his calmer judgment and his closer knowledge of the world to moderate and guide, the woman in her passionate earnestness and her impelling hopefulness to uplift and to sustain. And the call of the Council is – Men and women, let us go forward together, for our progress and our destinies are one. Men and women, let us go forward together, one in the infinite Unity, one in the infinite Love!<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Julia Parker Drummond, *Some Addresses*, 11-12

<sup>78</sup> Julia Drummond, “To the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894”, *Some Addresses*, 13-14.

<sup>79</sup> Julia Parker Drummond, “Address on the Council Idea (Sent to the Meeting at Charlottetown, P.E.I., in May, 1905)”, *Some Addresses* (Montreal: Gazette Printing Company 1907), 62-63.

In its first two decades the MLCW experienced rapid growth. By its fifteenth year of existence, there were thirty-seven affiliated organizations, estimated to bring thousands of women across Montreal into cooperative action.<sup>80</sup> As the MLCW got bigger, its projects got larger and the sophistication of its strategies greater. Many of the strategies that the MLCW committees employed were those learned from their own experiences in earlier charitable and philanthropic organizations as well as from watching their husbands and fathers operate in the business and political domains. They attempted to be as systematic and scientific as possible. Methodical research became a mainstay of their approach so that they would understand thoroughly the topic of concern. They consulted written materials, they pursued experts in the field, and they often made their own local studies. They also gained important financial experience. Though there was little budget for the MLCW as its own organization, cooperative events, such as Tag Days meant that tens of thousands of dollars were filtered through the organization every year.

In her examination of Australian women in this time period, Shurlee Swain has framed women's philanthropic activity as unpaid labour, which indeed it was.<sup>81</sup> Much of this labour, Swain argues, was invisible labour and as such, added to women's marginalization. "Such invisibility", she says, "limited the degree to which philanthropy led to the development of power structures that paralleled the political and commercial structures available to men... There is

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<sup>80</sup> "Fifteenth and Sixteenth Annual Reports, 1908-1909 and 1909-1910", *Local Council of Women of Montreal* (Montreal: W.H. Eaton and Son, Printers, 1911), available at BANQ, P653.

<sup>81</sup> The National Council of Women of Australia was formed in 1896, just three years after the NCWC.

little evidence that, through their philanthropy, women were able to exercise power which they were denied in the political, legal, or business spheres at the time.”<sup>82</sup> The record of Montreal women and indeed the primary argument of this thesis, indicates that elite women were very cognizant of the influence and authority that could be earned through philanthropy. Furthermore, they became very proficient at accessing power that was denied them in the official political structures of their day through organizational and philanthropic endeavours.

With the skills and experience of organization activity and an impressive record of effecting change, the MLCW positioned itself as an authority in the public realm. The Council made a concerted effort to ensure the public were kept abreast of their activities. Often the public announcement of their activities was reinforced by endorsements from prominent authoritative figures, such as clergymen. In the Annual Report of 1899, for example, the Hygiene Committee reported that the health talks they had arranged “were announced and recommended from the pulpit by the parish priests.”<sup>83</sup> Helen Reid of the Press Committee, reported to the MLCW in 1900 that

during the year it has sent about one thousand lines of printed matter to the daily papers in the interests of the several good works of the Council, that many thousands of lines apart from this have appeared from city editors and reporters and that the public have been in constant reception of news of the Council’s work and projects.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Shurlee Swain, “Women and Philanthropy in Colonial and Post-Colonial Australia”, in Kathleen McCarthy, ed. *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 164-165.

<sup>83</sup> “Fifth Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1899” (Montreal: “Witness” Printing House, 1899), 11. BANQ, P653.

<sup>84</sup> “Sixth Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1900” (Montreal: “Witness” Printing House, 1900), 14. BANQ, P653.

Civic and social leaders recognized both the contributions of the Council and the authority and influence which women claimed in this work. Increasingly the Council was consulted on specific social issues and its cooperation was requested on a great variety of projects including the Tuberculosis Exhibition, the Child Welfare Exhibition, and eventually the political campaigns of certain municipal government candidates.<sup>85</sup> The Federated Trades Council approached the Council in 1900 asking for its cooperation in tackling the sweating system.<sup>86</sup> That same year,

a deputation from the Council was requested to meet a Committee of influential men, several of whom were clergymen, to discuss [Charity Organization]... Since then this joint Committee has worked very carefully, leaving no stone unturned which would help to insure the success of the undertaking... From the point the development of the work rested in hands of a regularly established Charity Organization Society, on whose Board of Directors are seven members of the Local Council Executive.<sup>87</sup>

This certainly would have been affirmation of their experience and authority, as they themselves acted as trailblazers in the organization of charity.

Furthermore, some of the projects brought to the Council by its member groups, most especially the Parks and Playgrounds Association (an organization comprised of both men and women), meant that the Council was having a very real impact on the shape of the city itself.<sup>88</sup> Daphne Spain argues that “Women’s

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<sup>85</sup> The Tuberculosis Exhibition was held in 1908 while the Child Welfare Exhibition was held in 1912. Descriptions of these requests can be found in the both the Annual Reports of the MLCW and the Minutes of the Executive Meetings of the MLCW. Both available at BANQ, P653.

<sup>86</sup> “Sixth Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1900” (Montreal: “Witness” Printing House, 1900), 6. BANQ, P653.

<sup>87</sup> “Sixth Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1900” (Montreal: “Witness” Printing House, 1900), 9. BANQ, P653.

<sup>88</sup> See Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) and Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940*,



voluntary associations created actual spaces in which problems associated with race relations, immigration, and women's status were worked out."<sup>89</sup> Though Montreal women were seemingly less concerned with race relations than their American sisters discussed by Spain, much of the work of the MLCW was centred around the city itself and the problems therein. By positioning themselves in the very streets of this city (albeit the respectable streets!) as philanthropists and activists, they were creating physical spaces for the working out of the issues that concerned them.

Nowhere was this clearer than in the Tag Day with which this chapter began. The logistics of organizing and executing such an event demonstrate many of the themes that emerge in understanding women's organizational activity in Montreal at the turn of the century. Not the least of which was the ways women occupied space in the city, moving physically into the space they morally sought to reform. The Tag Day highlights the way cooperation across ethnic and linguistic lines was sought (and the ways it failed), it points to a commitment to the tenets of philanthropy, and it reveals the sophistication of their organizational skills.

In 1911, Caroline Dessaulles Béique, president and co-founder of the FNSJB and active member of the MLCW approached the latter organization on behalf of the former with a request for cooperation in the effort of a massive canvass of the city, meant to raise funds for the work of women in Montreal. In

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(New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) for very good discussions of women and space occupation in the city. In Montreal, see Sarah Schmidt, "Domesticating Parks and Mastering Playgrounds: Sexuality, Power and Place in Montreal, 1870-1930." Thesis (M.A.), McGill University, 1996.

<sup>89</sup> Spain, *How Women Saved the City*, 5.

an effort to keep things egalitarian and cooperative, the FNSJB proposed that two honorary heads and two active heads be appointed along with a committee of forty women to serve as a coordinating body – twenty would be English-speaking and twenty would be French-speaking. They estimated that an additional three hundred women from “each side” would be required to see the project put into action on the day of the drive. Each organization would provide an equal number of total workers and at the end of the drive, the proceeds would be amalgamated and divided in half. At a meeting in March 1911 the MLCW were generally supportive of the idea and in fact, looked forward to forming further bridges with the francophone benevolence network.<sup>90</sup> There were practical problems that were raised at the meeting, including the difficulty of recruiting and organizing such a large number of women, the need to get the support of all the organizations comprising the Council and the fear that this strategy could conflict with current fundraising tactics. But in theory, the MLCW supported the idea of a cooperative Tag Day.

After much coordination and organization, The Tag Day went ahead as planned on 23 May – Empire Day.<sup>91</sup> Women spread out across the city, presenting themselves in public as respectable co-citizens. Although the organizers envisioned a day full of cooperation and mutual benefit, some competition emerged. Adhering to the belief that the west of Montreal was inhabited by wealthy Anglophones and the east by poorer Francophones, the press

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<sup>90</sup> 08 March 1911, Minutes of the Executive, Montreal Local Council of Women, Archives nationales de Québec à Montréal, P653,S1,SS3,D1.

<sup>91</sup> It is unclear from the records whether the date was chosen because it was Empire Day or if it was merely a coincidence. In either case, this must have seemed more fortunate for Anglophones than for the Fédération nationale St-Jean-Baptiste members!

reported that: “Il ne s’agit pas de faire des comparaisons entre l’est et l’ouest de la ville, mais l’est, tout en donnant des sommes plus minimes, a probablement beaucoup plus donné que l’ouest.”<sup>92</sup>

At the end of the day, the boxes were collected and delivered to the Banque d’Épargne de Montréal where the bank’s employees commenced the counting of the funds. The newspapers, after speaking with event coordinator Dessaulles Béique, revealed the final amount collected was \$16 000. As agreed upon in the planning stages of the campaign, the two organizations split the proceeds in half with each organization responsible for further distributing the amounts among the associated organizations.

**FIG. 3.2 DISTRIBUTION OF TAG DAY PROCEEDS BY MONTREAL LOCAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (1911)<sup>93</sup>**

<b>Associated Charity</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Pure Milk Stations (3 to be opened)	1000.00
Park and Playgrounds	1000.00
Victorian Order of Nurses	600.00
Hervey Institute	600.00
Ladies’ Hebrew Benevolent Society	600.00
Child Welfare Exhibition	500.00
University Settlement (on the understanding that a room be given rent free for a Pure Milk Station)	500.00
Royal Edward Institute	500.00
Grace Dart Home	500.00
Day Nursery	300.00
The King’s Daughters’ Creche	300.00
Murray Bay Convalescent Home	300.00
Ladies’ Benevolent Institution	100.00
Canadian Handicrafts Guild	100.00
Protestant Infants’ Home	100.00
Goodwill Holiday House	100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7100.00</b>

<sup>92</sup> 23 mai, 1911, *La Patrie*, 1.

<sup>93</sup> 31 May 1911, Minutes of the Executive, Montreal Local Council of Women, BANQ, P653,S1,SS3,D1

Distribution of the funds was based on the participation of volunteers, and therefore, associated organizations that participated in the planning and execution of the event were considered before organizations that had not forwarded volunteers. Secondly, the distribution was based on the need of the organization.

Pleased with the cooperative results of the first Tag Day, the following year, the FNSJB again approached the MLCW for their support of a second Tag Day. Though some reservations were voiced by members of the Council, (which remain very cryptic in the minutes), the MLCW agreed to the plan and a second Tag Day was held in May 1912. Although the day was considered another financial success with a total near \$15 000, tensions persisted throughout the festivities. Referring to the perceived discrepancy in the division of results between Francophone and Anglophones, Dr. Grace Ritchie England reported “a great difference in the amount of money collected by the French and English workers. If the amount of money collected by the French ladies had been proportionate to the English, the amount realized would have been about \$25 000.”<sup>94</sup> The following November, Dr. Ritchie-England met privately with Dessaulles Béique and several other FNSJB representatives to explain the Council’s unwillingness to participate in another Tag Day. As recorded in the minutes: “The Council had decided last spring not to take part in such a movement again, and Dr. England had explained the stand taken to these ladies, who quite understood the situation.”<sup>95</sup> No explanation for the discontinuation of

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<sup>94</sup> 22 May 1912, Minutes of the Executive, Montreal Local Council of Women, Archives nationales de Québec à Montréal, P653, S1, SS3, D1.

<sup>95</sup> 27 November 1912, Minutes of the Executive, Montreal Local Council of Women, Archives nationales de Québec à Montréal, P653, S1, SS3, D1.

cooperation was given in the minutes. And no follow-up was asked for by the FNSJB.

## CONCLUSION

Women's organizations were instrumental in the transition of women into an expanded public realm. The surge of organizational activity at the turn of the twentieth century emerged out of a rich heritage of women's charitable works. Charity had always served to reinforce class difference, positioning the donors in power over the recipients of charity. During industrialization and the emergence of a new industrial elite, benevolence was of particular importance for families that were new to elite circles and those that needed to reinforce class identity. Other organizations and clubs that were neither charitable nor missions-based, further solidified elite identity in urban centres. In Montreal, these clubs were based around the arts, sports, leisure, and general individual uplift programmes. Yet charitable organizations remained the most common and provided the most influence for women in the city. Inspired by Progressivism, the Social Gospel, and, among others, urban reform movements, scientific ideals permeated the world of charity transitioning it into an organized endeavour aimed at addressing the roots of problems rather than just the symptoms. Using maternalist discourse to position women as mothers and as morally upright, philanthropic activities assisted women in accumulating practical strategies and social authority that aided in their entrance into an expanded public.

This chapter has focused on the Montreal Local Council of Women and the ways it revealed the playing out of this process among Montreal's elite

women. It has challenged the historiographical suppositions that it was strictly an Anglophone organization and it has revealed the breadth of topics tackled by its membership. The MLCW reveals the way elite women worked to create the bridges and to forge links that spanned the divides caused by ethnic and linguistic differences. But it also shows how tenuous that cooperative spirit was and that there were very real and consistent challenges to it. The fact that the idea of a third Tag Day was vetoed in 1913 foreshadowed the ways cooperation would continue to disintegrate during the First World War.

Philanthropy, with its goal of societal regeneration, became a location of cooperation not only because of the ways it highlighted class identity, but also because of the ways a common motivation undergirded its playing out. Based on maternalist and Judeo-Christian understandings of charity, philanthropy was one way power through union was accessed by elite women in Montreal. Over time, elite women employed the skills and strategies they had acquired, accessed the bridges they had built, and depended on the public authority they had earned in their philanthropy to step into a more overtly political realm. In a hazy middle ground of philanthropy and political activism, elite women positioned themselves not just as mothers but also as citizens, with rights and responsibilities that called them to action not just in their homes but in the world beyond the home.

## CHAPTER 4

### CAMPAIGNS, CITIZENSHIP AND COURAGE: THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM

It may seem to some of you that we women, unless indeed we obtain the suffrage, can exercise no authority and but little influence in matters such as these. But I believe that the woman's influence, even when exercised only from within, is greater and more far-reaching than she knows and that she can do much when rightly informed to prepare public opinion to suggest and to enforce the best and wisest social measures.<sup>1</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION: POLITICS

From an international perspective, 1890 to 1914 was a very exciting time of change for women in Great Britain, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand and North America as they cultivated the emerging “women's movement” into the fullness of the suffrage movement. What has since been designated “first-wave feminism” is frequently pointed to as the moment women adopted an overtly political identity for themselves in the western world. It signalled a time of significant growth both in the number of women involved in political activism as well as in the degree of sophistication employed by these women and their organizations. As social reform, philanthropy and charity became more organized and more erudite, more women and men openly endorsed women's suffrage on

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Drummond, “Address at the close of the Meeting of the National Council of Women in the High School Hall, May, 1896.” *Some Addresses* (Montreal: Gazette Printing, 1907), 34.

the public stage and by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, suffrage associations were present in most western countries.<sup>2</sup>

The suffrage movement had many different faces. In the United States, race and gender played off each other in significant ways, tying and distancing the rights of women to the rights of African Americans. In Great Britain, the militant tactics of the Pankhursts among others became legendary as they stood in front of carriages, chained themselves to fences, and evoked sympathy through hunger strikes. In Canada, women's fight for the vote was largely a polite, systematic story. Without arousing the ire of general public, enfranchisement was deemed the logical next step.

The story of women and politics in Quebec prior to 1940, however, has often been a discouraging story to recount. At the Canadian federal level, most women over the age of twenty-one in Canada were officially enfranchised in 1918. At the provincial level, non-aboriginal Quebec women waited another twenty-two years to vote, nearly two decades after any other province in the Dominion.<sup>3</sup> Certainly this time of transition was longer and the growing pains were perhaps more painful in Quebec than elsewhere. The historiography has consistently argued for the uniqueness of Quebec, arguing that institutions and individuals prevented the growth of feminism occurring elsewhere in the world and, in so doing, deprived women of political participation until much later.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Of course, several countries had already formalized the enfranchisement of women including New Zealand (1893) and Australia (1902). Finland (1906) and Norway (1907) followed close behind.

<sup>3</sup> The last two provinces to extend the vote to women before were Prince Edward Island in 1922 and Newfoundland in 1925.

<sup>4</sup> Micheline Dumont-Johnson et al, *L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec depuis Quatre siècles*. 2<sup>ième</sup> ed. (Montreal : Le Jour, 1991).



With few exceptions, historians have blamed first and foremost the domineering Roman Catholic Church, and secondly, the supposed gulf between Anglophone and Francophone, or, more accurately, Protestant and Catholic, Quebecers. The identification of suffrage and the suffrage movement as the first step towards a “political identity” has encouraged this bleak outlook that dominates the political history of women in Quebec.

This chapter attempts to challenge this traditional interpretation in three significant ways. First, following the example of Elaine Chalus, the term “politics” is widened to include “social politics” or the “management of people and social situations for political ends.” In so doing, it becomes possible to question how women entered into the political arena long before the right to vote was extended to them. How did family connections, class status, and neighbourhood networks provide opportunities for women not only to learn and decipher the complicated world of politics but to engage themselves in politicking? Secondly, in a general sense, exploring political identity ought to occur not only through overt, traditional political action but also through the lens of citizenship. What did citizenship mean to these women and how did they engage in acts of citizenship? To what extent did they view themselves as citizens and what were the rights and responsibilities that accompanied this identity. Finally, while much of our understanding thus far about women and politics has been viewed at the national and provincial levels (as a result of historians’ focus on suffrage), there has not been much attention paid to the local political experiences of women. Central to this final challenge is the fact that some women *were* enfranchised at the municipal level. So, then, the question is –

what was happening in Montreal? To what extent were women creating a political role for themselves in urban politics? To what extent did women *experience* enfranchisement and how did this change their perceptions of citizenship and political identity?

Women's political activism in Montreal did not exist in isolation. Throughout the United States, the British Empire and Scandinavia, women were organizing and marching into political action on the backs of philanthropic experience. The issues tackled by Montreal's elite women were by and large the issues being tackled in other major cities. Maureen Flanagan and Sarah Deutsch have produced exciting studies on the political agency of women in Chicago and Boston respectively.<sup>5</sup> Both of these studies examine the way women had overtly political visions for the city and their participation therein, yet both authors also reveal the conflict that emerged with male municipal powers. Engagement in the political realm by activist women, argue both Flanagan and Deutsch, resulted in male interests trumping female visions time and again, yet still their activism is an example of the politicization of their efforts and visions.

By refocusing the attention on social politics, on activism at the local level, and on citizenship roles rather than simply the right to vote, political history becomes much more complex and rich. As a result, the history of women's political action in Montreal shines an important light on the intersection of gender, ethnicity, religion, and class. Furthermore, rather than getting tangled in the discussion of whether or not these women were 'feminists', a term that has

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<sup>5</sup> Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870- 1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Maureen Flanagan, *Seeing with their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

become rife with anachronistic double-speak when applied in this context, this change in perspective permits a more open exploration of the relationship between maternalism and political identity. It is clear that their identity as mothers did not preclude them from having an identity as political actors. Rather, it served as the platform from which they advocated for the rights of women and children. There was a definite change in the nature of their activism. With a collective voice they began to confront, shape, and endorse the political machine of their day. Though there were differences and moments of disagreement among these women, they urgently sought and created moments of cooperation.

#### **FROM PHILANTHROPY TO POLITICS**

Very calculated in their justification, elite women approached the political scene waving banners of motherhood. Cognizant of the negative associations of the Pankhursts and others who endorsed 'equal rights', the women of Montreal did not set out to prove that women were equal or superior to men. When the question of suffrage eventually entered their declared goals, these women justified the expansion of their goals as a means of working *with* men rather than in opposition to them.

They argued for the specificity of the times; they lived, they held, in a unique moment. The great revolution of industry had advanced civilization at such an accelerated rate that it was imperative that women join with men to act imminently if society was to see the fulfilment of its progress. They argued that while there were marvels beyond measure borne of industrialization, there was an underbelly that held society back from achieving its ultimate goal. Poverty, infant

mortality, hunger, immorality, and filth left their stain on this great era of progress and, as a result, civilization would never reach its culmination until this stain had been removed. Through their philanthropic work (as it developed out of charitable acts), women (in cooperation with men), were beginning the process of identifying and restoring the places where society was falling short. Philanthropy, as was described in the last chapter, depended on both the material and moral resources of the elite class. Furthermore, it depended on the cooperation of men because men were the ones who controlled society's power structures (i.e. financial, governmental, social organizations). As women developed more sophisticated and far-reaching philanthropic methods, they realized that philanthropy within the social structures of the day was limited and that success depended on a certain amount of systemic overhauling. Engagement in the political realm became the goal of philanthropic women as they sought to address the roots of society's ills.

Inherent in this argumentation is the assumption that men, in their role as leaders, had fallen short somewhere along the line. Without highlighting their inadequacy, women were, in fact, attempting to reshape the social power structures that had been dominated by men. Extending the work begun in their philanthropic efforts, women carried their skills, experience and confidence into the world of politics. Steven King points out that women were not only forming a self-conscious female identity here, they were essentially espousing "a feminist critique of male power at its core."<sup>6</sup> Moving beyond the debate about whether or

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<sup>6</sup> Steven King, *Women, Welfare, and Local Politics 1880-1920: 'We Might Be Trusted'*, (Brighton: Sussex University Press, 2006), 63.

not maternalists can be categorized as feminists, it is important to realize that women deliberately formed a bridge from philanthropic action to political action, and in so doing, challenged the established power structure that contained women in the “private” or domestic sphere.

How, then, did women build this bridge? How did they envision and then create the means of launching themselves into the political sphere? First, it must be recognized that women had long since developed the art of suggestion and private request. Located in the confines of strict social rituals dictated by their class, elite women utilized a variety of techniques for social politicking. Although scholars have been eager to identify this as a form of early political activism, the shape and the impact of social politics remain vague and undeveloped. What subjects concerned them and to what end? What methods did they employ? How effective was this form of political action in reality? From this rather primitive form of political action, women moved into a more direct activism. Cutting out the middlemen, so to speak, women began to appeal to governing bodies directly as they grew into the collective identity that emerged from organized and cooperative philanthropy. It was here that, as disenfranchised citizens, they added petitioning, interviewing, submitting “expert reports”, letter-writing, and campaigning, among other tactics, to their activist arsenal. During this era of “disenfranchised citizenship”, women affirmed their intention to establish a concrete role in political processes via suffrage and the right to hold political office, thus guiding them into a third phase of political activism. The women’s suffrage campaign was particularly complicated in Quebec where

ethnicity, religion, gender and class often clashed, leading to road bumps that delayed the province's extension of the vote to women nearly two decades.

## SOCIAL POLITICS

Milady,  
 Je viens aujourd'hui vous demander une grande  
 faveur... Mon mari est candidat pour la position de  
 sénateur actuellement vacante dans sa division  
 sénatoriale. Je crois le ministre bien disposé en sa  
 faveur à cause de ses sérieux états de services. Je  
 sais d'autre part pour en avoir en personnellement la  
 prévue par les témoignages de M. Laurier et  
 \_\_\_\_\_, que vous avez sur ces deux ministres  
 un grand pouvoir de persuasion.  
 ...J'écris aussi à Madame Laurier afin qu'elle  
 joigne son influence à votre bon secours...  
 J.M. Dandurand.<sup>7</sup>

Intervening on behalf of her husband, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand's appeal to Lady Ishbel Aberdeen is one of many examples of the interweaving of social practice and political action. Across the breakfast table, at dinner parties, after church services, during carriage rides, and floating across the dance floor, women and men shared intimate moments of confidence on a daily basis. These moments, whether pre-arranged or happenstance, were opportunities to share a humorous anecdote, listen to a heartfelt confession of love, or, if desired and of particular importance here, to request advice, resources or representation in the political realm. Joséphine Marchand Dandurand's appeal to Lady Ishbel Aberdeen was a very overt request for intervention on the political stage but not all such activities were as direct or well-documented. Clarence DeSola's diary

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<sup>7</sup> Letter Joséphine Marchand Dandurand to Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, 14 mai 1897, LAC MG 27-IB5 Vol. 1 (File: Dandurand).

hints at the elusive nature that social politics could take. He recounts the time he and his wife Belle Goldsmith DeSola ended up in a car with Wilfrid Laurier who chatted with them the entire train ride from Ottawa to Montreal.<sup>8</sup> On several occasions he gives an account of more explicit interactions with the Governor General and his wife: “while Countess Grey was engaged in conversation with Belle, Earl Grey talked with me at some length about my ship building enterprises...”<sup>9</sup> Later, at the opening of the Anti-tuberculosis Exhibition, Earl Grey invited Belle DeSola to take tea with him because Clarence DeSola was unable to be present.<sup>10</sup> These entries reveal little about the content of social networking but they do reveal the access women had to leading politicians.

Elaine Chalus has explored the ways women assumed the role of actors on the “extra-parliamentary stage for dramas large and small”, a practice that has been long-acknowledged but rarely teased out by historians.<sup>11</sup> Noting the challenges both historiographical and evidential of unearthing this type of activity, Chalus argues that recent scholarship on *political culture* has led to a more “transactional and inclusive understanding” of politics.

As a result, the disenfranchised members of the  
extra-parliamentary nation are now accepted as

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<sup>8</sup> 12 December 1905, Personal Diary of Clarence I. DeSola, P0164, Library and Archives Canada

<sup>9</sup> 17 February 1906, Personal Diary of Clarence I. DeSola, P0164, Library and Archives Canada

<sup>10</sup> 18 November 1908, Personal Diary of Clarence I. DeSola, P0164, Library and Archives Canada

<sup>11</sup> Elaine Chalus, “Elite Women, Social Politics and the Political World of Late 18<sup>th</sup>-Century England,” *The Historical Journal*, 43, 3 (2000), 673. At the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association-Société historique du Canada in 1991, President Gail Cuthbert Brandt presented the same challenge, using the case of the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences to note the real role women played in the Confederation negotiations. Brandt called for not just the “insertion” of women into political history but rather for a reconceptualizing of political history: Il faut aller encore plus loin, reconceptualiser la politique pour inclure des activités, des acteurs et des actrices que l’on n’incluait guère dans les anciennes définitions et les anciennes hiérarchies de signification.” Gail Cuthbert Brandt, “Presidential Address: National Unity and the Politics of Political History”, *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, vol. 3, n° 1, (1992), 9.

legitimate political actors, ritual and ceremony are recognized as playing a valuable part in electoral politics, and an increased sensitivity to gender is beginning to lead to new insights into women's involvement in political life.<sup>12</sup>

Tracing this “amorphous and anecdotal” exercise is an important step in understanding the political activism of disenfranchised women.<sup>13</sup> To what extent did the practice of social politics play a role in the political identity and activism of elite women in Montreal? How did women create opportunities to access political power through social ritual? What social issues were addressed in this way? What role did ethnicity play? Is there evidence of the impact of this type of political action? Was it, in fact, an effective way of affecting change?

One of the first things that becomes clear while sorting through these questions is the role that social settings played in the gathering of political information. For women in Montreal, with little access to higher education, understanding both the formal and informal negotiation of politics could be difficult.<sup>14</sup> Depending on the press, literature, and conversation, women's political education was often built around these lived social experiences. In the vein of European salons, women were sometimes invited to join drawing-room discussions that covered current events (both local and international), and ongoing political debates. It was here that women not only learned the ins and outs of

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<sup>12</sup> Chalus, “Elite Women, Social Politics and the Political World of Late 18<sup>th</sup>-Century England,” 672.

<sup>13</sup> Chalus, “Elite Women, Social Politics and the Political World of Late 18<sup>th</sup>-Century England,” 672.

<sup>14</sup> In 1884, McGill University did open its doors to a very small number of women. The vast majority of Montreal women, even elite women, was still denied a post-secondary education. This lack of political education was the driving force behind the publication and authorship of *A Treatise on everyday law* by Marie Gérin-Lajoie in 1902. The first pages of this work outline the structure of Canadian government in elementary terms. The book was first published as Marie Gérin-Lajoie, *Traité de droit usuel* (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1902).



formal governance, they were also exposed to the subtleties of political negotiation, alliances, and prowess. Growing up as the daughter of a politician, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand was exposed to political discussion at an early age. Marchand Dandurand's own interest was piqued by French politics, establishing a life-long interest in the political scene in France.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, as hostesses, they were required to understand the intricacies of political alliances and underlying frictions. When debates in the city council or in the House of Commons were particularly tense, it took special effort and specific knowledge of political process to produce smooth social events. As their lives as wives and hostesses became increasingly politicized, self-education became an integral component of the female experience.

Second, in some instances, women negotiated these waters for personal gain, as in the example of Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, and in other instances, on the behalf of others. While wives of the Governor General all had extensive hostessing responsibilities, Lady Ishbel Aberdeen was exceptionally interested in the daily goings-on of government. Her supposed "neutral" position, permitted her access to politicians from all parties. Her diaries reveal that she took an active role in political society. She was confidante and advisor to her husband, a role that was particularly important following the death of Sir John A. Macdonald and the subsequent political jockeying for leadership, she was known to observe debates in the House of Commons from the gallery, and she nurtured important friendships with significant political leaders. When Marchand Dandurand

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<sup>15</sup> This is evident throughout the published portion of her daily journal. Joséphine Marchand, *Journal Intime, 1879-1900* (Lachine: Éditions pleine lune, 2000).

approached Lady Aberdeen for her endorsement of Raoul Dandurand as senator, she was really “pulling rank”. It is not clear whether Raoul Dandurand requested or even knew of this effort on behalf of his wife. He, too, had an ongoing correspondence with Lady Aberdeen.

Furthermore, the amorphous nature of this type of political agency often meant that one request might travel through several different persons before reaching its ultimate destination. In this case, Marchand Dandurand, on behalf of her husband, was corresponding with Lady Aberdeen in the hopes that Aberdeen would have the opportunity to discuss the issue with her husband and his political colleagues. An even better example of this is a request also made to Lady Aberdeen by Julia Parker Drummond. In a letter outlining several different requests, Parker Drummond writes to Lady Aberdeen:

Mrs. Gillespie and the other ladies connected with the ‘Women’s Protective Immigration Society’ are very hopeful that through Your Excellency’s influence they may receive a favourable reply to their letter to the Hon. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior. Their scheme seems a good one and if the means to realize it were forthcoming, I think Mrs. Cox’s indomitable purpose and organizing ability would see it carried into effect.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, Mrs. Gillespie had approached Parker Drummond in order to get her support (by this time, George Alexander Drummond, husband of Parker Drummond was a leading society member, industrialist, and senator). Parker Drummond in turn, approached Lady Aberdeen. The letter includes some

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<sup>16</sup> Julia Parker Drummond to Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, 19 Dec. 1896, LAC MG 27-IB5 Vol. 1 (File: Drummond).

important details – namely, the actors on both sides of the issue (Gillespie and Sifton), a brief mention of the issue (inferring that Lady Aberdeen was already familiar with the details), and, most importantly, a reference as to the validity of the request. Parker Drummond's status and her connection with Lady Aberdeen were purposely connected with this request by Mrs. Gillespie in order to give weight and power to the referral and hence, increase the likelihood of action.

As primary agents of philanthropy and those on the ground, women's early efforts at securing state interest (either financial or otherwise), often required finding a kindred spirit with political status and influence. The Women's Protective Immigration Society, founded in 1880, depended on annual grants from the Federal and Provincial governments that complemented donations and the sizeable earnings of the organization.<sup>17</sup> Year after year this money had to be secured by the WPIS because there was no promise that the grant would be renewed. To speak on their behalf in government they found a sympathetic advocate in Donald Smith (Lord Strathcona), Conservative Member of Parliament for Montreal West. He considered the WPIS "worthy of the best support and the best consideration of the Government and of this House...I have given some attention to this society and I believe the women who interest themselves in it are really doing good work."<sup>18</sup> He put forward the suggestion of increasing the annual grant from one thousand to two thousand dollars in 1889, offering his own good word as evidence that the money was being spent responsibly. Smith's

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<sup>17</sup> For more information on the work of the WPIS and on women's migration to Canada, see Lisa Chilton, *Agents of Empire: British Female Migration to Canada and Australia, 1860s-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

<sup>18</sup> "Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada: Third session, sixth parliament 26 March to 22 May 1889," 965.

sympathy for the organization provided the women of the WPIS with a voice in government, albeit one they had little control over.

### **DISENFRANCHISED CITIZENSHIP**

Turning from the subtle power of social ceremony and performance to the open and public display of political action, the next section will focus on the appropriation of an identity of “citizen” that many elite women embraced during this era. Returning to a quotation from the previous chapter, citizenship was not just a vague idea accessed by elite women, it was the very language and vocabulary used to justify their activism. As outlined by Julia Parker Drummond:

For in the power of our union we shall be able to make a determined stand against any injustice or wrong that may be brought to our observation, and to aid effectually in its redress; we shall be ready to promote, so far as possible, measures for the general good of all. For we begin to realize that we women, too, are citizens, and having learned by sad experience how awful is the tie that binds us together in our cities, so that the moral shame and bodily disease of the lowest amongst us reacts upon the highest, we are resolved to bear our part in the regeneration of our cities as we have never done before; and as a society we may sometimes have to fill that part by acting as a stimulus to the civic or public consciences.<sup>19</sup>

As philanthropy became increasingly organized and sophisticated, women became more brave and enterprising in their efforts. The ‘woman’s movement’, with its focus on the restoration of society, blurred the lines between private and public by heralding the seemingly “private” maternal role of women as the key

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<sup>19</sup> Julia Drummond, “Address to the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894.” *Some Addresses* (Montreal: The Gazette Printing Company, Ltd., 1907), 11-12.

reason for embracing women in the supposed public sphere. By the turn of the twentieth century, women involved in philanthropic organization had determined that a certain number of systemic changes were necessary if they were to realize the fulfillment of their goals. Therefore, while yet unenfranchised for the most part, women began to engage enthusiastically in political action through familiar methods of letter-writing, petitioning, acquiring media coverage, interviewing and, at the municipal level in particular, facilitating the election of candidates they endorsed.

Nancy Cott writes that citizenship is “purposefully constructed” and that it “represents not only the bond between an individual and the state but also a bond between one individual and many others.”<sup>20</sup> While citizenship implies *belonging* it also implies certain rights and responsibilities on behalf of the citizen. Defining these rights and responsibilities is surprisingly tricky. Women, after all, were technically citizens of the Dominion of Canada (as British subjects at this point). While they had the right to political representation they did not have the right to vote. They had the right to petition the government but not the right to hold office in government. As Cott queries: “If it did not convey suffrage or political rights, did citizenship have usefulness or participatory meaning?”<sup>21</sup> As a *purposefully constructed* idea, the answer is yes. These elite women, devoid of the rights of suffrage (among other rights), clearly identified as citizens. Again, Parker Drummond eloquently demonstrated that women understood a connection between the rights and responsibilities of citizenship: “The woman has rights –

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<sup>20</sup> Nancy Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934”, *American Historical Review* vol. 103, no. 5 (1998): 1440.

<sup>21</sup> Nancy Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934”, 1445.

rights which may be called equal rights inasmuch as she shares them with every human soul, rights which she has no right to surrender, because under and over them is written that great word ‘Duty’ – and these rights may all be summed up in four short words, ‘the right to come to herself.’”<sup>22</sup>

Though it can be argued that Montreal women benefited from few of the rights typically associated with citizenship, these women nonetheless embraced their civic responsibilities. Seeing the world and its problems through the eyes of women, caring for those less fortunate, facilitating the march toward progress were ways that women expressed their sense of duty as citizens. By embracing these responsibilities (as opposed to rights), women were, in fact, pronouncing their identity as citizens to the world. These elite women were very careful in their assumption of this role. Prepared to fight for their identity as citizens, they nevertheless were wary of appearing threatening to their male co-citizens.

In the safety of numbers did women locate their strength as citizens. Citizenship, of course, implied belonging to a group and women found this tenet to be particularly relevant. Marie Gérin-Lajoie reinforced this idea in *La bonne parole*:

Dans tout l’univers depuis l’extrême Orient  
jusqu’à l’occident, la femme porte au front une  
pensée qui introduit un idéal nouveau dans le  
monde, la femme ambitionné de remplir une  
mission qui est bien l’apanage de son sexe: plan de  
rénovation, de restauration dont l’ampleur  
déconcerte l’effort individuel et qui a besoin pour

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<sup>22</sup> Julia Drummond, “President’s Address”, January 1897. *Third Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal*, 9-10.

être exécuté dans toute son extension des énergies  
concertées de toutes les femmes.<sup>23</sup>

The power of association had astounding implications for elite women. As a group, women were much more confident and forthright with their appeals. Creating bridges across ethnic, partisan and religious (though rarely class) divides, women focused on building strength with numbers. Always cautious of the standards of respectability required of them, (these were, after all, *ladies* of the upper class), women were careful to proceed in discerning and methodical ways. They focused their efforts on the well-being of the family, the challenges faced by women and children, and the plight of other disadvantaged groups and, in so doing, Montreal women's early political action avoided the scandals that sometimes accompanied women's activism.

Addressing the Montreal Local Council of Women in 1897, Julia Parker Drummond acknowledged and justified the transition into "public affairs" by Montreal women.

And now a word as to the last charge of which I have spoke, that women are naturally unfitted to pronounce an opinion or take an active part in public affairs, because they are apt to be biased by personal feeling and to form their conclusions rashly and without balanced judgment, or due consideration...Broaden the current of their sympathies, enlarge the circle of their lives, give to them in some form the discipline of association, let them experience the wholesome shock of contact with other women of other circles of unlike view and different lives, and they will no longer take the exaggerated and partial view of things...Only let men and women fulfil their equal part together – the man with his closer knowledge

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<sup>23</sup> Marie Gérin-Lajoie, "L'organisation sociale chez les femmes (suite)", *La bonne parole*, October 1913.

of the world to moderate and guide, the woman with her strong hopefulness and her impelling earnestness to inspire and to sustain, so let them solve these problems which, as they concern a world of men and women, can only be rightly met and understood by the combined thought and action of men and women.<sup>24</sup>

The questions then are as follows: How did women engage in traditional political action without the right to participate in the electoral process? What were their concerns? To whom did they direct their efforts and to what end? How effective were these women?

Janice Harvey's work on charity in Montreal during the 19<sup>th</sup> century has outlined the ways Protestant women conceived plans to incorporate private enterprise with public funding.<sup>25</sup> Roman Catholic religious orders operated in a similar fashion. No strangers to the process of approaching governing bodies with financial requests, the tone and methodology employed by women evolved over time. At the head of these efforts were the Montreal Local Council of Women and later the Fédération nationale St.-Jean-Baptiste. As first President of the Montreal Local Council of Women Parker Drummond noted, the "scope (of the MLCW) is wide and its ideal high" – because their political activism grew out of philanthropic action, their political activism covered similar objects of concern. Prime among these were issues surrounding women, the family, hygiene, and education.

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<sup>24</sup> Julia Drummond, "President's Address", January 1897. *Third Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal*, 8-9.

<sup>25</sup> Janice Harvey, "Agency and Power in Child Charity: A Study of Two Montreal Child Charities, 1822-1900" in Fecteau, Jean-Marie and Janice Harvey. *La Régulation Sociale Entre L'acteur et L'institution: pour une théorie de l'interaction*. - , 2005.



In the first year following the formation of the Montreal Local Council of Women, the MLCW conducted a study of the local conditions of women in factories.<sup>26</sup> Responding to the 1888 Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital, the MLCW was interested in concrete and practical ways of implementing improvements for working women. They interviewed workers, visited factories, and requested informed opinions from experts in other cities. Their research determined that these women lacked serious protection both in the physical environment and as workers. It became clear to the MLCW after the reports were given at various meetings that the Council ought to pursue their findings and subsequent recommendations with the Provincial Legislature. Priding itself on being well-informed and reasonable, the MLCW petitioned directly the Province for the appointment of women factory inspectors. This first formal intervention was well received and by 1896 two women factory inspectors were appointed in Montreal. It was the job of Mesdames King and Provencher to visit factories on a regular basis to ensure that women were receiving adequate treatment.

This early success encouraged the MLCW to pursue the issue further. The women inspectors, who focused their effort on smaller establishments that had been previously uninspected, noted that the Factory Act (though useful for factories) did not apply to these smaller shops and as a result “it has been found that most unfavourable conditions frequently exist.”<sup>27</sup> The council was

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<sup>26</sup> For a full discussion of the MLCW’s activities see Secretary’s Report, “Third Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1897”

<sup>27</sup> Secretary’s Report, “Third Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1897”, 18.

recommending that a Shop Act in addition to the Factory Act be adopted, “demanding suitable conditions and extending the jurisdiction of the inspectors to shops of every kind, wholesale and retail.”<sup>28</sup> This time the MLCW was confronted with more hesitance on the part of the government. Eventually an amended Shop Act that made seats in shops obligatory among other provision was passed in 1901.

Concerned about the spread of disease and general cleanliness in Montreal’s poorer quarters, Parker Drummond and Charlotte Smithers Learmont brought the question of public baths to the attention of the MLCW in 1896. The MLCW appointed a committee of inquiry to look into the possibility of having public baths erected in Montreal. Other than baths provided by the Grand Truck Railway Company for their employees, Montreal offered no public bathing facility.

Letters of inquiry re. cost, equipment and management, were sent to Boston, New York and elsewhere; city officials, doctors, and clergymen were consulted, with the result that the Committee advises that with cooperation of workers there would exist the possibility of obtaining from the City Council a grant of land, freedom from taxation, and free water, provided that the money for the erection of buildings and for part payment of running expenses be collected by private enterprise.<sup>29</sup>

With this cooperation of public and private interest, the first public bath was opened after several years of negotiation.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Report of Committee on Public Baths, “Fifth Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1899”, 11.

These examples highlight several important aspects of women's political intervention in turn-of-the-century Montreal. First, Montreal women appealed to all three levels of government indicating their identity as citizens of country, province and city. The city, perhaps, was the place they felt most connected and a great deal of their early political activism was directed to the local government. A second striking development is the *method* used by these women. Prior to this women had depended on indirect influence in government. Their requests and recommendations were regularly presented through another person, as in the case of Lord Strathcona (Donald Smith) explored earlier. In this example, however, women were appealing *directly* to the government. Their own words, ideas, and voices were being heard by those in power. Positioning themselves in direct contact with legislators, these women expected to be received by a serious audience. They followed the issue carefully, often frustrated by the commandeering of the issue by politicians who lacked enthusiasm and appreciation for it. It is certain that social politicking was still taking place in the background, in addition to this new boldness in approaching governments. Third, as women moved into direct negotiation with governments, they selected topics that were relevant to them as women, as mothers, and as philanthropists, to do otherwise may have compromised their effectiveness. Requesting women factory inspectors or chairs in shops fit into the sphere of "women's work". Similarly, the mandatory registration of births and the immigration of orphaned children, two items of concern for Montreal women in 1899, could both be safely accommodated under the umbrella of problems tackled by women.

Without a doubt, women sometimes misjudged the extent of their reach and as a result were much less effective in their political campaigning. While the governments frequently supported in theory the requests of the MLCW (though not always), often financial constraints or legal complications served as road blocks to the execution of their recommendations. This can be clearly seen in the case of women prisoners. Under the auspices of determining the condition of female prisoners, the MLCW scoured the reports of the Superintendent of Police and conducted their own research. The Superintendent's report provided the statistics and their research provided anecdotal evidence. Referring to the 998 women arrested in 1896, the council reported that:

We are personally aware of the fact that women arrested during the day remain in the cells until the next morning, when the police court deals with them...the present arrangements we consider quite inadequate. The situation precludes the necessary supervision, and it is not difficult to imagine what might take place in the best regulated police quarters.<sup>30</sup>

As a first step towards improving the plight of these women (though they were certainly not trying to address the problems that put these women in police custody in the first place, a project they address elsewhere), the MLCW recommended a separate police station for women only, where a matron would be in charge. "This we consider would greatly lessen the evil consequent upon the present arrangements."<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, they recommended a reformatory for young girls and women who were deemed "reform-able." Unfortunately, the

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<sup>30</sup> Secretary's Report, "Third Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1897", 19.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

MLCW ran up against strong opposition in the city council. While the city council agreed in sentiment with the MLCW's recommendations, on a practical level, the councillors saw little that could be done. A new building would be required to meet the specific requests of the MLCW and there were no monies available for such a project.

Appealing to the Police Superintendent, the Montreal City Council and holding public lectures was not enough to overcome the financial barriers of seeing their goal achieved. Knowing that one of the strategies employed by these activists was to prove that they had the (private) financial backing if the political will could be mustered, it is possible that it was more a lack of political will than material resources that sabotaged this project.

Although they were seemingly unsuccessful in their attempts to protect women in police custody, the MLCW saw in this case a larger goal – reform of the justice system. When Reverend Arthur French, minister at St. John the Evangelist Church, approached the MLCW again in 1908, requesting their support for reformatories for young women, the council enthusiastically took up the cause.<sup>32</sup> A crusader for social purity, French represented a growing interest in the plight of juvenile delinquents. In a movement to “save” children, social reformers were focusing their efforts on educating and reforming children who had ended up in the care of the state. In 1908, the federal government passed the first Juvenile Delinquents Act. Tamara Myers emphasizes the role Montreal played in the passing of this act: “the largest petition in the country with more

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<sup>32</sup> “Fifteenth and Sixteenth Annual Reports, 1908-1909 and 1909-1910”, *Local Council of Women of Montreal* (Montreal: W.H. Eaton and Son, Printers, 1911), available at BANQ, P653.

than 5000 signatures demanding the introduction into the House of an act concerning juvenile justice came from this city. Support for a JDA appeared to unite cultural, religious and linguistic communities.”<sup>33</sup> Encouraged by the passing of the JDA, the MLCW focused their efforts on the plight of female juvenile delinquents, advocating strongly for a “home of detention and training” for young women brought before the courts.<sup>34</sup>

With the experience of their early years in hand, the MLCW outlined a plan of action. As in the past, the first item on their agenda was a thorough investigation of the problem both from a local and an international perspective. Parker Drummond and Maude Angus Chipman addressed letters to numerous superintendents across Canada, the United States and Great Britain. Angus Chipman presented the information in “an exceedingly practical and helpful paper” to the MLCW and it became the consensus of the committee to request action from both the provincial and the federal governments. From the province, the MLCW was recommending that an industrial school be built and maintained by the government. Here, it was argued, “first offenders could be trained to lead useful, upright lives.”<sup>35</sup> From the federal government, the council was requesting an amendment to the JDA to lengthen the sentences of those deemed “reformable”, giving more opportunity to re-educate and train these young women. The next step was to muster support for their recommendations. Immediately they arranged meetings with the two most powerful religious men in Montreal –

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<sup>33</sup> Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal's Modern Girls and the Law* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 29.

<sup>34</sup> Carrie Derick, “An Historical Sketch 1893-1910”, *Montreal Local Council of Women*, 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary, 1893-1915, 17.

<sup>35</sup> Carrie Derick, “An Historical Sketch 1893-1910”, 17-18.

Anglican Bishop John Cragg Farthing and Roman Catholic Archbishop Paul Bruchesi. Both clergymen expressed their support though Bruchesi stated that he felt that while he supported the aim of the committee, he believed “Roman Catholic female prisoners (were) already adequately provided for by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.”<sup>36</sup> Next, they sent a letter to Liberal Premier Lomer Gouin, outlining their proposal and requesting an interview before the next session of the legislature. Third, they approached the National Council of Women of Canada, requesting that councils across the nation look into the topic. With this support secured, an extensively researched report in hand, and a suitably impressive group of male chaperones including Judges Choquet, Weir, and Leet as well as Senator Raoul Dandurand who provided the introduction, the Council travelled to Quebec for a meeting with Gouin. The premier, while showing his support for the cause requested the committee to submit to him a copy of their full report and pointed out that they would also need the support of the federal government. Between interviews with the federal minister of justice and Premier Gouin, Montreal women demonstrated unremitting effort to see their recommendations put into action.

Supporting the opinion of these women that they were integral to the political process, Myers maintains that “although women were denied the basic rights of citizenship, namely to vote and run for political office, female lobbyists played a critical role behind the scenes promoting and guiding the legislation through Ottawa and Quebec City.”<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, she points out that “The

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<sup>36</sup> Carrie Derick, “An Historical Sketch 1893-1910”, 17-18.

<sup>37</sup> Myers, *Caught*, 100.

MLCW lobbied hard for a women's reformatory...Caroline Béique, one of the founders of the FNSJB in 1907 and the wife of Liberal senator F.-L. Béique who was instrumental in securing the successful passage of the JDA in Ottawa, worked alongside other clubwomen in Montreal to see that Premier Lomer Gouin passed the requisite legislation establishing a juvenile court in 1910.”<sup>38</sup>

This example of political activism by elite women, no longer on the sidelines but in the heart of the debate, is just one of several major campaigns and a plethora of smaller ones. From the introduction of civic hospitals, to the immigration of children, to the conservation of waterways to the segregation of “mental defectives”, women, as citizens, were participating in and shaping the political world around them. Just as there is evidence of increasing sophistication in philanthropic strategies by Montreal's elite women, there is also evidence of increasing sophistication in political strategies as time went on. Creating ever larger bodies of support, elite women focused on cooperation across ethnic and religious lines in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Though the formation of the Fédération nationale St-Jean-Baptiste in 1907 has often been heralded as a moment of segregation amongst women in Quebec, in many ways it served to extend the influence of women.<sup>39</sup> In order to fit their political activism into the religious context of their faith, these women adopted “Christian feminism” (as approved of by clergy and originating in France) and subsequently formed the FNSJB.

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<sup>38</sup> Myers, *Caught*, 101.

<sup>39</sup> Marie Lavigne, Yolande Pinard et Jennifer Stoddart, “La Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste et les revendications féministes au début du 20e siècle” dans Marie Lavigne et Yolande Pinard, dir. *Travailleuses et féministes* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983), 199-216.



In fact, with Caroline Dessaulles Béique and Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie at the head of the FNSJB, close ties were maintained in the Fédération's early years with the MLCW. Together they staged massive fundraising appeals (as outlined in the previous chapter) and together they approached the government as concerned citizens, displaying an unprecedented strength in numbers. Both the FNSJB and the MLCW were front and centre in the fight for reformatories and a juvenile court, a partnership they carried into other campaigns beginning with reforms to the Quebec License Act in 1908. Roman Catholic women did have to address some resistance on the part of the church, but the resistance does not seem to have prohibited this type of disenfranchised political action and as a result, cooperation among Protestants, Catholics and Jews continued and developed until the First World War. As has been pointed out by Quebec historians, the Roman Catholic Church hesitated to endorse women's engagement in the public sphere because of the potential risk to the family.<sup>40</sup> With the embracing of Social Catholicism as first outlined by Leo XIII in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, the Church called for the amelioration of the conditions of the working class. Women's role as mothers in this was seen to be of particular importance and therefore, campaigning on behalf of women and children seems to have been more or less accepted by the clergy. When a perceived re-ordering of society in the form of women's suffrage was on the agenda, however, the resistance of the Church became far more overt and far more explicit. Orthodox Jewish women also faced a degree of resistance on the part of the clergy but again, this resistance

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<sup>40</sup> Micheline Dumont-Johnson et al, *L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec depuis Quatre siècles*. 2<sup>ième</sup> ed. (Montreal : Le Jour, 1991).

would be much stronger and more explicit when it came to the enfranchisement of women.

Despite these instances of resistance, elite women pursued their agenda of cooperation, reassured by their successes that they were gaining ground. Various types of cooperation were undertaken and these relationships changed shape depending on the topic. Though far from demanding complete prohibition, the MLCW and the Women's Christian Temperance Union at the bequest of the FNSJB collected a petition with seventy thousand signatures in support of restricting the number and the nature of liquor licenses distributed by the province in 1908. The MLCW also teamed up with the Montreal Women's Club during their campaigns for a Children's Aid Society and the medical inspection of schools. As their presence in political circles grew, reform groups dominated by men such as the Civic League and the Charity Organization Society frequently pursued the support of the MLCW and the FNSJB in their drive for political reform, eager to add the strength of these organizations to their campaigns.

The press regularly presented the efforts of the MLCW and FNSJB in glowing terms, praising women for their commitment to the city and the nation.<sup>41</sup> Elite women became more confident and trusting of public support toward their activism. Their desire to hold public meetings, to request the support of politicians and social leaders, to venture into new and colossal issues reveal a certainty and self-confidence that they could scarce have imagined in 1893. In 1912, Parker Drummond asserted that the council had done much:

to dissipate prejudice, to break down mere artificial restraints,

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<sup>41</sup> See for example "All is Now Ready", *Montreal Gazette*, 18 November 1908, 9;

to prove that women in public affairs may keep the balance true, the temper firm and the judgment wise and equal – that home and society are likely to grow better as women ‘strive to see and know things as they really are, to walk in the light of that knowledge, to help forward great designs, and to do good.’ This, perhaps, the changing and moulding of public opinion, is after all the greatest thing the Council has done.”<sup>42</sup>

Over time and with experience, politically active women in Montreal began to tie the responsibilities of citizenship to the rights of citizenship.

In summation, far from being a politically stagnant time for women in Montreal, 1893-1914 was a very vibrant and exciting series of moments. Political engagement was cultivated out of philanthropic action, depending on the skills and experience developed by women in organized charity endeavours.

Committed to facilitating reform at a systemic level, they turned their attention to political process. Existing in a society with structured political systems, women (though formally excluded from these structures in many ways) found ways to navigate the system in direct and indirect ways. This form of political action was non-partisan and had little to do with allegiance to the Liberal or Conservative party but rather was about a shared class commitment to the tenets of liberalism.<sup>43</sup>

Their political activism rarely involved partisan issues such as reciprocity or taxation though women as individuals often held definite opinions on these issues. These women created bonds across political allegiances in much the same way they had bridged religious and linguistic divisions. In their collective action, they avoided divisive issues (including suffrage for more than a decade), in order to

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<sup>42</sup> Julia Parker Drummond, “Practical Idealism”, *Montreal Local Council of Women, 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary, 1893-1915*, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Party allegiance seems to have been of minimal importance. While the Drummonds and Lacostes were well-known Conservatives, the Dandurands and the Béiques were affiliated with the Liberal Party of Canada. None of the elite women in this study were aligned with socialist, labour, or communist branches.

foster unity of purpose and action. Fifteen years after the formation of the Montreal Local Council of Women, women's suffrage was officially adopted by the council as the next step in the cause of fulfilling a woman's duty as both citizen and mother.

### THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Unfortunately, academic historians have done very little research on the women's suffrage movement in Canada. The best of the national works on suffrage was published in 1950 by American graduate student, Catherine Cleverdon – *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada*<sup>44</sup>. In her book, Cleverdon carefully surveys the various provinces and regions of Canada, surveying an impressive number of primary sources.<sup>45</sup> Cleverdon's insistence on dividing her book into regional chapters is one of its strengths and very appropriately draws attention to the fact that there was no unified "national" movement of suffrage in Canada. The reality is that Canada is a huge country – both geographically and metaphorically. The suffrage movements in Canada derived their strength from their diversity and large numbers, rather than sophisticated unity on a national level.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Catherine L. Cleverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

<sup>45</sup> Cleverdon's chapter on Quebec is particularly rich because it was written just several years after the passing of the provincial law and she was able to conduct interviews and correspond with both female activists and male politicians.

<sup>46</sup> A second study of suffrage, Carol Lee Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), was the recipient of sharp criticism, particularly for its simplistic division of members of the suffrage movement into two camps – the conservative maternalist reformers who dominated the movement and the true equity feminists who were overpowered by the former group. Her study also fails to acknowledge the regional diversity of Canada or the suffrage movements therein. Finally, as a

The historiography of the Canadian women's suffrage movement(s) tends to suggest a straightforward narrative lacking in excitement or extremist action. Canadian women rejected the militancy of their British suffragette sisters and depended, instead, on rational argumentation and the traditional and orderly tools of the disenfranchised – petitioning, lobbying, a strong public campaign, and private politicking amongst husbands and fathers who were social and political leaders. Though some women endorsed women's suffrage on the basis of equality, maternalism was the dominant ideology espoused by suffragists. They argued that as mothers women were citizens. As mothers they responded to the evils of society, as mothers they announced the hope of a new day, and as mothers they demanded the vote. Despite the popular belief that the climax of the story would be the “winning of the vote”, Canadian women viewed the vote as the means to an end rather than an end unto itself. They had long viewed themselves as citizens, despite being disenfranchised. As citizens, they were happy to accept the rewards and equally as willing to shoulder the responsibilities of living in an industrializing, liberal country but felt that they were asked to do so with one hand tied behind their backs. Enfranchisement was one step towards the salvation, restoration or reformation of society in the minds of many suffragists.<sup>47</sup>

At the time of the establishment of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, most property-owning men over the age of 21 comprised the electors' list. Women,

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study of English-Canadian suffragists, the work presents no model for comparison to the French-Canadian movement.

<sup>47</sup> This was a common theme in Canadian women's suffrage rhetoric in general but can be seen most prominently in the discourse of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, one of the first women's organizations to publically support women's suffrage and did so on these grounds. See Sharon A. Cook, *Through Sunshine and Shadow: the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 18741-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995)

status Indians, and certain immigrant groups were excluded from both federal and provincial elections.<sup>48</sup> As it did in many other countries, the campaign for women's suffrage emerged amongst women in connection with the advent of "The Woman Movement"<sup>49</sup>. The first organization to officially endorse women's suffrage in Canada was the Toronto Women's Literary Club – a name that was intentionally misleading.<sup>50</sup> Formed in 1876, its small, elite membership met to discuss the status of women in social, educational, economic and political realms. Their conclusion was that little advancement could be made in these areas without first securing the right to the vote for women.

Small pro-suffrage organizations began to emerge across Canada, often hand-in-hand with philanthropic or social reform movements. Cooperation between organizations began to produce impressive results, particularly noticeable by 1909, the year in which the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Canadian Suffrage Association orchestrated a massive demonstration at the Ontario legislature.<sup>51</sup> International encouragement was often sought through invitations to speakers from the United States and Great Britain (including militant Emmeline Goulden Pankhurst who travelled throughout Canada in 1909 lecturing in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal.) In June of that same year, the International Council of Women held its quinquennial meeting in Toronto, a large

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<sup>48</sup> The Constitutional Act of 1791 permitted unmarried or widowed female landowners to vote in Lower Canada (Quebec). This right was officially taken away by the union government of Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine in 1849. Office of the Status of Women *Fifty Years of Women's Right to Vote in Quebec: Viewpoints of Women from Different Minority Groups* (Montreal: Concordia University, 1993), 5.

<sup>49</sup> Alison Prentice et al, *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1988), 189.

<sup>50</sup> Cleverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement*.

<sup>51</sup> Cleverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement*, 30.

focus being on women's suffrage. Though the ICW had previously endorsed women's suffrage in 1904, the official endorsement of women's suffrage by Lady Ishbel Aberdeen at the meeting carried significant weight for female suffragists but also for male politicians who had learned to respect the acumen of this woman during her earlier stay in Ottawa as wife of the Governor-General.

Though these organizations tended to originate in large urban settings, the first suffrage campaigns to reach successful conclusions were those in rural and small-town Canada – particularly campaigns on the Prairies. By 1914 and the start of the First World War, suffrage organizations on the Prairies had become publicly dominant. In 1914, the Regina Walker Theatre in Winnipeg staged a Mock Parliament entitled “How the Vote Was Not Won”, with women legislators rejecting the pleas of men for full voting rights. Well-known activist Nellie Mooney McClung, in the role of “premier”, concluded by saying “It may be that I am old-fashioned. I may be wrong. After all, men may be human. Perhaps the time will come when men may vote with women.”<sup>52</sup>

Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan were the first to grant the provincial vote to women in 1916. Ontario and British Columbia (to the immediate east and west of the prairie provinces) were next in 1917. The war is frequently cited as the main reason for the eventual federal enfranchisement of women in Canada. First, women, as civilians and nurses, responded in unprecedented numbers to the demands of a country at war. From fundraising to knitting to recruitment to saving lives on the battlefield, women were recognized as important players in the

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<sup>52</sup> Candace Savage, *Our Nell: A Scrapbook Biography of Nellie L. McClung* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1979), 89.

war effort.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps more relevant was the political fiasco that erupted when Prime Minister Borden's union government officially enacted conscription. Conscription was hotly contested by many groups in Canada, none more passionate than French-Canadians who felt they were being forced to fight England's war. An election in the midst of this debate had the Union government desperate for votes. In early 1917, the federal government had passed a Military Voters Act that allowed female nurses to vote. Later that year, in the shadow of the Conscription debate and the upcoming election, Borden's government passed the Wartime Elections Act, which extended the franchise to "wives, widows, mothers, sisters, and daughters of those, alive or deceased, who had served or were serving in the Canadian or British military or naval forces."<sup>54</sup> At the end of the war, the political objective of securing women's suffrage was met with the passage of the federal Women's Franchise Act in 1918. This act enfranchised all women who were over the age of 21 and were British subjects.<sup>55</sup> Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island followed suit in 1918, 1919, and 1922 respectively. The only Canadian province to refuse women the vote was Quebec.<sup>56</sup>

This narrative does seem to support the general observation that women in Quebec lagged behind the rest of Canada when it came to political participation. The previous sections have addressed the adoption of a political identity and the first efforts at political action by elite women in Montreal. Citizenship, it has

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<sup>53</sup> Fundraising efforts by women were said to have raised between \$40 million and \$50 million by 1916, according to Prime Minister Borden. *Canadian Annual Review* (1916), 419.

<sup>54</sup> Prentice et al, *Canadian Women*, 208.

<sup>55</sup> Many women continued to be excluded from voting despite the supposed universality of this Act, including Aboriginal, incarcerated, and handicapped women among others.

<sup>56</sup> Newfoundland, which enfranchised women in 1925, did not join Canada until 1949.



been argued, was tied first to duty and responsibility rather than to rights and therefore in 1893, when this study begins, many of the women did not publicize their support of women's suffrage (though this is not to say that they may not have harboured the hope internally). As women progressed in their political activism, however, they eventually adopted a public pro-suffragist stance. How did they frame this shift in perspective and to what extent were they successful in their quest to secure the vote? How did their experience at the local level shape their experience of citizenship and what were the implications of this beyond Montreal? Moreover, how did ethnicity, religion, and class interact in this debate? Does the historiographical theme of two solitudes hold true in Montreal? Were Anglophones leading the way while Francophones were increasingly shackled into inaction by a domineering clergy?

### **EARLY VOTING REALITIES IN QUEBEC**

Though there seems to have been “no formal legal restraint” preventing women from voting in British North America, historians have observed that the colonies “simply assumed that women would not exercise the franchise.”<sup>57</sup> The Clio Collective points out, however, that in Lower Canada, women did not follow this practice of staying home from the polls.<sup>58</sup> By omission rather than intention, Quebec provided the opportunity for women to vote as early as 1809. Without explicitly specifying the gender of the voter, the franchise was associated much more to property (and hence taxes) than to the individual. Widows and single

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<sup>57</sup> Prentice et al., *Canadian Women*, 98.

<sup>58</sup> Dumont-Johnson et al, *L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec depuis Quatre siècles*, 126.

women property owners, therefore, technically qualified to vote. Historians have noted the presence of women at the hustings as early as 1809, and again in 1820, 1828 and 1832 though it is difficult to get a good sense of how many women practiced this right.<sup>59</sup> The word “male” was eventually inserted into the legislation in 1849 by the Reform government, preventing women from voting in both Canada East and Canada West.

### **MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATION**

For several decades, the issue of women’s suffrage in Quebec seems to have taken a back seat to other issues. With the formation of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union in the 1870s, some members of the union early identified suffrage as a key goal although it was not until 1891 that the WCTU officially endorsed it.<sup>60</sup> In Montreal, as has been noted earlier, the WCTU counted few elite women among its members. The membership, rather was taken from the Protestant evangelical community and therefore the suffrage campaign does not seem to have filtered its way into elite circles via the WCTU.

One of the first glimpses of interest in the franchise on behalf of elite women emerges at the local level.<sup>61</sup> In 1892, widows and single female property owners were again granted the right to vote at the municipal and school board

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<sup>59</sup> Dumont-Johnson et al, *L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec*; Bettina Bradbury, “Widows at the Hustings: Gender, Citizenship, and the Montreal by-elections of 1832,” in Rudolph M. Bell and Virginia Yans, *Women on their Own: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Being Single* (NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 82-113.

<sup>60</sup> The WCTU was officially formed in Montreal in 1884 by Mrs. Frances E. Willard.

<sup>61</sup> This reinforces the argument made earlier that the local political experiences of women are frequently overlooked by historians leaving a significant gap in our understanding of the growth of women’s political identity.

levels.<sup>62</sup> The 1897 annual report of the Montreal Local Council of Women reveals that women were very keen to take advantage of this right, even hoping to act as representatives on school boards: “A vacancy having occurred in the Montreal School Boards, letters were addressed to Mr. Atwater and Mr. Hackett, Provincial Secretary, making application for the admission of women on School Boards.”<sup>63</sup> The report notes that although the application was received courteously, Dr. MacVicar (presumably the Commissioner who was considering stepping down), had agreed to resume office, and therefore no further action was necessary. Whether he was requested to do so as a result of the council’s request or for other reasons is unclear. In 1898, the MLCW committee appointed to investigate the position of women on school boards reported discouraging news. Though the law did not explicitly forbid women to act on school boards, “the Secretary of the Protestant Commissioners considers the law prohibitory, and also says he believes no women have ever acted on such Boards in our Province. Judge Wurtele, Hon. Counsel of the Council, concurs in this opinion, and says that it would require a special amendment to the school laws to give women the necessary qualification.”<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, the MLCW campaigned to have a woman appointed to the Protestant Board of School Commissioners.<sup>65</sup>

As women pursued the issue at the local level, steps were taken at the provincial level that cut their legs out from under them so to speak. As outlined in the annual report of 1900: “a law has been passed excluding women from acting

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<sup>62</sup> Roderick MacLeod and Mary A. Poutanen. *A Meeting of the People: School Boards and Protestant Communities in Quebec, 1801-1998* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 336.

<sup>63</sup> “Third Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1897”, 9.

<sup>64</sup> “Fourth Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1898”, 9.

<sup>65</sup> Roderick MacLeod and Mary Anne Poutanen, *A Meeting of the People*, 336.

on School Boards in the Province of Quebec.”<sup>66</sup> In similar fashion to 1849, the amended law replaced the word “person” with the word “male”. The council was deeply disappointed by the action of the provincial government, “having hoped that the Council’s recommendation as to the interpretation of this latter word (person) would be received.”<sup>67</sup> The underhanded tactics of male politicians (both at the school board level and in the legislature) surprised and stung the local council but served as an important lesson in their quest for political representation. Their future campaigning would be more systematic, more informed, more aggressive and with more peripheral support.

Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie, eldest daughter of Marie-Louise Globensky Lacoste and Alexandre Lacoste, wife of Henri Gérin-Lacoste, became a very important leader among elite women in Montreal. Her extensive understanding of the law (largely through self-education) and her passion for the rights of women shaped both the goals and the methods of the MLCW, the FNSJB and various other women’s organizations in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Montreal. Chief among her concerns were the rights of married women in Quebec. In order to educate women on their inferior legal position she wrote and published *Traité de droit usuel* (translated as *A Treatise on Everyday Law*), a book that Parker Drummond wrote would “be of immense service.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> “Sixth Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1900”, 13.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Letter of Julia Drummond to Marie Gérin-Lajoie, undated 1902, Fonds de l’Institut Notre-Dame du Bon Conseil de Montréal, BANQ-M, P783, s2, ss3, sss3. Marie Gérin-Lajoie, *Traité de droit usuel* (Montreal: Lovell, 1902). Gérin-Lajoie funded this publication and advanced copies to important leaders across North America including clergy, politicians, educators, philanthropists, journalists, and friends. Hoping to see the adoption of the book as a mandatory text in schools, Gérin-Lajoie especially pursued various educational associations including universities, school boards, and law schools. These letters can be found at the BANQ.

Anne-Marie Sicotte, biographer of Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie, writes that while reading the newspaper in November 1902, Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie noticed that city councillor M. Lapointe had proposed an extension of the municipal vote to separated women (divorce being all but nonexistent).<sup>69</sup> Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie, excited by the proposition and keen to gain ground in the municipal franchise, immediately called together an emergency meeting of the MLCW. The MLCW quickly drew up a letter in support of Alderman Lapointe and presented it to the city council.<sup>70</sup> The MLCW was again surprised at the backhanded nature of political process when their attention to the issue elicited a most peculiar response from the special committee. While the committee could accept that women separated as to body and goods ought to be in the same category as widows, it proposed the removal of all women renters from the voters list arguing that women in this category rarely exercised their right to vote anyway, which opened the door to fraud.<sup>71</sup> Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie and the MLCW responded. Following a rapid but thorough investigation of the situation and a gathering of statistical and anecdotal information, Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie sought the sympathy of the press: “les esprits étaient disposés en notre faveur, et la presse entière à l’exception d’une seule feuille importante consentit à reproduire tout ce que j’ai voulu, les

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<sup>69</sup> Anne-Marie Sicotte, *Marie Gérin-Lajoie: Conquérante de la liberté*. (Montreal: Éditions remue-ménage, 2005), 169. Unfortunately, Sicotte does not provide a reference for this and attempts to request this information from the author were unsuccessful. The remaining evidence does seem to support the random nature of this discovery by Gérin-Lajoie.

<sup>70</sup> Noted in the minutes of the city council on 24 November 1902, “Local Council of women in favor (sic) of extending right to vote to women separated from their husbands.” *Procès-verbaux*, Fonds de conseil de ville de Montréal, série 2, bobine 22, 7.

<sup>71</sup> Sicotte, *Marie Gérin-Lajoie*, 170.

directeurs on été prévenus et leur concours assure sur le champ.”<sup>72</sup> Confident that they represented a large portion of the population, the MLCW sent another official letter to the city council:

To the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Montreal.  
Gentlemen: -  
The women of the Local Council of Montreal hope that you will be good enough to reconsider the amendment proposed to section 3 Article 43 of the Charter of the City of Montreal, by which 4, 304 women paying rent will be deprived of their right to vote. This measure appears to us contrary to equity since the right of voting ought to be inseparable from the paying of taxes. We may safely assure that, in future, women will value their electoral franchise more highly, and will use it conscientiously for the common good, on account of the greater knowledge they will have acquired from the discussion of this question, and from the light thrown upon it by the press...  
The Local Council of Women also hopes that you will maintain the amendment proposed to section 1 Article 43 granting the same rights to married women judicially separated from their husbands, (*de corps et de biens*) as are now enjoyed by unmarried women and widows.  
Respectfully submitted,  
Jessie Voigt.  
Corresponding Secretary of the MLCW.<sup>73</sup>

When the vote was held in city hall, the agreement was unanimous. Not only did the council support the presence of women renters on electoral lists, it extended the same privilege to separated women. The MLCW celebrated the victory and praised the efforts of Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie.

Why was this time different? What had women learned? First and most significantly, the women sought public support. Unlike their campaign for a position on a school board, the MLCW, with Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie in the lead,

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<sup>72</sup> Letter from Gérin-Lajoie to Léonie Morel de Teincey as quoted in Sicotte, *Marie Gérin-Lajoie*, 170.

<sup>73</sup> Letter from MLCW to City Council, 5 December 1902, Fonds de conseil de ville de Montréal, série 2, bobine 83, no. 10.4. The letter was presented in both languages to the city council.

actively publicized their actions, gaining support from the press and the general public, a tactic they subsequently adopted in other political campaigns. Second, in order to appeal to the public and the city councillors, these elite women framed their intentions in non-confrontational ways. Focusing on women as mothers, the call for support did not hint of a radical re-ordering of society but rather focused on women's responsibilities to their family.<sup>74</sup> Of the aldermen Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie said:

ils veulent pas qu'elle élève la voix pour exposer les besoins de la famille...mais gare à vous, mères de famille, si vous vous retranchez dans le silence...N'avez-vous pas un devoir? Oui, le devoir de l'heure présente, c'est d'affirmer votre droit à la considération, c'est d'exiger qu'on tienne compte de votre opinion, vous qui avez l'expérience, qui avez le cœur, qui avez la dignité morale, que vous votiez pour la nomination des candidates qui mettront ensuite des règlements en vigueur dont vous serez l'objet, que votre choix soit dicté par votre conscience.<sup>75</sup>

Furthermore, the MLCW was careful to continue to link the right to vote with paying taxes, not to the rights of individual citizens. Third, they sought more information behind what was driving the action, requesting a full explanation for the proposals from the city council. Therefore, they had the opportunity to be proactive by addressing the specific concerns of the council. It seems that the council was proposing the removal of women renters because so few women who qualified under this regulation actually voted and conniving men were taking advantage of this situation by creating fraudulent votes. Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie

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<sup>74</sup> Sicotte, *Marie Gérin-Lajoie*, 172.

<sup>75</sup> Marie Gérin-Lajoie, "Le vote des femmes et notre conseil de ville" (Pour les journaux, 1902), Fonds de l'Institut Notre-Dame du Bon Conseil de Montréal, BANQ-M, P783, S2, SS5.

pointed to the contradiction she saw in this rationale. It was men, she argued, rather than women, who were taking unfair advantage of the situation. Women ought not be penalized for the immorality of men. Finally, women accepted a certain degree of admonishing from the politicians. They admitted that women had not always taken voting seriously and that to have a municipal vote was not just a right but a responsibility. They then promised future action. The MLCW would take up the cause of educating and encouraging women in their duties as voters.

#### **THE ADOPTION OF A SUFFRAGIST POSITION**

Indeed, although the Local Council is not a Suffrage Society, and is established in the interest of no propaganda, its work shows that it has always assumed that men and women must go forward together since their destinies are one. It has often been asked that the municipal franchise be extended to married women and has gone further in declaring its belief in the political equality of men and women. In 1909, the question was submitted to all of the affiliated societies and the majority voted in favor (sic) of a resolution approving of Woman Suffrage...and in June 1910, the National Council, partly owing to the influence of the Montreal Council, passed a resolution supporting Woman Suffrage.<sup>76</sup>

The adoption in 1909 of this resolution to support women's suffrage as outlined by Carrie Derick in the above quotation, was by no means a given when the MLCW was formed in 1893. Though the founding members, including most of the women comprising this study, may have harboured the dream privately,

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<sup>76</sup> Carrie Derick, "An Historical Sketch 1893-1910", Montreal Local Council of Women, 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary, 1893-1915, 20-21.



none were willing to vocalize this goal in the early years of their organized social activism. Carefully and slowly, spanning more than a decade, the campaign for women's suffrage took shape in the actions and words of elite female activists in Montreal. Concerned about being labelled "strong-minded women" in the early days of women's organization, leaders stuck to conservative, maternalist justification for the entrance of women into the public sphere. They argued strongly for the right to care for and restore society, assuring men that it was their intention to aid and enable rather than to seek equality with men.

At the first annual meeting of the MLCW in 1894, Parker Drummond assured the audience that "neither is our society formed for the especial purpose of advancing women's rights. Such societies exist and are no doubt needed in this time of transition, but the members of this society are workers as it may happen for men or women or little children, and, as a corporate body, they have the rights of *all* humanity at heart."<sup>77</sup> Three years later, in 1897, her tone had subtly changed. Referring to the "City's Housekeeping", Parker Drummond maintained that "the woman's judgment is especially needed, and the woman's voice is entitled to be heard, for in all these things the home, her peculiar province, is vitally concerned." By 1905, Parker Drummond's speeches included a maternalist defence of suffrage without personally committing to it:

So our Council as a whole has made no pronouncement on the general question of Woman's suffrage...And one reason for Woman's Suffrage which has been given at meetings of the Council points to a further application of the principal of unity. It is that the claim is founded

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<sup>77</sup> Julia Drummond, "Address to the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1894", *Some Addresses* (Montreal: Gazette Printing 1907), 11.

not on the assumption that men and women are the same but rather on the fact that they are different, and therefore that the masculine or feminine judgment by itself is necessarily *partial*, and inadequate to the problems of a complex world. It is on these differences, we have been told, that the claim is founded, and even those who do not draw quite the same conclusion must share the view that the hope of the future lies 'in the development in equal freedom of the masculine and feminine elements in life.'<sup>78</sup>

There was strong resistance to the adoption of women's suffrage by the MLCW as an organization but also as individuals. Resistance, in general, was to be found in two main camps – those who felt it was against religious principles and those who felt that women's engagement in public would lead to the destruction of the family. Often these two reasons were voiced in unity. As has been well documented by historians, the Roman Catholic Church led the charge against suffrage.<sup>79</sup> Though they were initially hesitant about Catholic women working with Protestants and Jews in the form of the MLCW, Catholic clergy men generally endorsed the role of women in organized charity and early political activism. This, they argued was the lived experience of religion. Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* further justified the expression of faith in the form of social engagement. Clerico-nationalism, nevertheless, had a powerful influence among Francophone women. Tying the fate of the Catholic family to the fate of French-Canadian nationalism, priests discouraged women from upsetting the natural

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<sup>78</sup> Julia Drummond, "Address on the Council Idea – Sent to the Meeting at Charlottetown, P.E.I. in May, 1905", *Some Addresses* (Montreal: Gazette Printing, 1907), 57.

<sup>79</sup> There is a plethora of literature on this topic. See for example : Dumont-Johnson et al, *L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec*, 345; Sylvie D'Augerot-Arend, "Why So Late? Cultural and Institutional Factors in the Granting of Quebec and French Women's Political Rights" *Journal of Canadian Studies* Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring 1991): 138-65; Karine Hébert, "Une Organisation Maternaliste: La fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste et la Lutte de Femmes pour le Droit de Vote", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 52, no. 3 (hiver 1999) : 315-344.

order, as designed by God. A Christian woman, they often argued, was first and foremost a mother and as such, her responsibilities lay in the home. It is interesting to note, however, that there were differences of opinion even amongst Roman Catholic clergymen. Sicotte writes that Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie actively sought out Stanislas Loiseau, an open-minded Jesuit, as confessor. “Les Jésuites de Montréal sont ceux, parmi les religieux, qui on réagi le plus fortement à *Rerum Novarum*, et Marie est très liée à ce réseau qui lui donne accès aux derniers développements du catholicisme social d’outre-mer.”<sup>80</sup>

Less documented but equally scathing in their resistance to women’s suffrage was the approach taken by the Orthodox Jewish community. While the Reform community seems to have been more open to women in the professions and in politics, the Orthodox understanding of a woman’s place in society had her firmly entrenched in the home:

Are there among Jewish women any suffragists?  
The Jewish woman believes in her home, her  
husband, her children and her religion. She is not a  
suffragist. She is content to be queen and rule  
over her own domestic circle, over which she  
wields a sceptre of influence as potent as the  
morning star. She firmly believes that the starting  
point of great men and good men begins at home,  
where training is taught by example by lofty  
ideals<sup>81</sup>

## A CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Along with the official pro-suffrage endorsement of the Montreal Local Council of Women, two events seem to signal a change in the nature of women’s

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<sup>80</sup> Sicotte, *Marie Gérin-Lajoie*, 187.

<sup>81</sup> Clara Holzmark Wolf, “The Jewish Woman Suffragist”, *Jewish Times* 4 June 1909, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives.

political activism in Montreal. The first were the municipal elections of 1910 and 1912, the second, the Suffrage Exhibition in February 1913. Continuity in momentum was met with a changing of the guard in terms of central actors.

The suffrage movement emerged out of the organized political action of elite and middle-class women in Montreal – the women who birthed the MLCW, the FNSJB, and the Montreal Women's Club. As a group and as individuals they had accumulated practical experience, a network of supporters, growing confidence, a place in the international women's movement, and a status in the public realm that was difficult for even the most ardent anti-feminists to deny. In essence, these women prepared the groundwork for the explosion of suffrage activities that emerged in Montreal by 1909. It is clear, however, that the formal suffrage campaign (i.e. the campaign for the enfranchisement of women at the provincial and federal levels) was the project of the next generation of activists. Spanning the two generations, Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie acted as a thread of continuity linking the experience, status and confidence of the early activists with the enthusiasm, higher education and unrivalled boldness of the new generation. Many of the earlier generation were committed to the goals of the suffrage movement and as such supported the work of the WCTU and the MSA (and the subsequent forms of suffrage associations) in name and with financial gifts. Take, for example, the role of Julia Parker Drummond as "honorary President" of the Montreal Suffrage Association, a position of status rather than of grass-roots activism. In effect, it was Grace Ritchie-England and Carrie Derick accompanied by Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie and Caroline Dessaulles Béique, those who had

apprenticed under the original founders of the MLCW, who took over the reins of leadership at the advent of an aggressive suffrage campaign.

When the MLCW and other associated groups successfully extended the municipal vote to separated women in 1902, there was a very clear sense of needing to protect this right by proving that women valued their enfranchisement. The MLCW had promised to educate and encourage women in their civic duties and, in 1904, the council formed a Civics committee. In its initial stages, this committee had as its goal the education of women on their rights and responsibilities as citizens. In particular, the committee wanted to interest women in their rights as municipal voters. Though some lectures were held and some pamphlets were distributed in the first years of its existence, the committee considered itself to be falling short. In 1909, the Civic Improvement League approached the MLCW for their practical and influential support of a municipal election referendum being held in September of that year. Having coincided with the endorsement of suffrage by the council, the MLCW took on the task of informing and facilitating the votes of eligible female voters. Recognized by the Press and the CIL for its role in the “success” of the referendum, the MLCW threw its weight into carrying on this good work in the upcoming municipal election in February 1910.

The municipal election in 1910 was the first in which a Board of Control was to be elected in addition to the regular council (as determined by the referendum in September 1909.)<sup>82</sup> There was a strong sentiment among reformers

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<sup>82</sup> Coincidentally, the 1910 election coincided with the death of George Alexander Drummond. Normally enthusiastic about suffrage and civic duty, Julia Parker Drummond was completely

that corruption was rampant in city hall and that a full overthrow of the current administration would be the only way to repair the situation. As such, the Citizens' Committee (a group of men concerned with social reform and civic responsibility) drew up a full slate of men who "pledged themselves to give the city clean, honest and sane government."<sup>83</sup> Encouraged by the impact of the MLCW on the referendum earlier, the Citizens' Committee again requested the support of the women's organizations in Montreal. Working together, the MLCW, the FNSJB, the MWC, the WCC and the WCTU formed an impressive coalition, determined to reveal the commitment of women to political action.<sup>84</sup> Their goals were three-fold. First, they hoped to enumerate all eligible female voters – many of whom, they believed, were unaware of their privilege. Second, they hoped to "direct" women in their election choices so that the voice of women was heard in unity. Third, they were committed to aiding the actual experience of voting by establishing a transportation infrastructure that would ensure women across the city had the opportunity to cast their votes.

The first of these goals was harder to attain than they expected, there being no division between men and women on the voters lists. "Some six to ten women worked morning and afternoon from Tuesday to Friday to prepare these lists there

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absent during this mobilisation of women in Montreal. George Drummond was confined to his home for nearly three months preceding his death. The newspapers report that his family, including Julia Drummond, were at his side when the end came, early Wednesday morning (the day following the election.)

<sup>83</sup> "Grafters Routed: Montreal Elects Citizens' Ticket by Tremendous Majorities", *Montreal Witness*, 8 February 1910, 4.

<sup>84</sup> The *Montreal Standard* reported that even Archbishop Bruchesi publicly referred to "the pleasure it gives him to be assured that the women will exercise their municipal franchise" 29 January 1910, *Montreal Standard*, 2.

being 6000 women voters.”<sup>85</sup> More than three thousand post cards were sent out, notifying women of their status as municipal voters and invited to a public meeting. In addition to the post cards, volunteer canvassers spread out across the city, speaking one on one with women from all wards. The women’s coalition, having agreed to support the slate proposed by the Citizens’ Committee, endorsed a unified vote by all women in Montreal by drawing up a sample ballot for each ward. A week before the election, a meeting was held in Stanley Hall. Senator Raoul Dandurand addressed the meeting, introducing each of the candidates on the slate of the Citizens’ Committee. The meeting was well-attended and the MLCW felt that much interest had been aroused.<sup>86</sup>

The day before the election, the women met to put the physical infrastructure into place. Carriages and escorts were arranged to provide transportation to the polls and regional headquarters were set up across the city including the homes of a Mrs. Thurston, Grace Ritchie England, and the YWCA. The Citizens’ Committee asked the women to keep track of the female vote and to consult voting lists to ensure that all women were indeed voting. At the end of the day, the women were proud and hopeful of what they had accomplished. With the exception of one alderman, the entire slate endorsed by the women’s coalition and the Citizens’ Committee had been elected. In the days following the election, the praise mounted for the effort of the women’s coalition. Mr. Carter, elected alderman, claimed that “I wouldn’t be true to my Irish gallantry if I did not refer

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<sup>85</sup> 26 February 1910, Minutes of the Executive Meeting, Montreal Local Council of Women, BANQ, P653,S1,SS3,D1.

<sup>86</sup> 26 February 1910, Minutes of the Executive, Montreal Local Council of Women, BANQ, P653,S1,SS3,D1.

to the ladies. They are responsible in no small measure for the splendid majority which seems to have been given us.”<sup>87</sup> The MLCW spared some room in its report to extol the effort:

The work was magnificent. No one society could have done it alone but working together with a united front and securing the cooperation of the FNSJB by showing how important were the interests involved, every ward was done...the Local Council, the Fédération, the WCTU, and the Women’s Canadian Club – we were all united in a great and a national work...a triumph for women.<sup>88</sup>

Less contentious than the election of 1910, the 1912 election took a similar path. The women’s organizations participated in the same ways, mobilising the female vote on behalf of reform candidates. Rather than choosing specific candidates and proposing a single unified vote, the coalition hoped that women would make informed and wise decisions as they visited the polls. Following another successful election and with this momentum, the MLCW continued in its quest to educate and motivate women in their civic responsibilities. Having proved their worth and their weight as citizens to Montrealers, they began to shift the focus from municipal politics (always traditionally connected to taxes) to a more general struggle for the recognition of women as enfranchised citizens at all levels of government. While their focus was always on civic duty, they increasingly attached this to suffrage. They held public meetings, inviting leading suffragists including Ethel Annakin Snowden, Emmeline Pankhurst and Sadie American.

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<sup>87</sup> “Grafters Routed: Montreal Elects Citizens’ Ticket by Tremendous Majorities”, *Montreal Witness*, 8 February 1910, 4.

<sup>88</sup> 26 February 1910, Minutes of the Executive, Montreal Local Council of Women, BANQ, P653,S1,SS3,D1.



By 1913 the British suffragette movement was in full swing, gaining momentum every day. These were the days of forced feedings, violent clashes and arrests. Newspapers across the globe were carrying the stories of these militant feminists. Distancing themselves from militants, the suffragists of Montreal reinforced their commitment to using the right to vote for the good of society. Their experience with the municipal vote, with the extensive organization of charity, and with securing a public position in complex social networks, the women at the head of the suffrage movement, as yet undefined in one organization, produced a display of their goals in the form of a Suffrage Exhibition which took place during the first two weeks of February. Guest speakers were invited from England, the United States, and elsewhere in Canada including Annakin Snowden. The Exhibition appears to have been a major success, with a financial surplus complementing the social advancement made toward promoting women's suffrage.

#### **RESISTANCE AND ANTI-SUFFRAGE**

There was a very real anti-suffrage faction within Montreal, however. Not everyone was pleased with the suffrage exhibition taking up such a public role in Montreal. Nor was everyone happy with the adoption of women's suffrage as a tenet of the Montreal Local Council of Women and the National Council of Women of Canada. Anti-suffrage sentiments were not just the purview of men. On the contrary, many women held anti-suffrage beliefs.

Historian Julia Bush's research on anti-suffragist women in England is both long-overdue and fascinating.<sup>89</sup> If studying women's suffrage went out of fashion for some time in the academic world, it is certain that studying anti-feminist movements and leaders never was in fashion. In her study of British anti-suffragists, Bush commits to understanding the modes of thought, action, and principle within a movement that claimed to have the same amount of support (if not more) as Britain's pro-suffrage contingent. Bush divides these conservative women into three groups that sometimes overlapped and intersected: imperialist "ladies", women writers, and maternal reformers. The basis for their anti-suffrage philosophy, she maintains, was based on the belief that the differences between men and women were "natural" and that therefore they should "naturally" have different roles to play in society. A woman's primary role was as a mother and a homemaker. Any threat to this position (including a disrespect) would lead to a break-down in society.

Getting at the voices of women in history is always difficult. It is especially difficult when these voices are coming from the "losing" side of history. Bush had access to organizational papers and reports for her study. In Montreal, there is no such luxury for no formal anti-suffrage association existed at the time in the city. Furthermore, because so many of Montreal's elite activist women supported women's suffrage, it surely would have been difficult to voice opposition views amongst friends and activist "colleagues". What voices do

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<sup>89</sup> Julia Bush, *Women Against the Vote: Female Anti-suffragism in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

emerge on this side of the suffrage debate, suggest that many of Bush's findings about anti-suffrage in Britain would have been true also here in Montreal.

Opposition to women's suffrage came loudest from men in Montreal.

Henri Bourassa serves as the prime example. Having free access to public writing in the form of his newspaper, Bourassa frequently sermonized on the evil that would come to Quebec should Quebec's mothers be expected to vote.<sup>90</sup> Certainly he was in sympathy with the Roman Catholic Church that took a strong stance against women's suffrage. Stephen Leacock was also a vocal opponent to women's suffrage though often framed in more humorous tones.<sup>91</sup> In addition to these men were women who opposed women's suffrage. When the MLCW officially endorsed women's suffrage, Katie Samuel DeSola resigned from the council after having served on the Executive since its founding. Though she did not cite a specific reason for withdrawing, the evidence suggests this was her primary motive. Both the way she spoke in public about women's role in society and the way the Orthodox Jewish community was condemning women's suffrage suggest that as the wife of the chief rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, she could not publically be associated with suffragist organizations.<sup>92</sup> Within families sometimes there could be differences of opinions. While Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie was perhaps the most outspoken supporter of women's suffrage, her mother, Marie Globensky Lacoste was much less convinced of the

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<sup>90</sup> Henri Bourassa, "Désarroi des cervaux – triomphe de la démocratie" *Le Devoir*, 28 March 1918, 1

<sup>91</sup> Stephen Leacock, "The Woman Question." *Maclean's Magazine*, 28 (October 1915), 7-9.

<sup>92</sup> See Samuel DeSola's speech to the National Council of Jewish Women in *Proceedings of the First Convention of the National Council of Jewish Women*. Held at New York, Nov. 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19, 1896. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1897), 386 and the article Clara Holzmark Wolf, "The Jewish Woman Suffragist", *Jewish Times* 4 June 1909, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives.

value of women's suffrage. Her father, Judge Alexandre Lacoste and President of the Conservative Party of Canada, was equally unsupportive of the cause in public.<sup>93</sup>

By the 1920s, the situation had changed in Montreal and Quebec. The anti-suffrage troops were rallied and brought into common effort. Led by Roman Catholic clergymen, women across the Province signed petitions and staged demonstrations against women's suffrage.<sup>94</sup> While the cities remained strongholds of pro-suffrage forces with Montreal in the lead, it took years for pro-suffragists to launch an effective and successful campaign to win the vote. Few of the women involved in this study were still alive to see the vote extended to women in Quebec.

## CONCLUSION

If the study of women's political activity begins only with the fight for the vote, then the story of Quebec does in fact appear depressing. But by extending the definition of politics to include social politics and by thinking about citizenship and experiences of citizenship, than a new story emerges. This story is one of activism, of influence, and of power on behalf of women who engaged the political process without the right to vote. They were citizens – of a city, a nation, and an empire. And as citizens they would stand and shoulder their civic responsibilities; even if they were asked to do that without the same rights as their brothers, fathers, husbands, and sons.

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<sup>93</sup> Sicotte, *Marie Gérin-Lajoie: Conquerante de la liberté*.

<sup>94</sup> D'Augerot-Arend, "Why So Late?", 145.

## CHAPTER 5

### **FROM THE HEARTH TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH: MOTHERS AND CITIZENS OF THE WORLD**

The previous chapter focused on and argued for the importance of the local in the lives of Montreal's elite women. It made the case that distinct political identities were defined, tested, and negotiated at the local level. But any examination of the local lives of elite women also reveals the way the world outside the local seeped in and shaped that space – both in the intimacy of their domestic worlds and in the community they experienced outside the home. As a result, the world beyond the home influenced their primary identity as mothers or maternal figures. The record these women left for historians to follow indicates that they were in fact concerned with and engaged in an international world in their day-to-day lives. Montreal was far from isolated at the turn of the twentieth century. It was centrally positioned in complex international networks and as a result, the city welcomed performers, guests, and travelers from around the globe on an ongoing basis. Engagement in Montreal's social and cultural events demanded that the elite circles of Montreal be open to and comfortable in a transnational context. Equally important was one's ability to be able to leave home turf and travel to the lands beyond home, beyond Montreal, and beyond Canada. New technologies including the telegraph, the train, and the steamship collapsed time and space and provided even greater and easier access to the world beyond Montreal for elite women. This facility of travel coincided with the growth of women's organizations that increasingly spanned the Atlantic in the form of international associations. Political identities were fostered by these elite

women not just at home but also in constant interaction with national and international identities. Formal and informal networks beyond Montreal influenced these elite female activists, creating a cross-road in Montreal where Canadian nationalism, French-Canadian nationalism, British Imperialism, North American Continentalism, and the Francophone world intersected in the creation of their identities as women, as elites, and as activist citizens.

Moving from the local to the farthest reaches of the empire, this chapter begins by looking at the ways the world beyond Montreal seeped into everyday life within the city limits and the ways women engaged with these “foreign” influences. Elite women themselves saw the local in an international context. They wrote and lived a narrative that wove their intimate, personal and local lives into an international framework that centred upon their identity as elite women. Their very real commitment to the “domestic” (and their role therein as “mothers”) and the local was also a very real commitment to a larger international vision that linked their hearths to the furthest reaches of the globe.

The chapter then proceeds by following the women out of Montreal and examining the places they visited, explored and gathered. Informal exchanges occurred through travel and tourism, kinship networks and arts and literature. As women increasingly took advantage of trains, steamships and telegrams, the world beyond Montreal more and more became a part of their every day experience. Mid-week trips to Ottawa and Quebec to accompany politically active husbands, seasonal shopping excursions to New York, and annual voyages to Europe kept women in an elite international “social loop”. By the end of the nineteenth century, informal international social networks had solidified into formal

associational networks through the creation of organizations such as the International Council of Women, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, the Red Cross and the Daughters of Zion.<sup>1</sup>

As women's engagement in the world beyond Montreal evolved from a largely informal to formal participation, elite women positioned themselves not just as mothers of their homes or citizens of their cities but also as citizens of the world. Imperialism and nationalisms cemented the process of self-invention. As women, they tapped into the international networks both as a means of extending their influence beyond Montreal and as a means of bolstering their influence at home. This reciprocal relationship was facilitated not just by Montreal's convergent and overlapping political geography or by new technologies that further collapsed time and space but explicitly through the creation of a uniquely female international network.

An explanation of the spatial boundaries of this study begs a brief word about the temporal boundaries. The onset of the First World War very tangibly changed the international experiences of elite women in Montreal. New lines were drawn between enemy and friend. Pacifism and imperialism clashed with each other both at home and away. Conscription heightened partisan differences

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<sup>1</sup> Though the IODE was originally intended to spread across the British Empire, with chapters in every one of the seven points of the Empire (British Isles, Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the British West Indies), Julia Bush has noted that while it "was able to build a Canadian base which has lasted until the present day", with the exception of small chapters in Bermuda and the Bahamas, the organization never reached its desired goal of being an Empire-wide organization. According to Bush, the IODE came into conflict with the Victoria League, both a result of a conflict of personalities and an unwillingness to decentralize power from London to the "colonies". The IODE seems to have caught the interest of only one or two of the women involved in this study, though certainly the ideals and the practices of the organization were endorsed by the majority. Julia Bush, *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 89.

as individuals took pro- and anti-conscription positions. Renegotiating the roles of women in society in the form of suffrage came to a head in Canada during the war and drove the wedge deeper between pro- and anti-suffragists. This divide was evident in Europe as well, between countries that had enfranchised women and countries that had not. The First World War changed the way the world functioned, not the least for activist women.

### HISTORIOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Daniel Rodgers' important work *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*, is founded on the idea that the turn of the century (which he defines broadly as being from the 1870s to the Second World War), was an era that was peculiarly open to international exchanges, and that the Atlantic functioned "less as a barrier than as a connective lifeline – a seaway for the movement of people, goods, ideas and aspirations."<sup>2</sup> Focusing on "cosmopolitan progressives", Rodgers brings to light the ways American politics were influenced and shaped by imported ideas. He argues that "complicity in world historical forces marks all nations [but] it especially marks outpost nations...which began as other nations' imperial projects."<sup>3</sup>

As a new country, the offspring of one of the grandest imperial ventures to date, Canada was in the early stages of national self-definition at the turn of the century. Indeed it was an ambitious challenge to define this new dominion, comprised of two invading nations, spanning from sea to sea, while at the same

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 1.



time stomping over the rights and perspectives of the resident Aboriginal population. Positioning this beside Carl Berger's classic work *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* in which he argued that "imperialism was one form of Canadian nationalism", Rodgers' thesis takes on a distinctly Canadian flavour. Berger acknowledged the powerful influence of continentalism among some Canadians but the strength of his study is in the way he broke down the assumed conflict between imperialism and nationalism. His careful unpacking of imperialist ideology revealed that looking across the Atlantic for history, leadership, and culture rarely conflicted with visions of building a strong, independent nation. Nationalism did not have to conflict with imperialism and in fact, it rarely did in Canada argued Berger.

In *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* Adele Perry maintains that gender always underscored the project of imperialism. This study of British Columbian settlement explores how women experienced the intersection of empire and nation and how they positioned themselves in this relationship. Vron Ware's observation that "gender played a crucial role in organizing ideas of 'race' and 'civilization', and women were involved in many different ways in the expansion and maintenance of the Empire"<sup>4</sup>, encapsulates much of the research on the relationship between gender and Empire. Anna Davin, Antoinette Burton, and Katie Pickles have attempted to unpack the triangular relationship between gender, race, and class in their work on

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<sup>4</sup> Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History* (London: Verso, 1992), 37.

Empire.<sup>5</sup> Their insights have repeatedly echoed not only the agency of women within imperialist projects but also the complexity of this agency. Both Burton's biographical approach and Pickles' associational history identify the tensions and contradictions among female imperialists, yet both recognize the concerted effort to move beyond the local stage and play a role in an international drama that was unfolding under the banner of Empire. Burton notes the relationship between the simultaneous emergence of Victorian and Edwardian Imperialism and the emergence of an organized feminism in Britain: "As historical phenomena, feminism and imperialism might at first glance be considered an unlikely match...Although some of [Virginia] Woolf's 'quarrels with patriarchy and imperialism' are echoed here, what is primarily at issue is not British feminists' opposition to empire, but their collaboration in its ideological work."<sup>6</sup>

The British Empire provides one paradigm for analysis. But outside of this imperial web was a vast international expanse that also influenced understandings of self and other and shaped ideas of nation and citizenship. The relationship between empire and nation was far from an easy one in Montreal. Strong French-Canadian nationalism vied for a position next to English-Canadian nationalism and British imperialism. Ethnicity, language, religion, and class nudged at (and sometimes attacked) each other as visions of national identity were being negotiated. Did one feel loyal to Britain or to Canada? Could one be a

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<sup>5</sup> Antoinette M Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood" *History Workshop Journal* (1978) 5(1): 9-66; Katie Pickles *Female Imperialism and National Identity: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)

<sup>6</sup> Burton, *Burdens of History*, 2.

good French-Canadian Roman Catholic and be loyal to the British crown? Could one still speak with a British accent and yet see a rosy future for Canada in the promise of a closer relationship with the United States? And what of those Canadians who claimed their heritage in neither of these two founding nations? How did this set of relationships formed from gender, class, ethnicity, race, nation and empire play out in Montreal? Where were the intersections and how was this lived and experienced by the women in this study? What does the case of Montreal reveal about the ways religion impacted individual and group identity?

In particular, Montreal provides yet another view into the relationship between the organization of women and the growth of imperialist fervour. The formalization of women's organization provides the opportunity to ask: what role did gender play in this project? How did the emergence of the women's movement interact with rising imperialist zeal? How did Montreal's elite women engage with the ever-expanding and increasingly navigable world beyond their city walls? How did identities associated with nation and empire influence their identities as women and as activists? How did nation and empire inform their constructions of motherhood and citizenship and vice versa?

Taking this one step further by acknowledging that there was an intrinsic relationship between empire and nation (even if it was not as systematic as suggested by Berger) and that an imperative part of the project of identity is its performance, the question emerges – how did life outside of Montreal (be it nation, empire or other community construct) inform and shape the *performance* of an identity (or more accurately identities) of those elite women living in Montreal and vice versa? The next chapter will tackle these related questions.

### BRINGING THE WORLD TO MONTREAL: THE WORLD AT OUR HEARTH

As Canada's largest city and one of the key hubs of the British Empire, Montreal was truly a cosmopolitan city at the turn of the century. While travelling to distant locales was an important aspect of cultural enrichment, especially among those who could afford to do such things, the local social scene offered no lack of fascinating international cultural influences. The theatre regularly featured travelling troupes from England, France and the United States. French actress Sarah Bernhardt was a perpetual favourite for those who loved to love her and those who loved to hate her.<sup>7</sup> Making Montreal a favourite stop on their world tours, musicians and artists from around the world gave performances that kept Montreal's afternoons and evenings full of exciting (if at times bawdy) entertainments and concerts. Even when the stars were not visiting the city, Montrealers followed their performances and personal lives in newspapers and in their correspondence. Katie DeSola's scrapbook carefully follows the lives of several musical heroes.<sup>8</sup>

The presence of McGill University and the Montreal campus of Université Laval along with many local, national and international organizations in Montreal afforded the city the privilege of hosting many guest lectures, conferences, and annual meetings. Professors from Harvard, Paris, Toulouse, and Cambridge came

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<sup>7</sup> Her visit in December 1905 caused quite an uproar when *L'événement* published a scathing story of Bernhardt, accusing her of using the nickname "Iroquois" in regard to French-Canadians. Others came to her defence, saying that her words were misconstrued but the story was exemplary of the kind of tensions that followed her. "Story was Untrue", 8 December 1905, *Montreal Gazette*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> See "Scrapbook of Mrs. DeSola", P0164 (Meldola and Clarence DeSola Collection), Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives.

to speak to the McGill Historical Society, the Law and Medical schools, the Montreal College of Pharmacy, and the schools of divinity. Annual meetings for the Canadian Medical Association, the Anglican Church of Canada, the International Council of Women and many others were held in Montreal. Notices of meetings and lectures being held at the Windsor Hotel which seated up to a thousand people in its main auditorium or the similarly sized Monument nationale along with many other public, religious, and private institutions (including private homes) were published in the newspapers and indicate that there was a continual stream of interesting and important meetings taking place in Montreal.

Amy Redpath Roddick's and Joséphine Marchand Dandurand's diaries reveal the international influences that filled the everyday experiences of (elite) Montreal women. Keeping track of the lectures, the theatre productions, the receptions and meetings she attended, Redpath Roddick's weekly schedule is full of interactions with visitors from home and away. Though she was physically anchored on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal (perhaps more so than others because of the ill health of her mother), her daily life kept her firmly rooted in an international context. She recorded the weekly reading of clippings from the newspapers (both local and international) to her mother who was bedridden, keeping her informed of events around the world. Her regular habits of local calling were frequently interrupted by special invitations to meet guests from Ottawa, Quebec City, Labrador, London, and Paris over tea or dinner. She attended weekly lectures on world architecture and art. She listened to papers by guests and members on Ruskin and Ibsen (among others) at weekly literary meetings at George and Julia Parker Drummond's house. She kept up extensive

correspondence with friends and relations around the world. A branch of the Redpath relatives had returned to Scotland in their retirement and Amy's brothers spent time in California, South Carolina, Chicago and England. She corresponded with her neighbours, the Lyman family, during their travels to Bermuda and kept up regular correspondence with a Mrs. Dausch in India. These letters demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of international happenings, both the mundane events and the exceptional events.<sup>9</sup> Redpath Roddick carried these letters with her on her walks around the city and on Mount Royal and very tangibly demonstrated the way the local and the international intersected even for those who spent the majority of their time in Montreal.

Redpath Roddick, like many elite women, initiated a programme of self-education in order to improve her understanding of the world around her in an age when formal historical or political science education was scarcely available to women. While her understanding of and participation in the international environment were largely constructed around British imperialist structures, she also had an interest in the French and German worlds. Like many other elite women, she was tutored in both French and German as a young woman.

Relatively fluent in French at a young age, Redpath Roddick pursued perfecting her German throughout adulthood.<sup>10</sup> She made weekly visits to her German

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<sup>9</sup> See Fonds Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books Department, McGill University.

<sup>10</sup> Both Osla Clouston and Adaline Van Horne Jr. also write about learning German. Both had the opportunity as teenagers to live in Germany for some time. Clouston spent most of her time in Dresden while VanHorne remained primarily in Berlin. Van Horne, who was perfectly fluent in French, found German much harder to master: "I understand German very well now but the speaking is of course not so easily acquired. I can make myself understood very well but a conversation as yet does not succeed particularly well." 1 April 1888, Letter from Adaline Van Horne Jr., to William C. Van Horne, MG29 A60 Vol. 87 Library and Archives Canada.

tutors, the Gebhardts, and spent hours translating poems, plays and novels into German, including Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, on British imperialist matters Redpath Roddick was perpetually seeking out further opportunities to educate herself. When her brother, Reginald, went to South Africa during the South African War, she devoured the newspapers every day for even the smallest details of the war. She scoured history books for information about the colony and was thrilled to receive as a gift a table map of South Africa in order to better understand the geography and topography of the country as she followed the war through her brother's letters.<sup>12</sup> She even arranged to have some of these letters published in local newspapers including the *Montreal Witness*. And when there were victories to celebrate, she enthusiastically joined in.<sup>13</sup>

The telegraph and improved mail service meant that staying on top of international affairs like the South African War was easier than ever before. Montreal newspapers regularly carried columns dedicated to life in Europe and, if sensational in nature, other more exotic locations. Add to that the increasing number of foreign newspapers that were available. Interest in the world beyond Montreal was encouraged by the growing imperialist enthusiasm leading up to

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<sup>11</sup> On this exercise, Redpath Roddick commented: "I find [it] very good exercise. It is every day language. The more I study this play, the more it charms me. Ibsen's insight into female nature is wonderful." 6 February, 1897, Diary of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books Department, McGill University.

<sup>12</sup> 16 March 1900, Diary of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books Department, McGill University.

<sup>13</sup> "[I]n the evening we helped the Drummonds to celebrate the fall of Pretoria. Their house was brilliantly illuminated with torches all along the fence and as the military passed we all sent off Roman candles. Uncle George sent off from the gallery a most gorgeous display of fire works. I think these were the only fireworks along the route of the military procession." 5 June, 1900, Diary of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books Department, McGill University.

major events such as the South African war, the death of Queen Victoria and the subsequent succession of Edward VII and the emerging hope signalled by the signing of the *Entente Cordiale* between England and France in 1904. Alongside these imperial happenings, other international conflicts flooded into the lives of Montrealers -- first the Sino-Japanese War followed by the Russo-Japanese War, the re-election and assassination of President William McKinley Jr., and the Dreyfus Affair in France.

In the Marchand household, the world beyond the home was seen through a particularly political lens. Growing up in a household where politics dominated the everyday, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand was frequently a participant in heated debates about the state of the world. Her knowledge of the world emerged from extensive personal and formal education. While certainly aware of and engaged in local politics, Marchand Dandurand also demonstrated a strong understanding of what was happening on the French political scene. Her love for understanding the world around her was eclipsed only by her love of writing. From her homes in Quebec City and St Jean as a young woman and later in Montreal where she moved upon her marriage to Raoul Dandurand, Marchand Dandurand stayed on top of all goings-on in France, frequently commenting in her diary about political personalities and events. As noted earlier, on first meeting Marchand Dandurand, Raoul Dandurand noted: “Tout de suite, je m’aperçue qu’elle était très au courant de tout ce qui concernait la France ; elle lisait, m’expliqua-t-elle, les journaux français que recevait son père, M. Marchand...le



côté sérieux de la vie l'intéressait beaucoup plus que toutes les distractions mondaines dont elle aurait pu profiter.»<sup>14</sup>

But reading about the world beyond Montreal and debating the various aspects of international conflicts was only one aspect of global currents permeating Montreal. While newspapers carried stories about life in other locations, so too did the visitors who perpetually entered and exited the city. Perhaps nowhere in Montreal's elite circles did the world's visitors congregate more than at the Van Horne house. In his role as President of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the myriad of other positions he held, William C. Van Horne traveled the world as few others did at the time. While others generally confined their travels to North America and the European continent, Van Horne spent a great deal of time in Cuba and South America and made several trips to Asia, developing particularly close ties in Japan and India. He became so excited by Japan that he arranged trips there for his children.<sup>15</sup> Adaline Van Horne Jr. and Mary Van Horne (the daughter and sister of William C.) reveal in their journals the constant stream of international visitors to their home and the ceremony that surrounded these events. The Van Hornes hosted guests from Japan, India, Cuba, Holland, France, England, Germany and the United States. Dinners for twenty or thirty guests were regularly served by the Van Hornes, often with only a couple hours notice. When international guests were in town, W.C. Van Horne would invite colleagues, club-mates, and friends to join in festivities that would last late

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<sup>14</sup> Raoul Dandurand, *Les Mémoires du sénateur Raoul Dandurand, 1861-1942*, édité par Marcel Hamelin, Québec : Presses l'Université de Laval, 1967), 41.

<sup>15</sup> Although Van Horne's son Bennie did make the trip to Japan, his daughter Adaline declined the opportunity, claiming that she was needed to help run the household. 23 May 1903 Letter from Adaline Van Horne Jr. to William C. VanHorne, MG29 A60 Vol. 87, Library and Archives Canada.

into the night. Bringing together Montrealers and exotic guests was an art that Van Horne reveled in. On occasion, these parties struck a sour chord as described by Mary Van Horne: “Dinner for Mr. & Mrs. Abbott of Vancouver, other guests Miss Abbott, Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Allan, Miss Hamilton, Judge & Madame Taschereau, Mr. & Mrs. Sutherland Taylor, Mr. Kirkpatrick, Mr. Fleming, Mr. Brymner, Mr. Kleckymiski, Counsul General from France. Things went decidedly wrong. Did not enjoy the dinner at all.”<sup>16</sup>

Adaline Van Horne, wife of W.C. Van Horne, found the chore of organizing and hosting these social events very challenging. A school teacher by choice and by training, she found the many details of hosting these events exhausting and overwhelming. William’s sister Mary and later Adaline Jr. eventually took over the organization and execution of these dinners and entertainments, though Adaline participated as much as her deteriorating health would allow. Growing up in this household, Adaline Jr. felt at ease mixing with people from all over the world. She spoke three languages (though she continued to struggle with German into adulthood) and had visited many of the places from which her guests had come. Unlike her mother and aunt who both grew up in lesser circumstances, Addie Jr. was used to the flow of international guests through her home.<sup>17</sup> Her diaries and letters demonstrate a sophisticated flair for connecting people with common interests, even if they lived half the globe apart. Around the Van Horne’s dinner table, meeting guests from abroad on a regular

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<sup>16</sup> 21 January 1896, Journal of Mary Van Horne, MG29 A60 Vol. 95, Library and Archives Canada.

<sup>17</sup> Valerie Knowles, *From Telegrapher to Titan: The Life of William C. Van Horne*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2004), 45.

basis were the Drummonds, the Lacostes, the Cloustons, the Hingstons, the Redpaths, the Merediths, the DeSolas, and the Dandurands.

Montrealers stitched themselves into an international network that carried them across the map and back in the course of an evening facilitated by discussions of art and music, business and leisure, and international and local politics. This social networking that began on home turf would be extended and reciprocated when Montrealers traveled abroad and reignited friendships and acquaintanceships that had begun in their own homes and the homes of their neighbours. While these international networks certainly were advantageous for and often initiated by business men, they also were advantageous for women. Adaline, Mary and Addie Van Horne were daily greeted by international guests and extended these introductions to their peers. Likewise, other elite families in Montreal welcomed guests from around the world. From their journal entries and their correspondence, it is clear that the women in this study attended these events not just as escorts to their husbands, fathers, and brothers but that they attended as participants. They themselves formed relationships with men and women from outside of Montreal. They built networks with other elite world travelers. They began to stitch their own stories into an international fabric.

From their hearths in Montreal, elite women could participate in an international dialogue. The world came to Montreal through the arts, education, philanthropy, religion, and politics. Visitors and guests brought with them tales and news from other parts of the world, and carried away with them stories of life in Montreal, Quebec, and Canada. Newspapers brought distant local and international news to Montreal and Amy Redpath Roddick and Joséphine

Marchand Dandurand's diaries expose the care they took to inform themselves of international goings on. In social settings that surrounded lectures, performances, and celebrations, elite women formed acquaintanceships and friendships that knit them into an international social fabric. These visits to Montreal would be reciprocated by Montreal's leading ladies, reinforcing international bonds that began in their own homes and public buildings. Carefully, elite women in Montreal were building an international reputation – a reputation that would reinforce their identity as active citizens.

#### **BEYOND MONTREAL: BUILDING INFORMAL NETWORKS**

Far from limiting their international engagement to that which was possible from their homes in Montreal, elite women also went out from Montreal and found ways to connect with other networks in the rest of Canada, the United States, Europe and beyond. Both the train and the steamship played important roles in this process, making access to distant locales more convenient, more affordable, and much faster.

In April 1856, the Grand Trunk Railway celebrated its opening in Montreal. The Canadian Pacific Railway followed in the 1880s and thus began the (increasingly) consistent link to Ottawa, Quebec, New York, Toronto and all the places between and beyond. Being linked by rail to these cities meant that exchanges were easier, faster, and more common. Six departures a day from Windsor Station meant that Montrealers could make the trip to Ottawa and back

in one day.<sup>18</sup> Travel to New York for shopping excursions or to see the theatre no longer took a fortnight. And the burgeoning city of Toronto increasingly became a destination for Montrealers, with four rail departures a day.

While the train escorted people out of Montreal, it must be at least noted that it also escorted people into Montreal. The newspapers record the daily arrivals of visitors from across Canada and the United States. On 19 March 1909, the *Montreal Gazette* announced that in the twenty years of Windsor Station's existence, five hundred thousand trains had arrived and departed from the station.<sup>19</sup> Family and friends, employees and employers, visitors and guests, strangers and royalty were brought to Montreal by the legendary *chemin de fer*. Included in this group were the many immigrants arriving in Canada in record numbers at the turn of the century. Though most immigrants were just passing-by, headed further west to the farmlands of the Prairies, on any given day Russian, German, Scandinavian, English and Scottish immigrants could be seen in Windsor Station, often with all their worldly possessions in hand.<sup>20</sup>

Not only was the train a means of transportation *from* and *to* places, but it also became an important space in its own right. Though similar in some respects to the stage coach, the train presented new questions about respectable behaviour

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<sup>18</sup>Railroads advertised their schedules in the newspapers. In 1906, Canadian Pacific trains bound for Ottawa left Windsor station at 8:45, 9:40, 10:00 16:00, 21:40, and 22:00. A sleeping car was attached to the 22:00 train, and guests were invited to stay in the car from 9 p.m. until 9 a.m. the next morning (acting as both transportation and accommodation!) The Grand Trunk offered a similar schedule with the final train leaving Montreal at 19:30 and arriving in Ottawa at 22:30. Trains to New York left no fewer than six times a day (with various railway companies). Toronto was serviced with four trains a day and travellers to Boston had two different departure times to choose from.

<sup>19</sup> 19 March 1909, "Windsor Station Record", *Montreal Gazette*, 9.

<sup>20</sup> 22 March 1906, "Picturesque Immigrants", *Montreal Gazette*, 8 provides a particularly rich description of "by far the most picturesque batch of immigrants to be seen at the Windsor Station this season..."

that had implications for all who travelled by rail, especially elite *ladies* who were keenly interested in the appearance of their comportment. In dining cars and in comfortable compartments, entrepreneurs conducted business, lovers held intimate conversations, friends reunited. New practices and new rules had to be negotiated to assure riders that respectability could be maintained in the close quarters of the train. Called a “hybrid space” by historian Amy Richter, “in the confined spaces of the railroad, women and men renegotiated the boundary between private and public. They shaped public life to their will, re-imagining it as a realm of moral and physical comfort, transplanting the values and expectations of the private/feminine home onto the public/manly world on rails.”<sup>21</sup> As managers and owners tried to find ways to increase female ridership for commercial reasons, women meanwhile were busy negotiating their entry into public life in new, respectable ways. Richter concludes that men and women, driven by commercial, political and personal interests, did in fact negotiate a new code of respectability on the trains – a respectability that overlay the comforts of the home (and the sphere of feminine influence) with the commercial demands of a public enterprise. Yet another example of the ways women attempted to extend the private sphere beyond the home by creating a domestic space within the public realm, in the case of the railway, Richter shows that men were especially interested in aiding the process (if only for monetary reasons.) This collision of interests and the creation of a public domesticity demonstrate the ways “altered gender ideals and a revised notion of public and private permitted American

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<sup>21</sup> Amy Richter, *Home on the Rails: Women, the Railroad and the Rise of Public Domesticity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 8.

culture to move from Victorian restraint to modernity without abandoning the notion of a separate spheres.”<sup>22</sup> By securing the train as a respectable means of travel, women greatly extended their ability to move outside and beyond Montreal, which in turn extended their reach both geographically and ideologically.

Because the train collapsed time and space, it played a very important role in the lives of elite women who were looking beyond the city walls for experiences and influences that would impact their project of self-invention. This chapter follows the pattern of railway links and explores the ways women integrated the experience of the distant with their experience of the local. Beginning with Ottawa, the nearest “distant”, one begins to get a sense of the ways women fitted themselves into a complex social and political network that extended far beyond Montreal and the involvedness of such a project.

## OTTAWA

When Raoul Dandurand was appointed a senator in 1898 by Lord Aberdeen during the Laurier government, a familiar tradition of living between two cities once again resumed in Joséphine Marchand Dandurand’s life. Marchand Dandurand, who had grown up with a father who was involved in provincial politics, was used to travel associated with political obligations. Now a wife, these obligations intensified. Along with Marie Globensky Lacoste, Caroline Dessaulles Béique, and Julia Parker Drummond, Marchand Dandurand made frequent trips to Ottawa during the Parliamentary session. Once in

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<sup>22</sup> Amy Richter, *Home on the Rails*, 9.

government, few politicians from Montreal made a permanent (or even semi-permanent) move to Ottawa in the day and age of the railway. They considered Ottawa a place to conduct business rather than a place to settle. In fact, most Montrealers preferred to maintain their daily lives in Montreal, making the commute to Ottawa only when necessary. Members of Parliament and Senators made this trip regularly throughout the session while wives made the journey less frequently.<sup>23</sup> Certain to be there for festive events like the opening of Parliament or the Governor General's ball, the convenience offered by the train meant that women could stay based in Montreal and make the trip to Ottawa when duty or desire required it.

In Ottawa, Montreal women entered a ready-made social community of politicians and their wives. The city itself was much smaller in size and population than Montreal yet it offered a unique mix of people gathered there to perform the business of governing. Those who were used to larger centres often found Ottawa provincial and dull. Lady Ishbel Aberdeen found it a constant challenge to live in such a "colonial town" and on more than one occasion moved to Montreal for several months at a time to evade the small-town *mentalité* that she felt surrounded her in Ottawa.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> In this particular group of families, husbands and fathers were more likely to be Senators than members of Parliament. In addition, several husbands held political appointments which may have required less time in Ottawa but nevertheless meant that wives joined in these political networks as well. One particular example seems worth noting – that of Clarence DeSola who was appointed Belgian Consul in 1905. Though his professional business dealings (he secured a very lucrative shipping deal with the Laurier government) frequently took him to Ottawa, his diary indicates that these trips became even more frequent once the appointment was made.

<sup>24</sup> Ishbel Aberdeen, 15 December 1894, *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898*. Ed. John Saywell, (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960), 171ff.



A delightful, albeit gossipy, glimpse of Ottawa's social scene is presented in journalist and author Sandra Gwyn's *The Private Capital: Ambition and Love in the Age of Macdonald and Laurier*.<sup>25</sup> Gwyn exposes the complicated and elaborate etiquette that surrounded socializing in the capital. Politicians (and those who acted as hostesses on their behalf) shouldered heavy burdens of social obligation both within their own parties and, especially in the Senate, across the floor. It was a strange world in which almost every social connection was also a political connection. Rules about calling and entertaining demanded a great deal of time and money. Lady Aberdeen lamented the rigidity with which Ottawa social life functioned and even "suggested having a conference amongst the leaders of society with a view to lightening the intolerable burden imposed by the observance of strict rules about calling, leaving cards personally, and never calling except on the day 'at home' and always asking for the people."<sup>26</sup>

Those who had the opportunity to visit Ottawa regularly, found not only an instant social network, they were also instantly immersed into a *political* world. Life in the capital revolved around governing and politicking. While women were accustomed to social politicking at home in Montreal, in Ottawa life was very much based on politics and politics invaded every aspect of life in ways only hinted at in Montreal. As it was in Montreal, it was even more so important for women in Ottawa to understand the political issues of the day and who stood on which side of the issues. Politics certainly accompanied men and women onto the dance floor and into the garden party as it did in Montreal, but in Ottawa, it

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<sup>25</sup> Sandra Gwyn, *The Private Capital: Ambition and Love in the Age of Macdonald and Laurier* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1989).

<sup>26</sup> Ishbel Aberdeen, 16 February 1895, *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen*, 198.

also was performed on a daily basis in the form of spectacle called government.

In Ottawa, women were part of the spectacle, part of the performance of politics:

The opening of the session of Parliament today attracted a larger attendance than usual. The floor of the Senate chamber was occupied by ladies in evening dress, officers in uniform, and the judges of the Supreme Court in scarlet robes...The galleries were also crowded, chiefly with ladies. Those accorded places on the floor included Her Excellency Lady Grey, Lady Laurier, and the wives of the ministers, Mrs. R. L. Bordon, Madame Dandurand, Lady Drummond, and the wives and daughters of senators and their friends.<sup>27</sup>

Women were welcome on a daily basis to sit up in the gallery while parliament was in session. As observers, wives and daughters were afforded the opportunity to see the intricacies of parliamentary process in action and many were, in fact, daily attendees. Women, of course, were not welcome to participate in government in the traditional ways of acting as official representatives or by contributing to debates in the House of Commons or in the Senate Chamber, but they were, nonetheless, crucial to the ceremony and pageantry that surrounded government.

While there was tradition and pageantry in Montreal in formal social events, the formality and pageantry that accompanied government in Ottawa was much more elaborate. Unsure what to expect upon their arrival in Canada, Lady Aberdeen records many of the details of these formal events, noting that often they were even more formal and strict than the same types of events in London. Women, she notes, were integral to the proper execution of these events.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "Parliament Opens" 23 November 1906, *Montreal Gazette*, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Ishbel Aberdeen comments on this more than once throughout her journal. One such example can be found 28 April 1894, *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen*, 93.

This evening Drawing Room in Senate Chamber at 8.30 – It was very largely attended...they took about 1 ½ hours to pass. It is all done in a dignified & orderly manner & the curtseys were very good & quite surprised us. It seems to me a worse ordeal than at home. The custom is that we should shake hands with absolutely no one. We therefore not only stand on the step in front of the Throne but a sort of low platform intervenes between us & those passing. So that it is quite from a distance that the bows are made. As there is no regular levée, men as well as women pass – the officers make a line in front & a passage through which the people pass. First there is the Entrée to which but v. few have right – then Senators & their wives – then M.P.s -- & then everyone else...I wore a train, which was not usual, but only for the sake of the pages, as it makes the whole affair more finished. A few ladies did wear trains but we must discourage this....But I think that veils and feathers would make the ceremony look more in keeping & we hear people would like this...<sup>29</sup>

The connection between Ottawa and Montreal was very important in the formation of an elite female identity that was both *political* and *international*. In the first place, it put women in the centre of political action. Watching first hand, they understood the intricacies of political manoeuvring and for those who wished, life in Ottawa was an education in political science.

Second, it created an instant social network that was based on political involvement (at least family political involvement). Wives of senators and MPs were meeting other men and women from across Canada, forming connections that would develop into friendships and associational bonds. In Ottawa, Montreal women linked into a ready-made network of women who were already immersed in the world of politics (by proxy in most cases). These connections kept them in touch with the activism of women across the country and coincided with the launching and growth of the formidable National Council of Women of Canada,

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<sup>29</sup> Ishbel Aberdeen, 28 April 1894, *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen*, 93-94.

an activist organization from its outset that was explicitly involved in the negotiation and formation of a national identity that placed women in the role of citizen and activist.

Third, with the creation of the Dominion of Canada only a couple of decades old, the project of nation building and the accompanying growth of nationalism flooded Ottawa's daily rhetoric and spectacle. Those in Ottawa daily tackled the challenge of ensuring this new nation's success, despite concerns that Canada was too vast, too cold, and too diverse. Nationalist discourse was woven into the friendships and networks that grew out of life in Ottawa and was carried back home to Montreal and away again.

## **QUEBEC CITY**

Not unlike Ottawa, trips to Quebec City were both frequent and often based on political obligation for Montrealers. Husbands, fathers or brothers who were not involved in politics in Ottawa were often involved in politics in Quebec City. Some, like Raoul Dandurand and Alexandre Lacoste, were involved in politics in both cities. The access to Quebec by the train permitted women to live between the two cities in much the same way, however, and so Quebec was another city to be visited rather than a city to settle in. For some elite Francophone women, Quebec City was also an important hub in their social networks and family groups. These types of ties to Quebec were generally stronger for Francophones than for Anglophones though were not exclusively Francophone.

The Lacoste family serves as a good example of the family ties that connected Montrealers to Quebec City. Marie Globensky Lacoste had several siblings who were settled in Quebec (including her sister Coralie Globensky (Masson) Taschereau, wife of Judge Henri-Thomas Taschereau) as well as a husband who travelled there regularly. As Chief Justice of Quebec, Alexandre Lacoste habitually shuttled between Quebec and Montreal, often doing the trip in one or two days. As their children grew older and established lives of their own, several of Marie and Alexandre's children moved for various periods to Quebec. Two of their sons attended law school at Université Laval and certainly their eldest daughter Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie would have joined her brothers there had that option been available to her. Daughters Thaïs and Yvonne also spent significant time in Quebec upon their marriages.<sup>30</sup> Unlike her husband, siblings, and children, however, Marie Globensky Lacoste stayed firmly positioned in Montreal for the most part. Her trips to Quebec were infrequent though she often hosted friends and relatives from the capital at her house on St. Hubert Street. Her complex involvement with her children, grandchildren, and a plethora of organizations occupied much of her day, often bleeding into time that was normally reserved for sleep. Yet her daily network certainly involved connections to and from Quebec City.

Both Joséphine Marchand Dandurand and Julia Parker (Hamilton) Drummond spent short periods of time living in Quebec. While the Marchand family was based most of the year in St-Jean, the patriarch of the family, Félix-

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<sup>30</sup> See Diary Marie Globensky Lacoste, P76/7 12.8 BANQ-M. Thaïs Lacoste married Charles Frémont of Quebec City and Yvonne Lacoste married Auguste-Maurice Tessier originally of Rimouski and later of Quebec City.

Gabriel Marchand was an active politician in Quebec serving the Liberal Party as secretary, *commissaire de Terre*, treasurer and eventually as party leader both as Leader of the Opposition and finally, until his death in 1900, as Premier. The Marchands were frequently shuttling back and forth between St-Jean and Quebec City throughout Joséphine's childhood and adolescent years. Though her family was thoroughly rooted as one of the founding families of St-Jean (sur Richelieu), the Marchands had strong connections to Quebec City and their social network was in many ways more tied to Quebec than to Montreal during her early years. When she became engaged to Raoul Dandurand and it became clear that her adulthood would be spent in Montreal rather than in Quebec City, more than once in her journal she noted some anxiety about fitting in with Montreal society because it was unknown to her.<sup>31</sup> Throughout her adult life, Marchand Dandurand maintained connections in Quebec City, keeping up regular exchanges between Montreal and Quebec City.

Julia Parker (Hamilton) Drummond lived only very briefly in Quebec City and very little is known about this time in her life but her tenure there highlights an important aspect of life in Quebec. Though it was much smaller than the Francophone population, there was a relatively vibrant Anglophone community living in Quebec from its early days.<sup>32</sup> As an eighteen year old bride, Julia Parker Hamilton (not yet Drummond) had moved to Quebec City to install herself as wife of the vicar at the largest Anglican church in the city. Reverend George Hamilton was a member of a well-established Quebec family and the son of the

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<sup>31</sup> See for example, 21 September 1885 *Journal Intime, 1879-1900*, Joséphine Dandurand.

<sup>32</sup> Gary Caldwell and Eric Waddell, *The English of Quebec: From Majority to Minority Status*, 1982), 32-33

former Anglican minister at Holy Trinity church. Her move to Quebec in 1879 was short-lived because of Hamilton's ill health.<sup>33</sup> When Hamilton died just a year into their marriage, she returned to Montreal and eventually established a new life with a new marriage and a new family. Julia Parker (Hamilton) Drummond maintained contact with the Hamilton family, though, visiting and corresponding with them throughout her much longer tenure in Montreal. The connections she formed in Quebec City through this early and short marriage serve as evidence of the Anglophone connection between Montreal and Quebec that often remains unnoticed by historians.

There are two important differences between Ottawa and Quebec that deserve attention here. First, unlike Ottawa, Quebec was a stop-over location – en route to Europe, the many cottages on the lower St. Lawrence and the East Coast. Therefore, visits to Quebec were more frequently associated with tourism and travel (as opposed to political obligation) than trips to Ottawa. One rarely made trips to Ottawa other than for professional reasons or for a specific social visit. Quebec, on the other hand, was frequently a place where travellers spent a couple days in preparation for their cross-Atlantic travel or for gathering supplies on the way to summer houses located below Quebec. More than for the act of politics, it was this strategic location of Quebec that brought Anglophones to the city. Quebec had long seen itself as a tourist destination, emphasizing the historical heritage of the city and its important position in the “discovery” of North

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<sup>33</sup> Henry Morgan, *Types of Canadian Women Past and Present, Vol I* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1903)

America.<sup>34</sup> Lower Quebec was quaint if difficult to manoeuvre and history seemed to ‘live in the streets’. For most visitors to the city, Quebec was first and foremost a tourist destination. This stands in stark contrast to Ottawa that was first and foremost a destination for political engagement.

Second, Quebec and the acts of politics therein occupied a different form of nationalism. Construction of a Canadian nationalism (as in Ottawa) was surpassed by the construction of a French-Canadian nationalism and in that way changed the focus of the culture surrounding government. Construction of a French-Canadian nation was explicitly tied to language, ethnicity, and religion. Often spoken of as the French-Canadian *race*, a very strong and proud sense of difference was emerging as a consolidated ideal echoed frequently by Francophone women who were lauded as the mothers of the new race.<sup>35</sup> Though not necessarily positioning French-Canadian nationalism in direct competition with Canadian nationalism, there was certainly much less engagement with the political realm in Quebec by Anglophone women than in Ottawa (by both Anglophone and Francophone women.) Though their husbands, fathers and brothers maintained strong business ties with Quebec, none of the immediate members of the Anglophone families in this study held positions in the provincial government. Therefore, accompaniment to Quebec was often for reasons other than participation in the spectacle of parliament.

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<sup>34</sup> See H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 47.

<sup>35</sup> See Karine Hébert, “Une Organisation Maternaliste: La fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste et la Lutte de Femmes pour le Droit de Vote.” *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*. vol. 52, no. 3 (hiver 1999) : 315-344.



Elite Anglophone women were engaged in the political realm in Quebec but, somewhat ironically, less often as secondary participants or escorts to their male counterparts and more frequently as primary citizens demanding the attention of elected representatives. As outlined in the previous chapter, Anglophone women, along with their Francophone co-citizens approached the Premiers of Quebec and the related officers with their input and requests increasingly throughout this time period.

For the most part, it was politics that created the link for elite Montrealers to both Ottawa and Quebec City. While Montreal may have seemed culturally and socially more upbeat than life in either Ottawa or Quebec City, nevertheless these two cities provided access to a decidedly *political* world for elite Montreal women. In their commuting back and forth, these women were geographically and symbolically creating links that would influence both their understanding of politics and their participation in defining nation(s).

#### **ELSEWHERE IN CANADA**

With the completion of the transcontinental railway in 1885, the train effectively linked Montreal to the rest of the country (if a few rough patches still existed for the better part of a decade). While few Montreal women crossed the entire country via rail in their lifetime, the train did take them to other Canadian locations regularly. Most regularly were the annual trips to summer homes located for the most part along the St. Lawrence River. Even those with summer houses in nearby Dixie, Beaconsfield or Senneville depended on the train (and later a suburban tramway) to transport them from the city to the western edge of

the island of Montreal. The furthest of the summer homes, the Van Horne's, was located in St. Andrew's, New Brunswick and depended not just on the train but on a boat to reach the water-access home they called Covenhoven.<sup>36</sup> More than an exchange of cultural experiences with the locals, summering was a form of the transplanting of urban networks into more rural environments.

Canadian train travel was also common for leisure and vacation purposes as well as keeping family and business connections in place for those with ties beyond Montreal. Trips to the East Coast generally revolved around visiting Halifax and Charlottetown. Trips to the West Coast were much rarer and were made by only a few women in this study.<sup>37</sup> Annie Easton Clouston and Margaret McDonald Hingston, both born and raised in Ontario, depended on the train to keep them in contact with their families both bringing their families to Montreal and transporting them to Brockville and Toronto respectively. Similarly, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand visited her family regularly in St. Jean sur Richelieu. Business meetings meant that train trips to Toronto and Hamilton were

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<sup>36</sup> Michèle Dagenais' work on summer homes highlights the ways in which this practice was a relocation of elite society in a form of colonization that could lead to conflict with local residents, especially when it came to adaptations to the physical environment. Dagenais argues effectively that urban ideas of space, environment, nature, and recreation were transported from the city centre to the suburbs of Montreal in ways that had a lasting impact. See Michèle Dagenais, "'Returning to Nature': Vacation and Life Style in the Montréal Region" *Resources of the City: Contributions to an Environmental History of Modern Europe* ed. Dieter Schott, Bill Luckin, and Geneviève Massard-Guilbard (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 64.

<sup>37</sup> Julia Parker Drummond and Kate Armour Reed (only tangentially a part of this study) both made trips across Canada, spending time in Vancouver and Victoria. While there is a decent record of Armour Reed's travels (she travelled with the CP Hotels, serving as an interior designer for the hotels at Banff and Victoria among others), there is only the hint of a mention of Parker Drummond's trip. An exceptionally rich source for this type of travel can be found in the travels made by Lady Ishbel Aberdeen who not only recorded the trip in her journal, she also took photographs and turned the record into a book entitled *Through Canada with a Kodak*. (Edinburgh: W.H. White and Co., 1893).

frequent for Clarence deSola who was frequently accompanied by Belle Goldsmith deSola.

During this period, Toronto was undergoing major transformation. While it was as yet second to Montreal in terms of size and importance (and would remain so until well after the Second World War), it was experiencing a period of significant growth, spurred largely by the vast industrialization of the city. Travel to the city and interaction with the people who lived there followed the pattern of most of the other major cities in Canada. However, with the formal organization of philanthropy and reform, these links were reinforced and were particularly re-written for elite women. During the formation of the local councils and the National Council of Women of Canada, connections between Montreal and Toronto were strengthened as each local council looked to the other for support. Later that decade, the founding of the National Council of Jewish Women created similar ties.

## **THE UNITED STATES**

Montreal, as an important hub in the continental system, has always been geographically and culturally positioned in proximity to the strong influence of the United States, with Albany, Boston, and New York within a day's journey. Although one of the primary goals of the railway project undertaken in Canada under the government of Sir John A. Macdonald was to forge strong Canadian nationalist bonds, many of the original rail lines, built much earlier, were built along a north-south trajectory with New York City as the largest transportation hub on the continent. This north-south railway encouraged the strong magnetic

pull from south of the border in Montreal and elsewhere in Canada. Multiple trains carried passengers from Montreal to Boston, Albany, New York, Washington and beyond on a daily basis. In an era of trying to cement a strong East-West connection in the new dominion, this North-South connection often proved stronger and more convenient for those living in Montreal.

Elite women accessed this exciting world south of the border with a great deal of regularity. Already well-versed in American culture and current events through literature, newspapers and visitors to their city, Montreal women gravitated to American centres for a variety of experiences: vacation and health restoration trips, shopping and museum visits, theatre and the arts, and family reunions among others. But more than just the locale of high fashion or distinguished arts, the United States also played an influential role in the development of social reform and activism by Montrealers. Influenced by the work of the Parks and Playgrounds Movement or the real-life figures like Jane Addams among many others, Montrealers took many cues from American social reformers, often consulting them on specific Montreal cases as “experts”. Interested in what was going on within the American women’s movement and paying close attention to the work of women’s organizations, there is surprisingly little evidence, however, that Montreal’s women activists were interested in forging official alliances with American women’s organizations.

Vacations and “health respites” were the most common reason for elite Montrealers to travel to the United States. Not unlike today, Florida and other southern locations with favourable climes attracted snowbirds throughout the winter months, while other locations further north received visitors during the

summer for moderate temperatures and idyllic vacation settings. Upper New York State, Vermont and Maine were all within easy one-day travelling distance. Other destinations that were further away were accessed with a new degree of ease via the train. Travel along the east coast was most widespread for Montrealers while some adventurous travellers made trans-continental trips generally ending up in booming California.

Families seemed to have favourite destinations, returning there year after year. Sulphur Springs (Maine) for the Drummonds or Newport (Rhode Island) for the Roddicks were such destinations. Redpath Roddick's American vacations followed a pattern that would have been familiar to those living around her in Montreal's Square Mile. Throughout her lifetime, she spent vacations in various spots along the east coast. She seems to have been particularly fond of Newport, Rhode Island and Atlantic City, New Jersey. In Newport she would have had the opportunity to mingle with the Vanderbilts and the Astors. Sizing up the wealthiest Americans in their leisure zone would have provided points of comparison for one of Canada's wealthiest heiresses. Redpath Roddick consistently placed herself in a different category, attempting to remain aloof from the entertainments and habits of the elite Newport summer residents.

There is always music from eleven to one. No matter how late the "Four Hundred" are up at night they meet here [tennis club] in the mornings in exquisite gowns. Probably in no European court does one see such elaborate dressing, certainly not in the mornings. There are three beaches, one for the multimillionaires, one for the millionaires and Euston beach to which we go... We are in bed long before the balls begin & are leading our usual simple life.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> 1 August 1912, Journal of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books McGill University

Impressed by the mansions and “castles” that lined the ocean, Redpath Roddick nonetheless seems to have been equally impressed with the natural beauty of the place, commenting on the old trees, the ocean and the cliff walk which she claimed was “one of the finest walks in the world.”<sup>39</sup> Though she found Newport “fascinating and most restful,” Redpath Roddick maintained a strict rule about remaining private and anonymous in a town where pedigree and influence were badges to be worn on all suits of clothing, even suits for bathing.<sup>40</sup> “Here we have...a piazza where we spend most of our time when chez nous. It is wire screened & has geraniums all round it so we can be as comfortable as we please with no one to look on.”<sup>41</sup> Their stays in Newport usually lasted six to eight weeks, returning home in mid-September when the Montreal season began. When they chose Atlantic City instead of Newport, they followed a similar routine – renting a house or cottage, taking meals at hotels, participating in a relaxed manner in the local social life, and remaining there for six weeks at a time.<sup>42</sup>

Near the end of her husband’s life, Amy Redpath Roddick regularly passed the hardest winter months in Florida with Thomas Roddick. Throughout the years they rented houses and stayed in hotels in Miami, Jacksonville, and Fort Myers. Trips south to Florida often involved several days first in New York, soaking up the sights before travelling by rail to their final destination. Stops along the way, including repeated stops in Charleston and St. Augustine, broke up

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<sup>39</sup> 1 August 1912, Journal of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books McGill University

<sup>40</sup> 1 August 1912, Journal of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books McGill University

<sup>41</sup> 1 August 1912, Journal of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books McGill University

<sup>42</sup> September 1911, Journal of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books McGill University

the journey, especially as poor health plagued the couple. The journals suggest that she spent a great deal of time out and about during these winter getaways, visiting with acquaintances she had made over the years and friends of friends from home in Montreal.

In 1902, after a particularly horrific year of family tragedy, Redpath Roddick took an extended trip to California to recuperate from the trauma. The entourage, comprised of Redpath Roddick, her cousin Lily, her brother Peter, and her lifelong companion and lady's maid, Rose, took the train in segments. Upon their arrival in California, they rented a house near Redlands.<sup>43</sup> The main aim of this cross-country trip was the recovery in mind and body of the Redpath siblings after the notoriety of a domestic murder-suicide scandal.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, Redpath Roddick remained virtually silent on the daily life of their stay once they were settled though, she gave the impression that this trip was much more subdued than the others, allowing much time for rest and recuperation. Little was said of their journey home but on 4 July 1902, Redpath Roddick had set out for England via New York City. This time she was accompanied by her brother Reginald.

Closely connected to these vacations and health recuperation journeys and often overlapping were trips to the United States designed to "soak in the culture" offered by the much larger and more populated United States. Cultural experiences such as theatre-going, museum visiting, and shopping excursions dominated many American trips made by elite Montrealers, especially to New

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<sup>43</sup> 18 May 1902, Letter to Alice, Diary 1902, Redpath Roddick Diaries, MSS 659 Rare Books, McGill University

<sup>44</sup> "Tragedy in Montreal", *New York Times*, 14 June 1901, 1.

York City. Sometimes on the way to somewhere else (either further south or across the Atlantic Ocean) or as a destination unto itself, New York City definitely served as the centre of cultural influence in the New World. Vincent and Brenda Allan Meredith were frequent travellers to New York, where they stayed at the Waldorf Astoria. Some of their visits were for general pleasure and included shopping and sight seeing, while other visits were for very specific events. The New York Horse show, for example, drew a crowd of Montrealers every year: “Mr. and Mrs. H. Vincent Meredith...are among the people who are in New York this week attending the Horse Show.”<sup>45</sup> The Horse Show mimicked the culture of England’s Royal Ascot and prided itself as being a showcase of American elite culture.<sup>46</sup> Annually, the Montreal newspapers reported on the event, listing the Montrealers who had been present.

Family networks, those Montrealers who had immigrated from the United States and those who emigrated from Montreal to the States, further solidified networks that spanned the border and frequent visits to family members were made possible by the railway. Belle DeSola, originally from Cleveland, made the trip home to visit her parents several times a year for weeks at a time. She frequently took her children to visit for several weeks with her husband Clarence

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<sup>45</sup> “Social and Personal”, *Metropolitan*, 19 November 1898, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Referring to the New York Horse Show, however, the *Metropolitan* reported in 1896 that: “Those within the inner circle declare the Horse Show has not maintained its vogue as a social function this year. The ultra-exclusives of New York society did not lend it the cachet of their presence in any great numbers. From various reasons many well-known social leaders did not put in an appearance. The Vanderbilt family, with its numerous ramifications, which was much in the fore last year, revolving around the ducal sun which had just arisen on their horizon, were prevented being present by the death of Mrs. W.H. Vanderbilt...Apart the absences of the local magnates, American society from Boston to San Francisco, was well represented. Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore each contributed a smart contingent.” 21 November 1896, *Metropolitan*, 3.



joining them for a long weekend or a week during high holidays. She kept abreast of goings on in Cleveland through correspondence and through the newspapers.

Adaline Van Horne was in a similar situation, having spent the majority of her life in Illinois. Upon their move to Montreal, the Van Hornes brought members of their extended family with them. Both Addie and William's mothers lived with them at one point as well as William's sister Mary.<sup>47</sup> The Van Horne family correspondence shows that very tight relationships were maintained with their American relatives. William, who travelled extensively as part of his role as President of the Canadian Pacific Railway, most frequently visited the United States but certainly Adaline Sr., Mary and Adaline Jr. were frequent travellers south of the border, reuniting with family, nuclear and extended, as often as possible.

American spectacle beckoned visitors from north of the border as well. Exhibitions and fairs drew a wide-range of visitors from across the United States and Canada, especially when the fair was deemed a "World's Fair" such as the 1893 exhibit in Chicago. Making the link between leisure and activism, the Chicago World's Fair serves as an example of the ways women used international travel to connect with trends and currents in international venues. The Chicago World's Fair of 1893 was truly a catalyzing moment for women's organization, especially for Canadian women.<sup>48</sup> Though there had long been charitable organizations run by women in Montreal, this was organization on a different level. From this international spectacle came the incentive to form the National

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<sup>47</sup> Valerie Knowles, *William C. VanHorne: Railway Titan* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010), 34.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter 3 on Philanthropy for a more extensive description.

Council of Women of Canada, with the local branch in Montreal being one of the largest and most influential branches. Yet, one finds little evidence of Montreal women attending the women's meetings in Chicago. The Canadian representatives that do appear in the record were almost all Ontario-based, largely from Toronto and Hamilton.<sup>49</sup> By the end of that year, however, Montreal women seem to have been enthusiastically engaged not just in the local organization of the Women's council (the MLCW), but also in the larger network of Women's Councils in America and Europe. The inspiration in Montreal to join this movement, however, primarily came indirectly from Chicago and was spurred into being by the arrival of Lady Aberdeen to Canada during that eventful year. The women's council movement did draw Canadian women into a network of women's councils that were strongly influenced by American groups and ideas. Front and centre of the Council movement in Canada were Montreal women.

As organizations internationalized, Montreal women increasingly made trips south of the border to attend annual meetings, conferences and exhibitions. Activist women in Montreal were clearly interested in keeping up with what was going on south of the border. There are multiple examples of looking to the United States for advice by local organizations such as the MLCW.<sup>50</sup>

For elite Orthodox Jewish women, such as Katie Samuel DeSola and Belle Goldsmith in this study, ties to the United States were often stronger than for non-Jewish women in Montreal. Though neither were born or raised in the city, New

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<sup>49</sup> The exception is Mary Petrie Carus-Wilson who had herself just moved to Montreal the previous year, 1892.

<sup>50</sup> Though there are many examples of this exchange, see Valerie Minnett, "Disease and domesticity on display: the Montreal Tuberculosis Exhibition, 1908," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 2006, 23(2): 381-400.

York City served as a central hub for Orthodoxy at the turn of the century. The DeSola family, intermarried with the Menzes and the Josephs, were not only connected via kin to the city, but saw New York's Shearith Israel synagogue as its religious nucleus on this side of the Atlantic. The Jewish population of Canada, largely residing in Montreal, numbered only 16, 401 in 1901, whereas the Jewish population in New York City alone was 598 000 at the same time.<sup>51</sup> The Montreal-based *Jewish Times* kept Montrealers abreast of the social, political, and religious goings-on of life in New York.

With such a small base to draw on in Montreal, Orthodox women interested in organization and social reform looked to connect themselves with the strong network of Jewish women's organizations in the United States. American Jewish women founded the National Council of Jewish Women in 1893, mirroring to a large extent the National Council of Women founded in 1888 and also emerging from the Chicago World's Fair.<sup>52</sup> The organization was originally intended to be an American organization; however, interest from Canada was warmly welcomed and both Toronto and Montreal attempted to form branches with close ties to the American branches, though not always the American theological and ideological stands. At the head of the American organization were Mrs. Hannah Solomon and Miss Sadie American – well-known members of the Reform Jewish community in Chicago and extensively involved in social

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<sup>51</sup> Louis Rosenberg, *Canada's Jews: a Social and Economic Study of Jews in Canada in the 1930s* edited Morton Weinfeld (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 12; C. Morris Horowitz and Lawrence J. Kaplan, *The Estimated Jewish Population of the New York Area, 1900-1975*, (New York: The Demographic Study Committee of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, 1959), 14.

<sup>52</sup> Louise Barnum Robbins, *History and Minutes of the National Council of Women of the United States: Organized in Washington, D. C., March 31, 1888* (1898, Reprint Kessinger Publishing, 2008).

reform and philanthropy. Both of these women were well-integrated into the Jewish community, the American social reform community and a greater international network.

Having participated in the formation of the Montreal Local Council of Women, Katie Samuel DeSola personally undertook the founding of the Montreal branch of the National Council of Jewish Women in 1896. She travelled to Toronto several months later to assist in the founding of a branch there. She was met with an initial degree of success in Montreal. More than sixty-five Jewish women attended the first public meeting of the Montreal branch of the Council of Jewish Women (a title used by Samuel DeSola that contained no hint of the American heritage of the organization.)<sup>53</sup> There seemed to be a genuine interest within the Jewish community for a women's organization that tackled social issues from a distinctly Jewish perspective. Moreover, this initially seemed to be one way to bridge the divide among the different Jewish groups in Montreal, not unlike what the MLCW was attempting to do for all women in the city.

The organization, though it thrived in Toronto, seems to have dwindled very quickly in Montreal. In an era of increasing organizational activity, no less present in the Jewish community than elsewhere, the early struggles of the council seem incongruent. Unfortunately, the early papers of the Montreal branch of the Council of Jewish Women no longer exist and so an internal narrative of the situation is difficult to uncover. Yet, there remain some morsels of evidence. First and foremost, the organization seems to have been under the control of Katie Samuel DeSola almost exclusively. She certainly appears to have had a brusque

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<sup>53</sup> "Council of Jewish Women", 4 March 1898, *Jewish Times*, 105.

manner and an autocratic style of leadership. In a scathing rant at the annual meeting (and published verbatim in the *Jewish Times*), Samuel DeSola addressed the issue of the declining activity of the organization:

Of the 67 members enrolled only 12 have been active members so far. The remaining 55 have been content with attending the two public meetings held at the Fraser Institute and, may I venture to suggest criticizing the work done by the 12. Now, to be frank with you, I do not consider the Council is in a satisfactory state, by this I mean that it is not doing the work for which it was established.<sup>54</sup>

Samuel DeSola appeared to have been less interested in “bridging” the divide between Jewish groups in Montreal than in nurturing a more rigid and Orthodox practice of Judaism amongst women:

A great religious movement it may be in other sections but the Montreal section has not moved religion onwards at all. How many of us who were wont to market upon the Sabbath day have refrained since becoming members of the Council of Jewish Women? How many of us who have made it a practice to go to places of amusement theatres on Friday night and Saturday afternoon before have desisted since becoming members of the Council of Jewish Women? I know one bright example only! How many of us who, before were non-attendants at synagogue, are attendants since becoming members of the Council of Jewish Women? I sadly fear me not one.<sup>55</sup>

Samuel DeSola had visions of extending this Orthodox version of womanhood to the greater National Council of Jewish Women which was dominated by the Reformed Judaism of its Chicago leadership, notably Hannah Solomon and Sadie American. In Jewish circles, Samuel DeSola’s lineage and marital connections gave her a great deal of confidence and authority (whether others respected it as much as she did is less clear!) At the first triennial meeting of the NCJW held in

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<sup>54</sup> “Council of Jewish Women”, 4 March 1898, *Jewish Times*, 105.

<sup>55</sup> “Council of Jewish Women”, 4 March 1898, *Jewish Times*, 105.

New York City in 1896, Samuel DeSola spoke with audacious conviction against the election of Hannah Solomon as President. At several points throughout the meeting, she had raised the issue of Sabbath observance, a point which she believed divided devout from secular Jews and Jewesses.<sup>56</sup> In Hannah Solomon, so well-liked and respected by the majority of council members, she found her nemesis:

I feel deeply the unpleasantness of having to differ in a matter of this kind where unanimity and harmony should prevail, but “peace at any price” cannot hold good where the price is the sacrifice of principle and the sacrifice of what so many of us think essential to the best, noblest and highest interests of our holy religion. Hence I must make another nomination...if this Council stands for anything, it stands for Judaism, and if Judaism stands for anything, it stands for God and God’s Holy Law...I have expressed my opinions as to what the President of the Council should be, the keeper of the seventh day as the Jewish Sabbath.<sup>57</sup>

Where others found community and support in the larger American Jewish population, Samuel DeSola created a relationship of disapproval and discord with other elite Jewish women, focusing on religious difference rather than unity of

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<sup>56</sup> On three separate occasions throughout the meeting, Samuel DeSola attempted to get the council to agree to specify that Saturday was the true Sabbath. The first time it came up, Samuel DeSola wanted an amendment saying that members of the Committee of Religion must also be observers of the Jewish Sabbath. The second occasion was following a paper “The Advantages, Needs and Difficulties of the Council of Jewish Women” by Mrs. Nellie L. Miller. Samuel DeSola indicated her belief that the first need of the Council was that every woman should keep the Jewish Sabbath. Her third attempt to introduce the topic was during the report of the Committee of Resolutions. In response to the following resolution, she asked that her brother-in-law Dr. Mendes be given the floor to speak to the issue of Sabbath observance:

Resolution “Whereas we believe the observance of the Sabbath to be of paramount importance to the proper exercise and influence of religion, be it resolved that the members of the Council shall use all possible influence against the desecration of the Jewish Sabbath, and resolve to reinstate it in their homes in its pristine purity.” She was told that it was out of order, Dr. Mendes not being a member of the Council.

*Proceedings of the First Convention of the National Council of Jewish Women*. Held at New York, November 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19, 1896. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1897).

<sup>57</sup> *Proceedings of the First Convention of the National Council of Jewish Women*. Held at New York, Nov. 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19, 1896. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1897), 386.

purpose. Although she was committed to the inter-religious cooperation that guided the Montreal Local Council of Women, she was unwilling to translate the same tolerance to a Jewish organization. Her position within the Jewish community was much more obviously prominent than in elite circles in Montreal where the DeSolas had neither the money nor the social capital of the Drummonds, VanHornes, Lacostes, etc. Perhaps that guided her confidence and assumed leadership activities within the Jewish organization. When her new sister-in-law, Belle Goldsmith DeSola, relocated to Montreal upon her marriage to Clarence DeSola in 1901, she brought with her strong connections to the Council of Jewish Women, being a vice-president of the organization.<sup>58</sup> However, her participation in that organization came to a rather sudden end upon her marriage. Rather than butt heads with her new sister-in-law, Goldsmith DeSola focused her energies much more on the international Zionist movement and the local Red Cross organization. The Montreal branch of the Council of Jewish Women floundered until Samuel DeSola removed herself from the position of leadership. Its revival, twenty years later, was much more successful and the organization is still in active service today.

While there was clearly an interest in expanding the relationship between American Jewish women and Canadian Jewish women to include a formal organizational relationship, this relationship was thwarted in Canada largely due to personality conflicts. Katie Samuel DeSola's vision of this international union was vastly different than the way Hannah Solomon and Sadie American envisioned it and therefore, an alliance that seemed "natural" was untenable from

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<sup>58</sup> "Engagement", 16 August 1901, *Jewish Times*, 294.

the start, perhaps leaving Montreal Jewish women in even greater isolation than they had been before the birth of the Council of Jewish Women.

The United States continually influenced the women of Montreal. As tourists, they continued to travel and vacation there. As social elites, they mimicked the even richer and more powerful American elites, adopting certain practices and scoffing at others. As activists, they continued to seek advice and observe the work of like-minded women. Sharing a cultural bond and a geographical proximity, Canadian and American activists shared ideas, perspectives, and practices across the border. They established similar organizations and they learned from watching each other. But an almost tangible membrane seems to have kept them separate in other ways as well. The pull of Empire and the barrier of language serve as two explanations for this distance. The United States was seen as a point of comparison and a place of resource but only very rarely as a natal sibling or parent. Montreal women found inspiration and practical advice among their southern neighbours but not their heritage, not their cultural birthplace.

## **EUROPE**

Caroline Dessaulles and Frédéric-Liguori Béique planned to begin their new life as a married couple with a honeymoon tour of Europe in 1875. The excitement had been building for months, neither one having been to Europe before. They sought advice from those who had gone before them, arranging with family friend, Alfred Thibaudeau, a personal escort upon their arrival in England. Dessaulles Béique recalled that Thibaudeau, “connaissait l’Europe sur le bout de



ses doigts, traça un programme de voyage bien conçu et qui nous fut très utile."<sup>59</sup>

The couple travelled across Europe with stops in Great Britain, France, Italy, and Switzerland. They ended the tour with eight weeks in Paris. The cities they stayed in, the sights they visited, and the activities they engaged in resembled that of many elite travelers during the era.<sup>60</sup> Thanks to the ever-improving service of the steamship, travel to Europe was a practice that was becoming increasingly affordable and comfortable and as a result, increasingly popular among elite Montrealers.

Elite Montrealers, like their peers elsewhere in the New World, crossed the Atlantic for a myriad of reasons. Like their journeys south of the border to the United States, Montreal women travelled to Europe for vacations, to reconnect with family, to accompany husbands and fathers on business trips and, eventually, for formal organizational reasons. Great Britain and Europe offered an education in culture and refinement that could not be matched in North America.

Trans-Atlantic travellers in the form of tourists are the subject of Cecilia Morgan's *A Happy Holiday: English Canadians and Transatlantic Tourism, 1870-1930*. Morgan provides the first comprehensive look at British and European tourism by English Canadians. Using travel diaries (including several of the individuals involved in this study), correspondence, newspaper articles, travel guides, and advertisements, Morgan explores the destinations, practices, and implications of trans-Atlantic tourism. These trips that were meant to educate

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<sup>59</sup> Madame F-L Béique, *Quatre-vingts ans de souvenirs* (Montreal : Editions Bernard Valiquette, 1939), 41.

<sup>60</sup> Upon their return to Montreal, Béique found himself in a financial crisis that left him close to bankruptcy. Dessaulles Béique writes: Il se remit à un travail incessant et réussit en comparativement peu d'années à payer ses dettes et commencer l'édification d'une fortune qui devint assez considérable.

and entertain (though she does not ignore business and professional trips), reveal a great deal about the ways Canadians defined themselves and their place in the world, she argues: “Overseas tourism thus continued to offer the possibility of seeing oneself and one’s nation in the context of others, of exposing and confirming pre-existing prejudices and ethnocentric assumptions, and – perhaps – of challenging such beliefs.”<sup>61</sup> Exploring the way empire and nation intersected with history, gender, and place, Morgan argues that “tourists and travel literature participated in the construction of national and imperial communities at a time when Canadians were attempting to identify their own personal relationships to nation and empire.”<sup>62</sup>

Transatlantic tourism was an expensive and extravagant experience at the turn of the twentieth century. The journey was longer, the cost of living higher, and the expectations were much greater than travel within North America. Yet it was a journey made by most (if not all) elite women in Montreal and certainly made by all the women in this study. While Morgan has correctly pointed out the ways the practice of tourism influenced and shaped notions of self in relation to Empire and nation, it also influenced and shaped notions of self in relation to class, ethnicity and religion. Travel to Great Britain or touring the Continent was an important component of bourgeois life. The cost of transatlantic tourism alone qualified it as a middle and upper class experience. But it was the personal and individual enrichment that set the “cultured elite” apart, enthroning them (if only in an imagined space) above their co-patriots and co-citizens. Morgan points out

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<sup>61</sup> Cecilia Morgan, *A Happy Holiday: English Canadians and Transatlantic Tourism, 1870-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 370.

<sup>62</sup> Morgan, *A Happy Holiday*, 8.

how trans-Atlantic tourism could serve as a means of educating and enlightening travellers in ways that would reinforce their social status as elite and civilised :

For this group of historical actors, travel to Britain and Europe was a hallmark of a discerning, cultured, liberal subjectivity, one deeply embedded in ‘modern’ ways of thinking and being. The historical, cultural, and social attractions these tourists visited were perceived to be ‘the best’, the epitome of culture and civilization: direct knowledge of them, both intellectual and sensory, was crucial to their sense of themselves as enlightened and education individuals.<sup>63</sup>

The steamship changed transatlantic travel much the same way that the train changed travel overland. Rather than twenty to forty days of generally miserable travel by sail, the sophisticated steamships of the later nineteenth century had reduced the trips to seven to nine days. By the early twentieth century this had been reduced even further to as few as five days. Not only was the journey much shorter and much more reliable (no more waiting for just the right winds), travel on steamships had become much more comfortable and extravagant. These steamships carried a wonderful cross-section of passengers. In what was once known as ‘steerage’ but eventually became known as third class (when conditions were significantly improved by the end of the nineteenth century) travelled many immigrants and working people. Though they rarely saw each other, they shared the steamship with businessmen and politicians, heiresses and royalty, actors and artists, athletes and military men, tourists and honeymooners. Far from the tumultuous experience of travel by sail, steamships continued to make the experience more and more pleasant. Steamship lines heralded the safety of their ships and reassured travellers that their journeys would

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<sup>63</sup> Morgan, *A Happy Holiday*, 363.

be fast, safe, and luxurious. For first-class travellers, large en-suite cabins framed the Promenades where they were free to ramble as weather permitted. Dining rooms, music rooms, libraries and smoking rooms made steamships feel more like hotels and homes than massive holds of cargo. With playrooms, barbershops and ladies' lounges, the practices and traditions of a bourgeois lifestyle could continue with little interruption. Rich woods and sumptuous furnishings were meant to create an atmosphere of luxury and opulence. As steamships got larger and more sophisticated, their insides became grander and more exquisite. Electricity and private plumbing features created an ease of travel that was scarcely imagined just a half century earlier.

Unlike the train with its much closer quarters and limited public spaces, the steamships of turn-of-the-century Atlantic travel mimicked so closely the experiences of everyday life (in all classes) that many of the conventions and practices were carried from land onto the boat with little change. The same types of rules applied regarding respectability and etiquette, and were, perhaps, even more strictly reinforced and observed in this smaller microcosm of society where there was all the time in the world to observe one's fellow travellers in minute detail.<sup>64</sup> Travellers were always aware of the identity of their fellow passengers. Published copies of the ship's passenger list were circulated not just among the passengers but were also sent to the press and published on the days surrounding the ship's departure.

Generally, Montrealers embarked on their journeys at either Quebec City or New York City and disembarked at Liverpool. Rarely staying in Liverpool

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<sup>64</sup> Morgan, *A Happy Holiday*, 33.

long, tourists either remained in Great Britain to begin their tour or they continued via other modes of transportation to the Continent. Traditional tours involved stays in England, Scotland, and Ireland before heading to Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland. Less traditional tours (see Cloustons) involved trips to more exotic locales like Norway or even venturing into Africa through Egypt.<sup>65</sup>

Chief among the locations of civilization and high culture was Great Britain, where, due to transportation routes, most transatlantic tourists began their tour. Morgan spends more than half of her study on English-Canadian tourism in Great Britain, devoting an entire chapter on London. English Canadian travellers, she argues, understood England not only as the centre of the Empire but rather as the epitome of a great nation. Yet they arrived in England as colonials – important members of the Empire yet geographically far removed. “Many of these tourists arrived in Britain carrying notions of themselves as ‘Canadians,’ as members of the British Empire and of the historical and cultural landscapes through which they would be moving.”<sup>66</sup> In Britain they could look for their own histories and shape their own understandings of the relationship between Canada and Britain. It was a complex relationship in which “their sense of themselves as part of a nation...was enfolded into a larger entity, the empire...”<sup>67</sup> They would have navigated carefully the tension between seeing themselves as a prized jewel in an Empire yet still being colonial both symbolically and geographically.

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<sup>65</sup> Clouston as described in Morgan, *A Happy Holiday*, 301. Amy Redpath Roddick and Julia Drummond travelled to Egypt. See Diary of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books Department, McGill University and Passports of Grace Julia Parker Drummond, Drummond Family Fonds, P015, McCord Museum.

<sup>66</sup> Morgan, *Happy Holiday*, 8.

<sup>67</sup> Morgan, *Happy Holiday*, 8.

Though European tourism almost always began in England, Montrealers were eager to visit the continent with a similar verve. Time spent in France and Italy was often extended with stays in the Netherlands, Belgium and especially Germany. During her first tour of Germany (which was originally planned for her as a young adult but was delayed because of her mother's poor health and only took place in 1906 during her honeymoon), Redpath Roddick delighted in being able to function effectively in German. Her impressions of Germany seem to eclipse even her impressions of England: "The town is most quaint. German shops are so neat, each with its own specialty & nothing else. The people are all so healthy & good-tempered. More alert than the English. The children never seem to quarrel. They play happily in the streets, whipping their wooden tops."<sup>68</sup> Constructing narratives about what she was observing, Redpath Roddick tapped into the understandings of Germans, Germany and "German-ness" that had reached her in Montreal. Redpath Roddick interpreted what she was witnessing in Germany based on what she had cobbled together in Montreal through her relationship with expatriate Germans and enriching herself in German literature and culture. Her narrative was romanticized and simplistic and offered little appreciation of the complexities of daily life.

Often tourism overlapped with other reasons to visit Great Britain or Europe. Business and professional agendas often merged with tourist agendas. In 1909, Brenda Allan Meredith accompanied her husband and manager of the Bank

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<sup>68</sup> 20 September 1906, Diary of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books Department, McGill University.

of Montreal Henry Vincent Meredith on a tour of Europe and Egypt.<sup>69</sup> The Merediths began their tour in England and then proceeded to France, Egypt, and Italy where Vincent Meredith hoped to get a sense of the financial situation in the various countries. They returned home via England where they called on fellow Montrealer, Lord Strathcona. Their tour was a mixture of business and pleasure – they visited tourist sites in between meetings with government officials and financial officers. Similarly, Amy Redpath Roddick's three-month honeymoon tour of Europe was perhaps first and foremost a journey of pleasure and relaxation, but her new husband, Dr. Thomas Roddick, had many professional links across Europe and thus business was mixed with pleasure to some extent. He visited with colleagues along the way including time with his former McGill colleague Dr. William Osler at Oxford.<sup>70</sup>

In many ways, European travel served to connect Canadian travelers to each other more than to Europeans themselves. Redpath Roddick's European travels always began and ended with a family reunion in Britain. Mingling with other guests in hotels (as opposed to natives), and arranging travel plans so that neighbours in Montreal might overlap their time in London for example, European travel in many ways acted as a solidification of elite groupings formed not overseas but in Montreal itself. A certain amount of transplantation of networks overseas served to strengthen and reinforce the elite class grouping that very practically prohibited access to non-elites. Morgan has demonstrated the ways class and nation intersected in the act of tourism. While tourism served not

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<sup>69</sup> "H.V. Meredith Back", *Montreal Gazette*, 15 March 1909, 9.

<sup>70</sup> 16 October 1906, Journal of Amy Redpath Roddick, MSS 659 Rare Books, McGill University.

only to solidify class demarcations, it also tied ideas of nation and empire to those identities and provided a stage for the playing out of such identities.

Tourism also overlapped with education. Aside from the general education that accompanied transatlantic tourism in the form of cultural enrichment, there were more formal ways to acquire an education while in Europe or Great Britain. Osla and Marjorie Clouston spent a season in Dresden when they were young women. Their mother and governess accompanied them in 1898, setting up a full schedule of lessons and activities designed to serve as an alternative to boarding school or private instruction at home in Montreal. Art and language lessons filled most of their time while in Dresden, with formal outings to historical sites meant to round out the curriculum. The young women seem to have particularly enjoyed the watercolour lessons and sent samples of their work back home for approval.<sup>71</sup> Joséphine Marchand Dandurand chose an even more formal approach to education in foreign settings by enrolling her daughter, Gabrielle, in a Parisian private school. This was a compromise for Marchand Dandurand who felt conflicted about sending her daughter to be educated in a convent school in Quebec. She felt panicked by the idea of sending her daughter away to school and so, in order to be close to her daughter, Marchand Dandurand spent much of the year in Paris as well, writing little in her journal and hence leaving few clues as to her own experiences or impressions.

Both of these examples of traveling for educational reasons reveal another side of international travel for elite women. Because stays in Europe often lasted more than a couple weeks, some even lasting a year or more, male companions

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<sup>71</sup> Osla Clouston, Travel diary 1898, Clouston Family Fonds, P007-A/4, McCord Museum.



were rarely able to commit to being present for the entire trip. They claimed business and professional obligations in Montreal that limited the amount of time they could spend with their families overseas. Lengthy stays in Europe (and elsewhere) were consequently comprised usually of female-only entourages. Females acted as escorts and chaperones for females, without fathers, husbands, brothers or other males present to take that role. Furthermore, because these specific trips were also about education and the act of becoming “cultured”, it was women, not men who were responsible for arranging and overseeing of the education of daughters. While it took a fair amount of practical and ideological care to arrange the education of their daughters, without a great deal of description of the content of these educational programmes, it is difficult to suggest whether the freedom from male oversight provided women with the opportunity to challenge, accost or endorse prescribed gender ideals. From what does remain in the record, nothing flagrantly radical emerges.

Morgan’s study of English-Canadian tourism leaves the door open for comparison with French-Canadian tourism. The several accounts of travel by French Canadians within this study can hardly be expected to speak as a definitive take on French-Canadian tourism but they do offer several interesting insights. The first is that the travel patterns of Francophone Montrealers did follow a very similar path, particularly in European tours. Caroline Dessaulles Béique, who made her first European tour while on her honeymoon, spent time at many of the locations described by Morgan. Making stops in England, France, Italy and Belgium, Dessaulles Béique and her husband engaged in the same types of tourism – they visited museums, walked through ruins, attended concerts. While

Dessaulles Béique seems to have been fascinated with London and indeed spent a significant amount of time there, what does emerge is a feeling of greater comfort in Paris. While London served as *a* metropole for Dessaulles Béique, *her* metropole was Paris. “Comme ville, je ne trouve pas Londres à mon goût. Malgré toutes les richesses qu’il renferme, c’est triste et je ne voudrais pas y demeurer en permanence. Les environs sont charmants de tous les cotés.”<sup>72</sup> As in London, the couple reserved two months for their stay in Paris and rented an apartment rather than staying in a hotel the entire time. Unlike the rest of their travels, Dessaulles Béique felt able to rest in Paris (perhaps aided by the extended length of their stay there) and frequently reported in her letters home to Montreal how happy she was to arrive in Paris. “J’étais contente d’arriver ici pour me reposer... nous sommes maintenant tout à fait chez nous.”<sup>73</sup> London and Paris were certainly the highlights of the honeymoon voyage for the young couple but Paris seems to have been more to their *goût* and certainly identified as their metropole, demonstrating the way Empire, nation and ethnicity could create complicated yet concrete international networks by those living in Montreal.

The newlyweds returned home in time for the opening of the courts in September 1875, almost eight months after their departure. The couple probably did not anticipate that it would be the only time they made such an extended European tour. In the years that followed, Dessaulles Béique would give birth to ten children and while her grown children travelled in Europe, her own travel

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<sup>72</sup> Letter from Caroline Dessaulles Béique to Louis-Antoine Dessaulles, 11 May 1875, McCord Museum.

<sup>73</sup> Letter from Caroline Dessaulles Béique to Louis-Antoine Dessaulles, 21 July 1875, McCord Museum.

itinerary was certainly limited by the responsibilities that came with raising such a large family. While not all French-Canadian or Roman Catholic families were large, (witness the family of Joséphine Marchand Dandurand), certainly family size was a factor in international travelling. While the Cloustons, the Stephens and the VanHornes found travel with two children feasible, for example, travel with six or eight or more would definitely limit travel opportunities and would shape the international experiences of elite families in Montreal in very concrete ways.

Facilitated by the train and the steamship, by growing family fortunes, and by the redistribution of families and social networks through immigration, the international travel of elite women was an important component of class consolidation and identification. International travel provided an opportunity to observe and participate in the world beyond their domestic and local environments and elite women displayed a great deal of comfort in crossing borders, oceans, and continents. While travelling in groups and as individuals, they engaged both with other compatriots they met on foreign soil and with the natives they met there. Through this process, they were positioning themselves (and being positioned) in a social network that was constructed out of the materials of class, was shaped heavily by their gender experiences, and called for their individual identification as “nationals”.

#### **THE INTERNATIONAL SHAPE OF FORMAL ORGANIZATION**

Increasingly, however, women's transatlantic experiences and relationships were growing around new types of links that were based less on

leisure and kinship ties and more on philanthropic and activist intentions. Like much of the progressive movement, the growth of women's organizational bodies took place on multiple levels. Many organizations emerged at the grassroots level, with associations and committees being formed to deal with very local situations. But even in these most local of organizations, currents of thought, ideas, and practices were being implemented that originated on a much larger plane.<sup>74</sup> Organizational patterns in Montreal reveal the way both local organizations could develop international concerns and the way international organizations could find a local foothold in the city. Montreal also demonstrates the important role played by individuals in the identification of a cause and in the transportation of ideas and practices from "here" to "there" and back again.

On a pragmatic and practical level, the Women's Protective Immigration Society (WPIS) was formed in part as a response to a growing shortage of domestic workers in the city.<sup>75</sup> While this trend was lamented across the country, there was certainly more behind the movement than a labour shortage. Meant to assist "friendless female immigrants" the organization was based in Montreal but was connected to other organizations designed to assist single women in the immigration process. Prepared to help all "respectable" single women immigrating to Canada through the ports in Montreal and Halifax, the WPIS also came (somewhat reluctantly) to the aid of those who were either not deemed "respectable" or were not single. They provided free accommodation for twenty-

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<sup>74</sup> Again, the previous chapter on Philanthropy delves into this idea in greater detail, tracing many of the ideas across the globe.

<sup>75</sup> Single women's immigration to Canada from Great Britain has been studied most thoroughly by Lisa Chilton. See Lisa Chilton, *Agents of Empire: British Female Immigration to Canada and Australia, 1860s-1930* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2007)

four hours for the new arrivals and helped many secure employment through their own placement service, most commonly as domestic workers.<sup>76</sup> The WPIS sought out international relationships that would help stream-line the arrival of desirable single women to Montreal in an effort to be proactive rather than simply reactive. Establishing relationships with private (and semi-private) immigration agents and agencies in England, Scotland, Ireland and elsewhere, the WPIS hoped to create a safe and affordable path from an old country to a new country for respectable young women prepared to engage in domestic labour. They depended primarily on the Canadian government for financial backing (they generally received a grant of one thousand dollars per annum) of their work. The WPIS was securing a means of imperial exchange that was necessarily gendered and necessarily classed. This is an example of one of the ways women in Montreal thought of the Atlantic world as a stage for networking and facilitating exchanges. It took on a very different shape than the networking that was based on leisure and kinship patterns, yet in its own way, it reinforced and solidified class identities.

Immigration for some meant the transplanting from one urban environment to another, like those aided by the WPIS. But for many immigrants to Canada in this era, immigration meant settling in very rural and isolated environments as Canada attempted to “settle” the west and north-west. Again forming connections across the Atlantic, the Aberdeen Association set out to provide a connection for those in remote settings to the “civilized” urban centres, both in Canada and in Great Britain. Established before Lady Aberdeen’s term as

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<sup>76</sup>See for example, *Seventh Annual Report of the Women’s Protective Immigration Society* (Montreal: John Lovell and Son, 1888).

wife of the Governor-General and as a result of her first cross-Canada journey in 1890, the Aberdeen Association collected literature from various centres and, with the help of the federal Post Office, mailed bundles of literature to women living in remote areas who otherwise would not have access to literature of high quality. Like many of her contributions to the social reform and the women's movement, the personal interest of Lady Aberdeen, herself truly a woman with a transnational heart, aided and very concretely provided the bridge that spanned the enormous geography of Canada and the Atlantic Ocean. She explained the cause and the great need to her acquaintances in England and Scotland while connecting them to the women of Montreal and, in so doing, Lady Aberdeen's individual participation served to create links that otherwise would have been very difficult to form in the world of letter-writing and telegrams: "From the beginning, Lord and Lady Aberdeen have befriended the Association in every way possible, making it widely known in Great Britain, whence packages of excellent literature are dispatched regularly from Aberdeen, Glasgow, Liverpool and London."<sup>77</sup> This international network, focused around the transit of literature across land and sea, was supplemented and fermented by the exchange of letters between those sending the books and those receiving the books, presumably discussing the literature exchanged. While it was initiated around a British network, the Aberdeen Association also established a French branch of the Association, centred in Montreal and highly supported by several women in this study including Joséphine Marchand Dandurand who served many years on the Executive of the Aberdeen Association.

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<sup>77</sup> *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work*, (Montreal?: 1900)

Other organizations formed by women in Montreal and across Canada were explicitly designed to position them where they were, in their local environments, in an international context. The very purpose of the organizations was to knit Canada and its women into an imperial tapestry that demonstrated Canadian loyalty and commitment to the British Empire. The most obvious of these is the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE). From *The Call To Arms: Montreal's Roll of Honour, European War, 1914*:

The Order was founded in 1900, at the time of the South African War, by a Montreal woman, Mrs. Clark Murray and was designed to be a bond between the women and children of the various parts of the Empire, particularly the Overseas Dominions. This splendid conception has borne abundant fruit, and though many of those who gave themselves to the perfecting of the links of the chain have passed on, it is a matter of greatest satisfaction that we in Montreal are able to enjoy the visits of the Foundress of the Order, who always has a word of inspiration for her "Daughters," whose numbers are being wonderfully augmented daily.<sup>78</sup>

The IODE appealed almost exclusively to Anglophone women yet only a few of the women in this study were active as organizers or committee members. Most prominently involved was Annie Easton Clouston who was an Honorary Regent in the Lord Kitchener branch. Katie Pickles describes how this organization which was the brain child of a Montreal woman, grew in size and experienced as women across Canada and the British Empire felt a strong commitment to the sisterhood that was being birthed in the IODE.<sup>79</sup> Both the Victoria League and the Ladies Branch of the Primrose League functioned in similar ways, deliberately

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<sup>78</sup> B. K. Sandwell, *The Call to Arms: Montreal's Roll of Honour, European War, 1914* (Montreal: Southam Press, 1914), 180.

<sup>79</sup> Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 15.

intending to strengthen imperial bonds while positioning women (as mothers) in key positions.

These organizations were locally constructed, and as a result, the international links they forged grew out of local initiatives. Other organizations that emerged in Montreal came from similar initiatives but these initiatives spread *to* Montreal through these very same networks that had been forged by elite women and men. Other organizations were brought to the city as women in Montreal connected with women in other cities, other countries, and other continents. The most obvious of these was the women's council movement.

The women's council movement was one of the first major international women's organizations to take root in Montreal. Following the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the arrival of Lady Ishbel Aberdeen in her official, imperial office in Canada, the council movement grew quickly in Canada, with Montreal being the largest of the branches. It immediately connected Montreal women in multiple ways. As noted earlier, it provided a stage for Francophone and Anglophone women across the city to gather in common effort and under one banner. But more than that, it immediately linked this common effort to other women in other cities across Canada. As a branch of the National Council of Women of Canada, Montreal women, who were well-represented on the Executive of the NCWC, met regularly with like-minded women from Canada's other cities. They shared experiences, ideas, plans, and activities with women who lived as far away as Vancouver and Halifax. Furthermore, this national council was embedded in a larger transnational network. As a member of the International Council of Women, the NCWC and its branches including the



MLCW, were positioned in an international configuration where gender, class, and activism intersected.

Born out of an American initiative, the formation of the International Council of Women in 1888 was heavily indebted to the United States and European countries for financial and moral backing. Though the council adopted three official languages (English, French, and German) and claimed to be open to all creeds and nations, as Leila J. Rupp points out: “[l]imitations on participation flowed from the nature of international organizing and from unacknowledged assumptions about the superiority and natural leadership of Euro-American societies.”<sup>80</sup> Rupp maintains that the ICW remained largely the domain of “European-origin, Protestant, and elite women”<sup>81</sup> in its early years. Though it is unclear how much research Rupp has made into this assumption that the women were all Protestant, a similar assumption has been made in the Quebec historiography about the MLCW.<sup>82</sup> Yet the MLCW was a religiously (if not racially or class) diverse organization, especially in its early years. Considering that even within Canada, Montreal’s structure and membership stand out as an exception, it is likely that this was the same in the greater international community. Far from being a radical organization (other than in its original intention to be a truly international network of women), the ICW (and the NCWC

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<sup>80</sup> Leila J. Rupp, “Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women’s Organization, 1888-1945” *American Historical Review* Vol. 99, no. 5 (Dec. 1994), 1577.

<sup>81</sup> Rupp, “Constructing Internationalism”, 1576.

<sup>82</sup> Quebec historiography has tended to separate the early activism of women into two separate worlds, presenting the MLCW as an ‘Anglophone and Protestant’ organization. Despite an acknowledgement of the presence of strong Francophone actors in the organization, the historiography continues to stress that Catholic francophone women left this organization in 1907 to form their “own” organization, the Fédération nationale St-Jean Baptiste. For an example of this see Dumont, Micheline et al. *L’Histoire des Femmes au Québec depuis Quatre Siècles 2<sup>ième</sup> ed.* (Montreal : Le Jour, 1992), 345.

and the MLCW) was an intensely moderate and liberal organization. The Council even hesitated in its official acceptance of women's suffrage for many years. The ICW was constructed to bring together in common effort women of different creeds, ethnicities, and social classes (and obviously failing on this front, most notably the latter for many years, according to Rupp.)

Montreal's position in the ICW remained strong in the early decades of the organization. Having Lady Aberdeen as the ICW president for many years served to strengthen Montreal and Canada's place in the ICW as Lady Aberdeen once again became a personal advocate for the women of Canada. The ICW held one of its early quinquennial meetings in Toronto in 1909. Montreal hosted an extension meeting in 1909 for international delegates who were interested in visiting the city and sent delegates to ICW Executive and quinquennial meetings held in other countries.

The Red Cross and the Zionist movement provide two other examples of formal international networks that engaged Montreal women. Neither of these networks were particularly "women's" organizations but both provided an important role for women within the formal and informal work that surrounded the movements. Interest in the Red Cross in Canada coincided with the imperial battle raging in the generally divisive South African War. The movement to form a branch of the Red Cross in Canada was headed up by Montreal women, including Belle Goldsmith DeSola, Charlotte Smithers Learmont and Marguerite Lamothe Thibaudeau. With its emphasis on aiding victims of war (including those who were judged to be "instigators" of international conflicts), the Red Cross became an important example of international cooperation that captured the

attention of some of Montreal's elite women and provided yet another means of cooperating across creedal and ethnic lines.

The final example of an international network considered in this chapter is the Zionist movement. It was at a Zionist meeting in Atlantic City, after all, that Clarence DeSola and Belle Goldsmith first met. Their lives together continued to revolve around their commitment to the Zionist cause. Clarence was in many ways the primary promoter of the Zionist agenda in Montreal and he travelled extensively across Canada and the United States under the Zionist banner, raising awareness and funds for the cause. Belle, who obviously held interest in the movement prior to their initial meeting, also became a strong advocate of the cause, founding the Daughters of Zion in Montreal. Rather than being religiously inclusive, the Zionist movement was specifically exclusive. It was an international organization that was based on ethnicity and religion and sought to create links across the globe for those sharing the Jewish faith and a desire for a Jewish nation.

Female international networks had long been based on kinship, tourism and business connections. With the formal organization of the women's movement and the growth of the social reform movement, these networks were reinforced and solidified. In many cases, these networks grew along the same lines as the existing international links forged by elite women. In other cases, new links were born uniting women in new locations and in the name of new causes. The organizations that solidified national and international networks were far from radical. Elite Montreal women were attracted to organizations that were liberal but moderate. As they were on their home turf, they were not interested in

tearing down social structures or erasing class boundaries. Rather, they sought ways to reinforce and strengthen the society around them. Many of these female networks emerged out of existing imperial networks that provided a ready-made structure for a sisterhood that crossed land and sea and back again. But elite women in Montreal found themselves engaged in a complex system of networks. Engagement in one international cause often led them to other related causes where networks intersected and shadowed each other. In other cases as in the example of Belle Goldsmith DeSola's commitments to the Red Cross and the Daughters of Zion, international networks existed in parallel structure and rather than intersecting, they followed similar paths across the globe but were kept separated when groupings or causes so dictated.

## CONCLUSION

Daniel Rodgers called the Atlantic Ocean at the turn of the twentieth century a "connective lifeline." The elite women of Montreal present a rich tableau of how this connective lifeline was lived and experienced. Montreal was a crossroads – where multiple international networks touched, intersected and sometimes collided. It was a city where a burgeoning elite society was reinforcing itself and determining its position both at home and abroad. High society had long demanded that women be comfortable with international travel but with the steam train and steamship international travel became faster, more predictable and far more comfortable. Increasingly at ease crossing the globe, these women showed a remarkable poise in their international travel and this served to reinforce their position as social elites. While tourism and family ties

continued to be the main reason for international travel, these motivations could be piggy-backed by other motivations and even at times usurped by other agendas. Looking for support and lending support to their sisters in other places, elite women established themselves in powerful alliances that not only provided them with aid in their causes, but also provided them with a mirror for comparison. The formal organizations that emerged mirrored national and international structures such as the British Empire and created a multi-levelled identity for elite women firmly rooted in Montreal. In these networks, they could judge their own positions, asking questions about motivation, belonging, and identity. From these within these formal organizations, elite women would define themselves, as elites, as women, as Canadians, and as citizens of the world.

## CHAPTER 6

### ***WOMEN OF CANADA:* DEFINING AND DISPLAYING THE CANADIAN WOMAN**

It is only right that this last chapter begins at a moment when all the women involved in this study found themselves in the same room at the same time. It must have been crowded in the Assembly Hall of the Royal Victoria College on 12 December 1907.<sup>1</sup> On the platform sat His Excellency the Governor-General Earl Grey. On either side sat Lady Julia Parker Drummond and Madame Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, pillars of Montreal society, representing the elite Anglophone and Francophone populations respectively. In front of them was a crowd of some four hundred people. Among them nearly every woman involved in this study – Francophone, Anglophone, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Canadian-born and foreign-born. Sitting side-by-side their Montreal sisters, the most influential women of the city were doing more than just listening to speeches. They were standing on the precipice of an ambitious project. Well-used to the work required to form new organizations by this point, the women of Montreal were striking out in a different vein in 1907. Neither a social reform project nor a “culture” club, the Women’s Canadian Club was a patriotic venture consumed not with the goal of improving their daily lives per se but with a goal that extended far beyond the reaches of their homes or their cities. This Club, they hoped, would provide union of purpose and would help build a nation that stood as a beacon in the vast British Empire.

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<sup>1</sup> “Inaugural Address by His Excellency the Governor-General, Earl Grey, G.C.M.G. to the Women’s Canadian Club of Montreal, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1907.”, 1. Women’s Canadian Club Fonds, P722 McCord Museum.

With this new venture they were claiming a role for women in the process of nation building.<sup>2</sup> In her speech of introduction, Julia Parker Drummond, as president of the Club, urged women to define and embrace this ambitious role:

And of her daughters, too, for we grow not singly but together. And we women have our distinctive part to play in working out these destinies, a part that has never been more fitly or beautifully expressed than by Addison in the pages of the old *Spectator* – where he says, ‘women were made to be the cements of society and came into the world to create relations among mankind.’ May this club in a true and vital sense be indeed the cements of society, and thus help to realize the ideal so dear to the heart of His Excellency, that ideal of a unity in diversity which shall be the strength and glory of this nation and of the great Empire of which it forms a part.<sup>3</sup>

Gathered there to “foster patriotism and to encourage a deeper and more serious interest amongst women in the institutions, history and resources of Canada...and to endeavour to unite Canadian women in such work as may be within their powers for the welfare and progress of the Dominion”<sup>4</sup> the inaugural meeting of the Women’s Canadian Club of Montreal was a moment of enthusiasm, optimism, and commissioning. Despite the fact that their guest of honour was neither female nor Canadian, Parker Drummond praised Earl Grey’s lofty conceptualization of the “sentiment, the virtue, [and] the duty of patriotism.” In him they had found a powerful advocate for the Empire and a kindred spirit for Canadians. Grey, in return, praised the women of Montreal for their role in “removing barriers which prevent[ed] the fusion of forces on whose complete and

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<sup>2</sup> Their husbands, sons, brothers and fathers had formed the Canadian Club of Montreal two years earlier, in 1905.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup> “Inaugural Address”, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Constitution and By-Laws of the Women’s Canadian Club of Montreal, 1907-1908, 21. Women’s Canadian Club Fonds, P722 McCord Museum.

whole-hearted fusion, the best hopes and interests of Montreal and of Canada depend.”<sup>5</sup>

The WCCM was an expression of identity that fused both the local and the national. As the previous chapter argued, the local and the national and international were very much entwined in both the way elite women perceived the world and their very real lived experiences. Their identity was shaped around understanding their position in Montreal to be firmly entrenched in a series of international networks that overlapped and intersected in their own lives. They felt very connected to larger communities and their local and daily lives bore fruit designed to strengthen and reinforce those connections. The WCCM was exactly this type of effort.

Eight years earlier these same women had joined together in another united act of patriotism and self-definition. In 1900 Julia Parker Drummond had acted as Convenor of the publication *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work*.<sup>6</sup> Prepared for the Exposition universel held in Paris, this handbook displayed to the world what and who the Canadian woman was. The book went to Paris accompanied by Canadian delegate, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand. In the process, the contributors (albeit perhaps less consciously) went through many of the same steps as the Women’s Canadian Club of Montreal did. The process of creating and shaping their own identity as Canadian women paralleled the process of creating a national identity. As they cobbled together a place for women as activists and as citizens of Canada so too they contributed to the larger project of

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<sup>5</sup> “Inaugural Address”, 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work*, (Montreal?: 1900)



forging a nation and buttressing an empire. This chapter gives shape to this identity that wove the local into the national and international and examines the way it contributed to both understandings of and the formation of nation and empire. Paying careful attention to the ways women themselves presented their identities and visions of nation and empire, this chapter will primarily focus on the book *Women of Canada*, returning to the formation of the WCCM at the end.

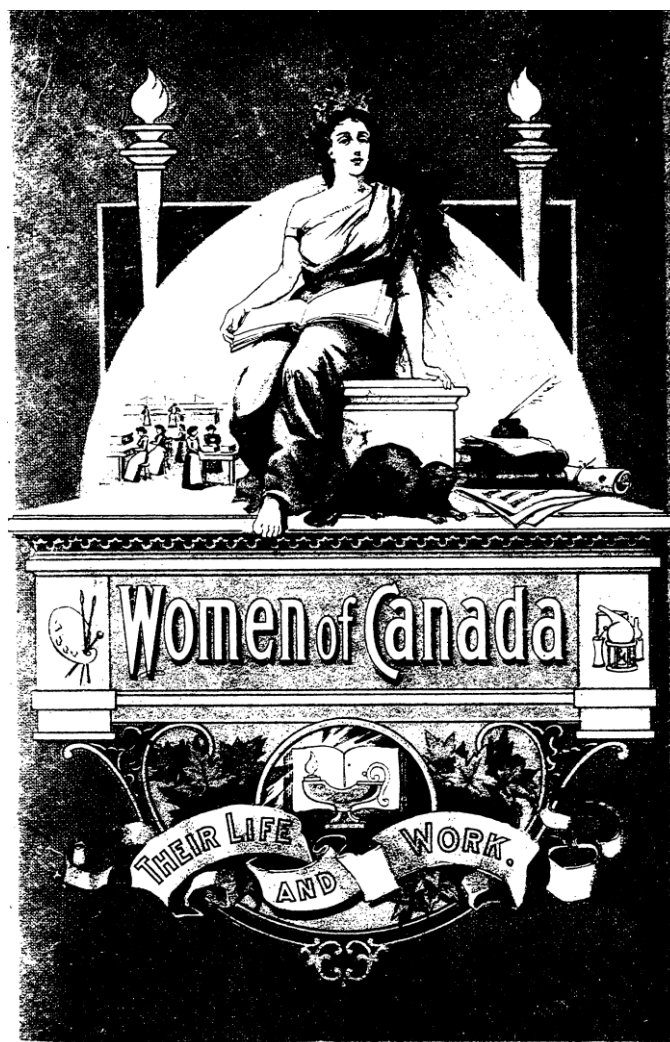


Figure 6.1 Cover, *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work*<sup>7</sup>  
As H.V. Nelles' *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at*

*Quebec's Tercentenary* has revealed the project of national self-invention was not

<sup>7</sup> *Women of Canada*, unnumbered page.

exclusively the domain of men. Rather, the story of the tercentenary points to the many ways women were involved in the creation of a national narrative. Nelles' research highlights the zeal with which Canadians and specifically Quebecers were inventing the stories of self. They attempted to create a nationalism that included the history of two nations, two races, Nelles argues, and that "somewhat surprisingly, a good deal of middle ground did appear" in 1908.<sup>8</sup> Here, with the elite women activists of Montreal (who were of course also involved in Quebec's tercentenary celebrations as organizers) is another opportunity to unpack this process. And while this chapter is about national identity and imperial belonging, it is also about the ways this project intersected with the creation of citizenship roles for women. How did the current of national self-invention intersect with their attempts to define a political role for themselves? How did their interactions with the world beyond Montreal shape both their individual and collective identities?

While Nelles' examination of Quebec City in 1908 reveals the ways spectacle itself became part of nation building, the Exposition universel in Paris 1900 provides a similar moment for examination – not one played out on the Canadian stage this time but rather on an international stage.<sup>9</sup> At the height of imperialist fervour and at a key moment of national self-definition, surrounded by

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<sup>8</sup> H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Elsbeth Heaman's study of exhibitions in Canada highlights the ways both reason and passion were connected in the exhibition and how this grew out of an Enlightenment project aimed at improving humanity. Heaman also examines the way politics was played out in the nineteenth-century exhibition, calling the exhibition a "contested political terrain. Elsbeth Heaman. *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society During the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 54.

visions of a quickly modernising world, Paris in 1900 provides a fascinating glimpse at how spectacle became a lived political experience, especially for the women of Canada. In reference to the tercentenary celebrations, Nelles maintains: “[t]he point is not that politics intruded into the gaiety or interfered with the master plan, but rather that festivals are politics.”<sup>10</sup> With Paris 1900 and the women’s desire to intervene and display themselves at the Exposition universel in mind, an interesting moment of solidification is born. In an act of display and performance that was meant to prove their commitment to Canada and the empire, they were in fact reinforcing their position as citizens (and citizens of the world) with all the rights and responsibilities that title carries with it. Indeed it must be stated that *Women of Canada* was not in itself exhibition in this strictest sense, a point that was strongly lamented by its authors. However, it was designed to be present at an international exhibition and its authors did what they could to make it a replacement in paper form. These women wanted to “display” their citizenship, their identities, their national and international positioning because each reinforced the other and yet they were all situational. The displaying of this connectivity, in effect, became part of the grand project of self-definition.

#### **PARIS 1900: THE *EXPOSITION UNIVERSEL***

In 1898, the National Council of Women of Canada requested from the Honourable Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, permission to establish a women’s display in the Canadian section of the Exposition universel to be held at

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<sup>10</sup> Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building*, 13

Paris in 1900. In 1898, the western world was sitting on the cusp of a new century. During the nineteenth century, industrialization and imperialism had altered the world map and while some were apprehensive about the new century, many were imbued with great optimism and hope for the days ahead. For the elite women of Montreal, and especially for those involved with the Montreal Local Council of Women, 1898 was a year of coming into their own. The MLCW had experienced a fair amount of success in its first five years of operation and was feeling optimistic about its role and impact. In those early years the council had had the moral and practical support of Lady Ishbel Aberdeen but with the announcement that she would be leaving Canada, her husband's term as Governor General having come to an end, the MLCW (and the NCWC) was facing a new stage in its organization.

In this moment of leadership change and stepping out on their own, the Exposition universel became a focal point of the councils' energies. They sought a public and international display of their role in Canadian life. They arranged for a personal, private meeting with Fisher in May 1898. Montrealer Joséphine Marchand Dandurand was a well-connected member appointed to the committee commissioned to confer with Fisher.<sup>11</sup> She was accompanied by those with even more connections – Lady Thompson and Lady Laurier among others – and introduced by Lady Aberdeen who was president concurrently of the National Council of Women of Canada and the International Council of Women.<sup>12</sup> Fisher was presenting this same type of bid further up the chain of command to both the

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<sup>11</sup> Minutes, 12 October 1898, National Council of Women of Canada, Library and Archives Canada, R7584-0-0-E, Volume 4, File 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Women of Canada*, I.

Imperial Commission and the French authorities. Space was tight in Paris, especially within the British section, and each country and colony was jockeying for more space.<sup>13</sup> Fisher attempted everything in his power to expand the space allotted to Canada. The Canadian commission, dependent on the reputation and diplomatic skills of Lord Strathcona (Donald Smith), argued that Canada held a pre-eminent position within the Empire and therefore deserved more space. The campaign succeeded and secured space for Canada both in the Colonial Pavilion and in the Section of the British Empire.

This victory, far from resounding, did not translate into an adoption of generosity towards the NCWC by Fisher. Fisher informed the NCWC that though there would be no specific physical space at Paris for Canadian women, the government was offering to fund the collection and publication of a handbook portraying the role of women in Canada and to be available for distribution in Paris. While clearly disappointed with this answer, the women of the NCWC adopted the new project, convinced that this was better than nothing at all. The NCWC appointed Lady Ishbel Aberdeen as Editor-in-Chief (neither a Canadian woman nor even a resident of Canada at this point!), Julia Parker Drummond as the Convenor and primary hands-on overseer of the project and a committee to collate the Handbook.<sup>14</sup> By the time this was settled, there seemed barely enough time to complete the project. The hard work of envisioning and then executing

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<sup>13</sup> Indeed the tension over space seemed to parallel the tensions and jockeying that took place between empires on the world stage. Elsbeth Heaman reports that the “British accused the French of skimping foreign empires to make their own seem greater”. *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, 212.

<sup>14</sup> Ishbel Aberdeen personally secured the position of the Corresponding secretary, Miss Teresa F. Wilson. Introduced officially in October 1899, it appears to have been decided that Wilson would fill the position in the NCWC just as she had for the ICW. In this capacity, she was also integral in the production of the Handbook and is thanked officially for her hard work by Ishbel Aberdeen in her Prefatory Note. *Women of Canada*, unnumbered page.

the creation of this “*aperçu* of the history, the achievements, and the position of Canadian women as a whole” took the better part of a year.<sup>15</sup> The result was the 442 page opus *The Women of Canada: Their Life and Work*.

#### **WOMEN OF CANADA: POSITIONING OF CANADIAN WOMEN BY CANADIAN WOMEN**

Though the title page of the book informs the readers that *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work* was compiled by the National Council of Women of Canada at the request of The Hon. Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, Lady Ishbel Aberdeen dispelled this myth on the following page in her prefatory note, giving the reader just a hint of the resistance with which they were met. The story of the women of Canada begins in these first pages with Lady Aberdeen excusing and lauding the effort in the same breath:

They can only hope that these sketches, slight and imperfect as they must necessarily be, will be the means of giving the people of other countries, gathered at the great International Exhibition in beautiful Paris, some idea of the happiness, freedom and richness of opportunity enjoyed by the women living under the beneficent sway of ‘Our Lady of the Sunshine and of the Snows.’<sup>16</sup>

There were many practical complications of producing such a Handbook, many of which were accentuated by the slow speed of correspondence in Canada at the time. These complications mirrored the complexities involved in pulling together a cohesive narrative of the life and work of women in Canada. The authors and collaborators filled more than four hundred pages in fourteen chapters in the attempt to articulate a self-definition. Each chapter began with an introductory

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<sup>15</sup> *Women of Canada*, Prefatory Note, unnumbered page.

<sup>16</sup> *Women of Canada*, iv.

essay (or several) written by individually prominent Canadian women and this was followed with a listing of all the related work done by Canadian women in each field, generally divided by province. The topics covered were (in order): The Past and Present of Canadian Women; Legal and Political Status; Professions and Careers; Trades and Industries; Education; Literature; Art, Handicrafts, Music and Drama; Nationally Organized Societies; Church Work; Charities and Reform; Social Life; Immigration; and Indian Women. In general, the chapters were divided into “English” and “French” work, often with separate introductory essays being written. The book itself was published in both English and French and required copious amounts of translation to accomplish the task in such a short period of time.<sup>17</sup>

While this was officially a project of the National Council of Women of Canada, the fingerprints of elite Montreal women were evident in abundance in this project. Not only was the convenor of the committee one of the strong leaders in Montreal, Julia Parker Drummond, three other prominent Montrealers sat on the committee: Charlotte Smithers Learmont, Caroline Cox, and Marguerite Lamothe Thibaudeau. In the photographic collage of the Committee at the beginning of the book, three of the five members shown were Montrealers (Cox, Parker Drummond and Smithers Learmont). Of the twenty-five essays that were included in the book, ten of them were written by Montreal women including the longest and most researched essays on the history and the legal status of women<sup>18</sup>. The work of compiling the data that followed the essays was tackled by twelve

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<sup>17</sup> The French version is entitled *Les Femmes Du Canada: Leur Vie Et Leurs Oeuvres*. (S.l: s.n.)

<sup>18</sup> Written by Julia Parker Drummond, Lily Dougall, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, and Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie respectively.

individuals, seven of whom were Montrealers. In the contributions of Montreal's elite women, there emerges an elaborate, conscious self-portrait.



Figure 6.2 Committee of Arrangements, *Women of Canada*<sup>19</sup>

As an historical document, *Women of Canada* provides an incredible window into the way elite urban activist women at the turn of the century envisioned themselves as individuals and as citizens. The compilation was intended for both a national and international audience to project the breadth and

<sup>19</sup> *Women of Canada*, unnumbered page.



depth of women's influence in Canada, highlighting the way women contributed to the growth of the nation and the expanding influence of the empire. Such a record is rich in details about exactly how elite women understood these ideas of nation, empire, and citizenship and how these concepts were interwoven to create an identity that was political, cosmopolitan and deeply entrenched in (equally constructed) elite femininity. As an artefact, it leaves a vivid picture of women's lives in Canada in 1900 as told by *elite women* for the *purpose of display*. Those qualifications necessarily tempered the types of information that were included in the book but rather than negating its usefulness, the book provides a sense of the role class and performance played in identity formation. They wrote themselves as citizens into a national and international narrative by consistently positioning themselves at the centre and relegating "others" to the periphery.

Furthermore, the compilation of women's activities though probably far from complete, does give an unprecedented look at the extent of women's work in this historical moment, revealing its diversity and complexity. What emerges is a picture of women acting out many of the recurring themes from earlier sections of this study. They spent their energy on works that highlighted the centrality of motherhood and the home, that were undergirded by religious motivation, and that were imbued with the optimism of a new day coming. They were increasingly aware of the realized power of association for women and were learning new ways of putting this power into action.

The narrative the women wove in *Women of Canada* began where one might expect – with an attempt to find the beginning of their story. H.V. Nelles argued in regard to Quebec's tercentenary celebrations that "commemoration was

an act of self-invention”<sup>20</sup> and “that history would make a nation”.<sup>21</sup> Here too, the authors set about to make a nation from history and to find the role of women within this act of nation-building. From this very first chapter, it is clear that Canada was imagined as a location of intersection, with three main groups of people considered in the “*founding*” of Canada.

Though aboriginal women were acknowledged in *Women of Canada* as being the first women to occupy this land and as such occupied a special place in the imagined beginnings of the nation, they were not written in as sisters in the birth of the Canadian nation. Aboriginal women fit into this version of Canada’s history as book ends – being present in the first few pages of *Women of Canada* and in the final few pages. Throughout the bulk of the book, they were consigned to silence and invisibility, a more-than symbolic situating of aboriginals on the margins of nation-building if nothing else. *Women of Canada* maintained the paternalistic, superior tone of much of Victorian writing about Aboriginals, reinforcing many of the contemporary stereotypes in circulation. In her introduction to the book, Parker Drummond established the romantic tone that accompanied the “women of the wilderness” in this collective narrative: “It was a good world in those early days, when the Indian women gathered in the harvest and sang their hymn of praise to the Sun, or gave their voice in the councils of war.”<sup>22</sup> With both admiration for the women’s councils that were part of Mohawk society and a casual dismissal of its obvious lack of sophistication, the author explained:

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<sup>20</sup> Nelles, *The Art of Nation-building*, 12

<sup>21</sup> Nelles, *The Art of Nation-building*, 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Women of Canada*, 4.

[The council of women] had the right of initiative in discussion and presented subjects for consideration to the council of chiefs and elders, where it was represented by a delegate. In determining the succession of a chief, the voice of the Women's Council was all but final, and its ingenuity and judgment, exercised in devising and apportioning tortures for prisoners of war, were considered invaluable to the nation.<sup>23</sup>

Assuming the Iroquois nations represented all Aboriginal societies, *Women of Canada* dismissed the unique status of women not as an advanced attribute of society, but rather as just another “heathen practice” of the Natives: “For a century they were the scourge of Canada, and the liberty granted by them to their women commended itself no more highly to civilized Europeans than did their other heathen practises.”<sup>24</sup>

While they maintained many romanticized ideas about aboriginal women, they certainly saw them as needing “European influence” and even still were seen to be best suited to remain on the periphery of Canadian life. With no indication of the injustice of the acts nor with any kind of remorse, *Women of Canada* detailed how “the land which had originally belonged to the Indians, was absorbed by the white races in their advance north and west...they were then allowed to choose ‘reserves,’ on which they have ever since lived as ‘Wards of the Government.’”<sup>25</sup> Repeatedly in the narrative, aboriginal women were regarded as being naïve, native mothers to a land that had now grown up into civilized adulthood and no longer needed “pre-civilized” mothering:

In order better to recognize the present status of Indian women, it will be well to recall their condition before the

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<sup>23</sup> *Women of Canada*, 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> *Women of Canada*, 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Women of Canada*, 432.

civilizing influences began to operate, -- twenty five years ago. Their lot was indeed hard. Polygamy was the general practice. The richer an Indian was (his wealth being horses), the more wives he sought, or rather bought for the maidens were sold by their paternal relatives to become the wives of those who proffered the greatest number of horses in exchange...After marriage the position of the woman was worse even than before. The lordly husband never worked, or rather his work was sport, hunting, trapping or fishing. The woman did all that had to be done however laborious the task might be. Divorce was as easy as marriage. A man, tired of his wife, could easily sell her to someone else. Whenever there was a death in the family, the women, for some reason unknown, were mutilated by being slashed with a knife, and the bent, decrepit and scarred forms to be seen at the present day are the living testimony to a horrible practice which no longer exists. And now, after twenty-five years -- what of the women? They visitor to the Canadian West sees bright-eyed, chubby, happy-looking damsels; though it must be admitted the matrons are still haggard and worn. The Industrial Schools, which have been established for the training of young Indians, and the efforts of missionaries have had their effect....most marriages are now sanctified by a religious ceremony, and just as the agricultural pursuits of the men are leading them to substitute houses for tepees (tents), so the cedar bark petticoat is being supplanted by the neat dress of modern make.<sup>26</sup>

Where the aboriginal woman found redemption in the narrative of *Women of Canada* was in her role as mother: “[infants] are cared for with the most motherly affection.”<sup>27</sup> Yet still, with their primitive devices (papooses) and their uncivilized understandings of society, aboriginal women were hardly fit to care for children beyond infancy. From childhood on, the state ought to be responsible for the education and training of aboriginal youth, according to this version of history. While aboriginals added a romantic spin to the history of Canada, they were not seen as full partners in this new nation and belonged on the edges, in the

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<sup>26</sup> *Women of Canada*, 435-436.

<sup>27</sup> *Women of Canada*, 437.

reserves, and denied citizenship rights until they had proved themselves civilized. Those who counted themselves *Women of Canada*, made no effort to enfold aboriginal women in this role.

In turn, Parker Drummond redirected the readers' attention to the new day that came once Europeans settled on these lands, beginning the complete dismissal of aboriginal people from the narrative of "Canada":

It is a better world now; for the face of the Sun-god shines as it did of old, the land is people by the children of two races who came hither from the old world and share under one flag the privileges of a great Empire; and another Women's Council has arisen whose motto is the Golden Rule.<sup>28</sup>

With aboriginal societies relegated to the "preamble" of the story of *Women of Canada* (and the Canadian nation), the author pointed to the arrival of European settlers as the true beginning of the relationship between women and this new land that would become Canada. "Though a continent might be discovered, explored, and to a certain extent exploited for commercial purposes by men alone, it could not very well be colonized without women."<sup>29</sup> Women were positioned as no less responsible for settling the land that was seen as vast, untouched, and virginal than men. As mothers, women had important biological and moral contributions to make to this new land. First and foremost, the women of 1900 envisioned these settler women as mothers of a new nation. Faced with the great task of populating and civilizing this land, women were described here as brave and unflinching in the face of such a challenge. The subduing of the land was of utmost importance to mothers who were making the ultimate sacrifice for

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<sup>28</sup> *Women of Canada*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> *Women of Canada*, 6.

their husbands and sons. Though little was known about the daily life of these early settlers, especially of the women who settled initially in Acadia, the author surmised that they were generally “brave, industrious, patient and prolific otherwise the population would not have increased so steadily.”<sup>30</sup>

Maternalism and morality were seen to have worked hand-in-hand across class lines in the early days of the new colony. Responsible for maintaining their own cultural and social traditions (as well as their population in numbers), these French settler women had a lasting impact on the moral character of the French-Canadian race the author argued, even to the point of passing their virtue (and Roman Catholicism) onto the Scottish soldiers who joined their ranks: “More remarkable still is the transformation effected by these Norman women of Scotchmen into French Canadians...the much multiplied Blackburns and Frasers have adopted the French language, French customs and the Catholic faith.”<sup>31</sup> Jean Talon was heroized for thoroughly grasping the important role of women in this new settler society and acting effectively to bring about, by extreme means, the further influence of women therein. Talon, the author informed her readers, “developed great talent as a match-maker,” and he ensured that “every possible precaution was taken to secure good and suitable wives for the colonists” in the form of the *Filles du Roi*.<sup>32</sup>

The purity of this new nation is a theme that recurred throughout *Women of Canada* but nowhere more strongly than in this initial historical synopsis: “Virtue was never anywhere so popular...all the women, from the Governor’s

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<sup>30</sup> *Women of Canada*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Women of Canada*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Women of Canada*, 11.

wife to the poorest peasant, were of blameless piety.”<sup>33</sup> The author explained that women held themselves responsible for the maintenance of morality in the new world and blamed men for the lesser noble responsibilities of nation building.

Canada is probably the only country in the world where the date of the introduction of sin can be definitely fixed. It was not introduced by a woman. In the year 1665 the Marquis de Tracy, with a contingent of the famous Carignan regiment, landed at Quebec and proclaimed with great pomp that the young King, Louis XIV, had the welfare of his subjects in New France near his heart, and that therefore and henceforth, peace and prosperity were assured to the patient victims of savage warfare and most adverse circumstance. It is marvellous how the devil manages to frustrate the purest intentions. ‘Our good King,’ writes a sister of the Hotel Dieu at Montreal, ‘has sent troops to defend us from the Iroquois, and the soldiers and the officers have ruined the Lord’s vineyard and planted wickedness, sin and crime in our soil of Canada.’<sup>34</sup>

According to *Women of Canada*, morality and at least symbolic maternalism were most effectually combined by those religious women who made the perilous crossing to sacrifice their comfort and security for the sake of the sick and suffering in the new world. The French heroines Marie de l’Incarnation and Jeanne Mance were hailed for their saintliness and their womanliness, and, as the author explained, the two “gave the tone to society in Canada during the mission period.”<sup>35</sup> These French women, lay and religious alike, who nurtured a French-settler society into a French-Canadian race were lauded for founding a race “of great physical endurance and so conservative of racial traits that though now long subject to the British Crown and surrounded by a people of superior energy, it

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<sup>33</sup> *Women of Canada*, 9-10.

<sup>34</sup> *Women of Canada*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> *Women of Canada*, 9.

has, with vastly increasing numbers continued its significant traditions and preserved its essential identity.”<sup>36</sup>

But in this version of history, the groundwork done by the French-Canadian race would be surpassed by the British immigrants who came in droves following the American Revolution so that even though the French-Canadians left a lasting legacy and cultural traditions that would continue to circulate in Canadian life, it was the British spirit that would triumph in the formation of a Canadian nation. Because they brought with them “no paternal King or guardian Church”, the Loyalists “conquered the wilderness, they founded cities, and they taught their children to keep before them those conceptions of freedom and justice which creeping down the ages and expanding with knowledge, form the cherished ideals of their race.”<sup>37</sup> Not unlike the emphasis on the Norman heritage of French settlers, the author glorified the Loyalists as the best of English immigrants – those who chose reason over violence.

More than keepers of morality or mothers of many children like the French-Canadian mother, the essay’s author pointed to the strength of Loyalist mothers’ political principles and their devotion to an Empire which guarded democracy, freedom and justice – seemingly much higher ideals than those of French Canadian women. The author connected Canada’s present and future much less to its French heritage than to its British roots by maintaining Canada’s position in the British Empire as being like the “eldest son coming of age”. Clearly written with an Anglo-bias, glorifying the high cultural and intellectual

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<sup>36</sup> *Women of Canada*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> *Women of Canada*, 13.



gifts of the beneficent British Empire, this historical essay set the tone for the rest of the publication. Here where two nations intersected and where a new nation was born, the empire became the champion.

In an essay that followed this historical sketch, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand, long seen as a defender of French-Canadian culture, engaged this same question of how the two “races” intersected in the new nation of Canada. She spent time outlining what she saw as the strengths of her French-Canadian forbearers, highlighting their aptitude for the arts, their fastidious housekeeping skills (the French-Canadian housekeeper was the “redoubtable enemy of microbes” she wrote<sup>38</sup>), their firm religious commitment, and their willingness to engage in hard physical labour. She also pointed to the weaknesses that characterized the French-Canadian woman. She explained: “[t]he French-Canadian woman, though good and intelligent, has no taste for serious reading.”<sup>39</sup> She continued, “[o]ur country, in consequence, suffers from a veritable dearth of books. Our girls come from the convent with an excellent foundation of general ideas, which require only to be developed, but nothing favours or stimulates a desire to cultivate them.”<sup>40</sup> But here she also had hope. Without directly pointing to the influence of English-Canadian or British women, Marchand Dandurand observed:

If indifference as regards mental culture has reigned in French Canadian women for half a century, if ‘salons’ are unknown among us, the men themselves separating absolutely the idea of intellectual pleasure from social recreations, it must be acknowledged that within the last few years there has been an

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<sup>38</sup> *Women of Canada*, 26

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

awakening.<sup>41</sup>

Marchand Dandurand rifled off the gentlest of accusatory shots when she maintained: “The unusual movement causes some people to fear an invasion of ‘the new woman.’ It is true that under this name have been cloaked, in other countries, many audacities and eccentricities that would never be acclimatised here.”<sup>42</sup> She argued that rather than creating havoc, this new movement was improving the position of French-Canadian women, who would never be so audacious or as eccentric as the British militant feminists to whom she must clearly have been referring. French-Canadian women were, after all, she posited, responsible for the significant refining of British men, claiming that “Anglo-Saxon manhood was becoming polished by contact with us.”<sup>43</sup>

Marchand Dandurand understood the story of Canada as the story of two nations – “French-Canadian” and “English”. She presented them as being in contact with each other, each being shaped and influenced by the other and by the act of contact itself. She positioned the two nations living side by side, not with one in power over the other. Known to be a good friend to Lady Aberdeen and an open admirer of the British Empire, Marchand Dandurand still saw her “race” as separate, yet she found accommodation in the empire for two nations living under its banner. While the English perspective had exhibited an Anglo-bias by positioning the Loyalists one step further up the ladder of influence, the Francophone perspective did not. Yet for both, there remained a sense that Canada owed its heritage to both French and English settlers.

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<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Women of Canada*, 27.

*Women of Canada* reveals the way that these imagined groupings were further broken down by the elite women who sketched this narrative. Not imagining their nations to be totally homogenous, both Anglophone and Francophone authors identified the multiple layers that emerged around issues of class, urban/rural communities, and place of origin. Tackling the task overtly, Montrealer Lily Dougall, cousin of Amy Redpath Roddick and niece to Julia Parker Drummond, wrote: “Yet to understand even outwardly the ideals which culminate in the fashionable entertainments of a young nation, one must look at the roots from which the gay flower springs – we must try to classify the earlier immigrants as to nationality and social position – and in this examination we may discover the larger elements of Canadian home life.”<sup>44</sup> Marchand Dandurand wrote freely about the differences and similarities that existed among the “poor”, the “middle class”, and the “rich” that comprised the French-Canadian nation. Dougall produced a somewhat chronological and geographical picture of the types of people who settled Canada, making clear distinctions between social customs and heritages in urban centres versus those in rural communities. For both nations, point of origin also was an important demarcation within their communities. In the first historical sketch, it was explained that:

[successful French immigrants] came chiefly from Perche and Normandy and the strength of their qualities may be estimated by their persistence. In spite of the later influx of immigrants from other northern and western provinces of France, the French Canadian of today is of Norman type. His accent and form of speech approximate closely to that of those long dead Norman mothers, and his songs are the songs they sang.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Women of Canada*, 15.

<sup>45</sup> *Women of Canada*, 12.

For English-speaking Canada, there too did point of origin have an impact. There were English, Scottish, Irish, and seemingly most favourable of all, Loyalist immigrants. While neither the Irish nor the Scottish were upheld as ideal immigrants (though certainly the Scots were considered hard-working), a certain romantic aura seems to have accompanied those English immigrants who came to Canada via the states south of the border: “Many Loyalists were persons of long-established political, professional, and commercial importance in New England, in New York and Virginia. The women represented the grace, dignity and cultivation of old colonial society.”<sup>46</sup> Loyalist women were praised both for maintaining the glory of ‘old colonial society’ in their customs but also for their “voluntary sacrifice for a principle of ordered social existence, even of civilization.”<sup>47</sup> Loyalist women were seen as more enlightened, more experienced, more refined, and certainly more committed to the ideological tenets of British imperialism: “The ‘new woman’ was old in the Republic before she crossed the border to emancipate her Canadian sisters.”<sup>48</sup> The author summarized the best of English and French Canadians by creating a hierarchy of regional origins: “As traits of Norman women predominate in the French, so salient qualities of Loyalist women characterize the English of Canada.”<sup>49</sup>

*Women of Canada* provided a platform for both nations to laud the virtues of their women and what they brought to this young nation. The Anglophone authors were at risk for sounding superior, rarely noting weaknesses that existed,

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<sup>46</sup> *Women of Canada*, 12.

<sup>47</sup> *Women of Canada*, 12.

<sup>48</sup> *Women of Canada*, 13.

<sup>49</sup> *Women of Canada*, 13.

instead trumpeting especially the virtue that Loyalist women extended to the Dominion. Marchand Dandurand's praise was equally idealistic but did at the very least indicate that not all was perfection. The French Canadian woman brought much to her nation, she noted:

In spite of some things lacking in her upbringing the French Canadian woman represents in the hearts of her people, – wisdom. Those who are privileged to attain to her confidence, find there good counsel. Her sweetness, like oil, softens manners. Her uprightness, her native purity, have their unconscious influence. She preserves the worship of an ideal. She transmits from generation to generation, by example and heredity, unaffected goodness, moral and physical health. Her country does not ask of her brilliant action, nevertheless the beginnings of our history show that she knows how to perform noble tasks...courage has never failed her in the accomplishment of her patriotic role as chief partner in the work of expansion of the French Canadian nation.<sup>50</sup>

Marchand Dandurand concluded her essay this way: “She is not a Spartan, – but something else and better, – a good mother.”<sup>51</sup> This returned the story back to the common ground shared by the women of these two nations and what they viewed as their central role. As mothers, English-speaking and French-speaking women alike shared a common bond. And it is as mothers they imagined their role in bringing up this young dominion, born of their two nations, now living in one family where tussles were apt to occur but where increasingly harmony would even out the relationships therein. Lily Dougall echoed this sentiment in her essay on the “Home and Social Life of English-Speaking Canadian Women”: “Happily for the young nation, the great natural laws which have always governed human life are at work rapidly welding opposing elements into a more and more

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<sup>50</sup> *Women of Canada*, 30.

<sup>51</sup> *Women of Canada*, 30.

sympathetic society.”<sup>52</sup> Women could stand together as mothers as they built a new country of two peoples.

Significantly, the opening historical sketch of *Women of Canada* was followed directly by three essays concerned with the “home life” of women – Dougall’s, Marchand Dandurand’s and third by Jessie McEwen sketching “Home life in the West”. The common assumption in all three was that woman’s primary location was the home and her primary role, not just historically but in their contemporary world, was as a mother (even endorsed by Dougall who neither married nor had children of her own.)

Dougall related multiple representative stories in her essay, reinforcing stereotypes of settler women, city women, Prairie women, and even “Indian women” married to fur traders. While each scenario differed in terms of the specific challenges faced by each woman, Dougall connected them in their role as mothers, returning repeatedly to the experience of raising children in all these different circumstances. Of the rural woman: “In the midst of broad ploughed acres, midway between the ancient forest and a leaping river, whose water is always strewn with the debris of a neighboring [sic] sawmill, stands a wooden house....Here a woman of title, the belle of many a Dublin season, reared a family of stalwart sons.”<sup>53</sup> Of the early town woman she wrote: “The centre of this life was usually some Calvinistic mother whose tireless industry, strong principles and intense sentiment gave tone and color to the family fortunes.”<sup>54</sup> And of the families of the Indian women married to fur-traders she concluded that they

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<sup>52</sup> *Women of Canada*, 20.

<sup>53</sup> *Women of Canada*, 18.

<sup>54</sup> *Women of Canada*, 16.

“bequeathed to their children not only considerable wealth but most romantic family traditions.”<sup>55</sup> Even the young servant girl sent across the sea bore incredible responsibilities for mothering this country: “From the penury of a cottage home a young servant girl had been sent across the sea. She saved money from her wages, and at a time when the passage money was greater than at the present, brought a sister to Canada, and then another, and they three united to bring the old parents who were past work. Soon there were sons-in-law to help in their support. Before their death the old people gave their benediction to great grand-children whose fortunes were rapidly advancing.”<sup>56</sup>

Marchand Dandurand assumed a different approach in describing the primary role of the French-Canadian woman. Though she noted different geographic environments of these women, she wrote of the commonality of life in Quebec: “In the country the style of life differs very little from the customs we have described. As the same language is spoken from one end of the Province to the other, so they have the same customs.”<sup>57</sup> She romanticised both rural life and large family life in her description of the celebrations surrounding Christmas. The festivities, she informed, revolved around the mother, located in the centre of her world – the kitchen:

In the large kitchens, where swarm the whole family, feasts and joys are prepared. While on the stove, encumbered with simmering pots, the odorous doughnut is fried under the superintendence of the mother, others knead pie crust into innumerable starts, season the stews or pluck the fowls that shortly will be put in the store to freeze. In a corner out of the way of the comings and goings of the cooks, one of the

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<sup>55</sup> *Women of Canada*, 16.

<sup>56</sup> *Women of Canada*, 17-18.

<sup>57</sup> *Women of Canada*, 28.

daughters may be seen ironing the lace for the dresses to be worn at supper on Christmas night. Another again, in the embrasure of window, bends absorbed over the hat she is trimming...an interruption is made by the children coming in from school.<sup>58</sup>

Acknowledging that women may not always find happiness and fulfillment in marriage (despite the fact that “[m]uch is said in praise of marriages of inclination. In Canada, we believe in them only”<sup>59</sup>), she pointed to motherhood as the redemption of these unhappy unions: “[t]he child, or oftener the children, are nearly always the saviours of the situation.”<sup>60</sup>

Though not a member of Montreal’s elite circle as the other two authors, Jessie McEwen echoed these same romantic sentiments about the role of women as mothers in the West: “It is to mothers in this busy, new land that we must look for intelligent interest in all that concerns the welfare of the home. They must be not only tender and true, but also broad-minded and wise, that their sons and daughters may prove worthy of their grand heritage.”<sup>61</sup>

The layout of *Women of Canada* itself served as a clear example of how Canada was imagined as two nations living together and how this played out in concrete terms for elite Canadian women - the chapters that were divided into two sections, with essays side to side, written by members of each group. Both in the compilation of *Women of Canada* and their understanding of Canada as a nation, elite women intended to bring about a *bonne entente* between two peoples, two ‘races’, two nations. The process of seeking a *bonne entente* first meant

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<sup>58</sup> *Women of Canada*, 29.

<sup>59</sup> *Women of Canada*, 24.

<sup>60</sup> *Women of Canada*, 25.

<sup>61</sup> *Women of Canada*, 33.



acknowledging difference - this was most obviously identified as ethnic difference. These ethnic differences were also augmented by language and religious difference that were not always as clearly divided, especially in Montreal. But agreement also meant finding locations of commonality. They found solidarity not just under the banner of the British flag, but also around their identity first and foremost as mothers, but then also as elites, as citizens, and as moderate progressives. The common ground was not just that they were mothers but that together they would be mothers of this new nation. If they envisioned the Dominion of Canada as being the story of two nations coming alongside each other, they also claimed the role as mothers of the nation in order to see their vision come to fruition. As elite mothers they would guide the new country to its ultimate destiny of being a shining beacon not just in the British Empire but to the world at large.

While all women in the dominion bore this duty of mothering, from the farm wife to the urban chatelaine, there ran a strong undercurrent through *Women of Canada* that the responsibility of elite women was even greater. Not only were they mothers in terms of raising strong, Canadian families and preparing the next generation of girls and boys to do the same, but with “the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners...and the power of conduct” they bore the extra responsibility of growing this new nation “to its full stature”.<sup>62</sup> Elite women set themselves up at the centre of the act of nation building. While all women had a biological and moral role to play, elite women would be the ones to extend this same role to the nation as a whole, seeing

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<sup>62</sup> *Women of Canada*, 4.

it developed from infancy to adulthood, taking its place beside the other great nations of the world. The act of compiling *Women of Canada* was one small contribution to the project of nation building and this very act of creating *Women of Canada* depended on the class of these women. Julia Parker Drummond and her committee of organizers could only have been successful if they had had the time, the resources and the educational background to complete such a mammoth task. In 1900, these qualifications would only have been available to elite women who neither had to engage in waged labour nor be concerned with primary childcare responsibilities. Indeed, Parker Drummond's early lament in the introduction that it was too difficult to tackle this project over the summer when holidays were being taken and the choice to wait until "the world was 'at home' again" firmly positioned the creators of the work as members elite society.<sup>63</sup> It was not the factory workers nor the shopkeepers nor the farm wives who were away from their homes during the hot months of summer but rather the urban bourgeoisie. At the centre of women's role in nation building sat the elite woman, who wove the biological and moral aspects into the tapestry of motherhood with the golden threads of refinement, high culture, and ample means.

The act of nation building and the ways elite women claimed a role in that process fixed their identity firmly around their understanding and experiences of citizenship. As outlined in an earlier chapter, citizenship was only partially concerned with the right to vote and having an identity as a citizen meant much more to elite women than fighting for the right to vote. Here in *Women of Canada*, they outlined their political efficacy resulting from united effort: "But

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<sup>63</sup> *Women of Canada*, 2.

although women have no direct vote, they have, by much labour and united effort, effected some important changes in the criminal code and civil laws, as well as in the political position of women in municipalities.”<sup>64</sup>

In public and on the international stage, the authors of *Women of Canada*, were prepared to offer a strong written critique not only of their legal position in the Dominion (including bold critiques of law-makers and the seemingly arbitrary administration of the law) but also of the political position of Canada’s female citizens. Authored by Canada’s two most educated female law experts, Clara Brett Martin and Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie, two essays on the legal status of women outlined the major injustices that lay at the foundation of Canadian laws, owing their legal heritage to English and French law respectively. Both lamented the ways this injustice was harshest for married women. Martin sarcastically posited:

Women’s legal position changes considerably on her marriage. Our ancestors insisted upon treating marriage as a suspension of the independent existence of the wife, and as an absorption by the husband of the woman’s person and all her belongings, of whatsoever nature or kind... This notion of unity of husband and wife, meaning thereby the suspension of the wife and the lordship of the husband, seems to have been particularly agreeable to the whole race of English jurists, tickling their grim humor and gratifying their very limited sense of the fitness of things.<sup>65</sup>

In a tone of warning, Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie trumpeted the same horn of injustice at the implication marriage had for women in Quebec:

Has the woman, about to be married, any conception of the change about to take place in her legal status? Does she realize all that the ‘Yes’ which she is about to pronounce implies? Once

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<sup>64</sup> *Women of Canada*, 52.

<sup>65</sup> *Women of Canada*, 37.

this step is taken, her freedom, her belongings, everything that concerns or interests her will undergo an immediate change. The code runs thus: -- ‘A husband owes protection to his wife; a wife, obedience to her husband.’ And in order that this dependence of the wife may be really effective, and that the protection with which the husband gives her may not be a meaningless phrase, the law makes her incapable of acting in any capacity, and deprives her of the exercise of every civil right except that of making a will, which remains inviolable.<sup>66</sup>

These critiques, however, were framed with the understanding that the fate of Canadian women was in flux in 1900 and that great changes were coming for women, as they took up the reins of responsibility and bore the duty of citizenship. Pointing to the systemic injustice of the law for women, Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie urged women not to remain acquiescent and resigned but to fight for a change of the laws themselves: “But the law is unbending, and only becomes more generous after reiterated assaults and when the impression of customs make it clear that it must expand and progress.”<sup>67</sup> Henrietta Muir Edwards, author of the essay “The Political Position of Canadian Women”, still a Montrealer in 1900 and later one of the “Famous Five” responsible for leading the charge in the “Persons case” argued<sup>68</sup>:

Canadian women themselves, until lately, have taken very little interest in this movement, and a few years ago, were, as a whole, very antagonistic to it. However, at the present time almost every Canadian woman, who is at all interested in questions of the day dealing with education, philanthropy, or social life, is in favour of

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<sup>66</sup> *Women of Canada*, 43.

<sup>67</sup> *Women of Canada*, 50.

<sup>68</sup> Edwards vs. the Attorney General of Canada (1930) is more commonly known as the “Persons Case” in Canada. Five Alberta women, including Muir Edwards, challenged the definition of the term “persons” in regards to the appointment of senators by the Governor General of Canada. Eventually the Privy Council agreed that the term “qualified persons” could include women and, therefore, women could be appointed to the Senate. See Jerome E. Bickenbach, *Canadian Cases in the Philosophy of Law* (Peterborough, Ont., Canada: Broadview Press, 1998), 25ff.

some form of woman franchise, either school, municipal, or parliamentary.<sup>69</sup>

Muir Edwards further argued: “[t]he woman is queen in her home and reigns there, but unfortunately the laws she makes reach no further than her domain. If her laws, written or unwritten are to be enforced outside, she must come into the political world as well – and she has come.”<sup>70</sup>

The authors believed that if they were to come into their own, they must be prepared to take up the hard work of effecting change on the ground. Their impact must be present in their local environments as well as in the houses of government and on an international stage. The following chapters in *Women of Canada* outlined and described the efforts and results of engaging in this process. The book offered to its readers a full description of the ways Canadian women were receiving new levels of education and entering new professions. They were finding extraordinary (and ordinary) success in the Arts as well as engaging in ever-expanding fields of philanthropic works. Their sphere of influence outside the home was presented as burgeoning and promised to bring about a new day in Canada. In their homes, in their philanthropic work and on the political stage, Canadian women were taking up the challenge of envisioning and building a new nation.

From their houses on the hill, they could look down on the slums of Montreal, as Julia Parker Drummond has so frequently been quoted as saying, and feel great empathy for those on whose backs their own fortunes had been won and

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<sup>69</sup> *Women of Canada*, 51.

<sup>70</sup> *Women of Canada*, 51.

then depended on. They could be compelled by such great empathy that they established milk stations and provided parks and playgrounds for the children of workers. They would fight to maintain working women's moral purity by insisting on having female factory inspectors. And while they envisioned a day of clean inner cities and healthy work environments, their vision was not for a disintegration of class differences. Those working-class neighbourhoods ought to be cleaned up but not eradicated and certainly not moved into closer proximity to their own homes and neighbourhoods.

The authors, compilers, and creators of *Women of Canada* positioned themselves at the centre of nation building and therefore, necessarily placed others at the margins, away from the centre. Their vision of Canada and its place in the empire depended on securing their position in the centre while keeping the "others" on the margins. Constructing their hopes for a new day in Montreal, Canada, and across the empire with bricks of paternalism (or maternalism as the case is here) and the mortar of benevolent tones, their idea of a nation with unity in diversity had its limits.

Similarly, their outlook on ethnic and racial "others" found expression in much the same way. From the way aboriginal women were placed both symbolically and literally on the edges of this story of Canada as told through *Women of Canada*, the treatment of aboriginal women serves as an example of the way these elite female activists envisioned Canada as having a centre and a periphery. But Aboriginal peoples were not the only groups marginalized based on race or ethnicity by the authors of *Women of Canada*. In chapters on immigration, where the influence of Canada's best women was being felt, there

were clear indications of how ethnicity determined one's position in Canada – whether at the centre or on the periphery. Immigration was of utmost importance to those concerned with building a great nation. While they themselves (or possibly their ancestors) had once been immigrants to Canada, they saw it as a new day of immigration and one that required careful navigation. This was an era of massive immigration to Canada and seeking to populate the new nation depended on successful immigration campaigns. However, with the goal of building a new kind of nation, the authors warned that the process must be undertaken very carefully: “Those engaged in work of this kind grow apt to forget that it is never the scum nor dregs of a population, but its legitimate overflow only, which ought to be emigrated.”<sup>71</sup> Immigrants who were seen to be desirable to the authors would fit into one of two classes – either farmers and agricultural labourers or domestic servants.<sup>72</sup> Immigrants, they maintained, must understand that Canada “is most essentially a worker's country”<sup>73</sup> The book identified successful immigrants as being Galicians, Doukhobors, Slavs from Austria, Icelanders, German Mennonites, Scandinavians, English, Irish, and French – those who settled the land through hard work and the sweat of their brows.<sup>74</sup> While still considered “others” by the authors, these immigrants were nonetheless welcomed in Canada so long as they were prepared to settle in the vast expanses of the West or in other rural settings. Those who intended to settle in cities, such as the vast majority of Jewish immigrants, were seen to be

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<sup>71</sup> *Women of Canada*, 411.

<sup>72</sup> *Women of Canada*, 412.

<sup>73</sup> *Women of Canada*, 412.

<sup>74</sup> *Women of Canada*, 413.

dangerous to the current city-dwellers. They would become unneeded competition for jobs in cities already seen to be struggling with a population of urban poor. That there was no mention of Jewish immigration in *Women of Canada* at all, reflects the Anti-Semitic immigration policies in Canada at the time.

Of the groups identified as ideal immigrants in *Women of Canada*, the Doukhobors provide an interesting sketch of how elite activist women envisioned the successful immigration of “others” to Canada. The Doukhobors, very new to Canada having been only granted the right to leave Russia in 1897, seemed to capture the interest of the National Council of Women of Canada and to the Montreal Local Council of Women in particular. The MLCW went to great lengths to assist Doukhobors in their relocation to Canada.<sup>75</sup> They came as immigrants to Canada fleeing religious persecution and arriving in poverty, much the same way the Eastern European Jewish immigrants had arrived. Yet they seem to have attracted the interest and imaginations of Montreal’s female activists in a way the Jewish immigrants did not. Seeing Doukhobour women in particular as victims of unjust and cruel persecution, and yet identifying with these women as fellow mothers, the MLCW set about on a campaign that was designed not only to provide financial support to these women by selling their handiwork in metropolitan centres but also to provide ways to ease the settlement process into Canadian life. Though it is an obvious difference, it is imperative to note that the Doukhobors (unlike many Jewish immigrants) never considered settling in

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<sup>75</sup> Sixth Annual Report of the Local Council of Women of Montreal, 1900” (Montreal: “Witness” Printing House, 1900), 6. BANQ, P653.



Montreal or other urban centres and therefore had already positioned themselves at a safe geographical distance from Montreal. Furthermore, the Doukhobors were Christian and they had prominent supporters such as Leo Tolstoy. Combined with any hidden or overt anti-Semitism, this positioned them in a different realm from Jewish immigrants and secured the support of elite activist women in Montreal that was denied their fellow Jewish compatriots. The MLCW and the NCWC believed that Canada could, in its vastness and its commitment to liberal ideals, be home to those seeking refuge from tyrants and could provide safe haven for those looking to start again – so long as they could find those new homes on the periphery of the nation and empire, (and certainly not at the centre) and be prepared for hard labour in order to make a living.

The obvious assumptions were that desirable immigrants would be white, they would be of European origins (though this definition was as yet still being negotiated), and they would be satisfied with hard labour on the margins, responsible for peopling a nation led by those enlightened, urban “old families” who here wrote the story of Canada with themselves at the centre:

Celt and Teuton, Latin and Slav, these are all of them branches of the great Caucasian family tree, but branches which have been separated from one another in Europe since prehistoric times: and if, as scientists tell us, the finest mixed races are those which spring from related, but not too nearly related, stocks, then the future mixture here should be a good one. Canada, as we see it now, is in its childhood, but it exhibits, as children sometimes do, the elements of gigantic growth. In fullness of time we may trust confidently that it will be a great country and peopled by a great nation.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> *Women of Canada*, 414.

## LIVING OUT *WOMEN OF CANADA*

Chosen to be the Canadian representative at the Paris Exposition universel, Joséphine Marchand Dandurand nearly perfectly personified what a “Canadian woman” ought to be. From an old French-Canadian family and strongly devoted to that heritage, Marchand Dandurand was also fully integrated into both the elite and Anglophone worlds of Montreal and Ottawa. Well-educated, well-traveled, and generously liberal, she lived the “bonne entente” elite Montreal women so desperately presented to the world as their vision for Canada. She was a mother, a wife and life-partner, an activist, and a proud citizen – not just of her city, Montreal, but also of her “race” (the French-Canadian nation), her country Canada, and her empire. A nation of two races, of two languages, of two sexes, living and working side-by-side – this was how a small group of powerful, elite women in Montreal envisioned Canada. Their firm belief that an enlightened nation could emerge through the active realization of a “bonne entente” guided their actions and intentions as they sought to fulfill their role in this nation-building process.

Marchand Dandurand was on the stage that day in mid-December 1907 in the Assembly Hall of the Royal Victoria College. As she had in 1900 in Paris, Marchand Dandurand represented the best of Canadian womanhood. And as she had done in Paris, so too was she poised to extend that vision to her fellow Montrealers. Montreal’s elite women were gathered together to put into action that which they had outlined in *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work* and that which they had displayed in Paris in 1900. They had created, negotiated, and given voice to an identity as elite women, as mothers, and as citizens on the world

stage. They had constructed a narrative of Canada that positioned them not secluded or locked in their homes but free to navigate and engage in a public discourse. Convinced that their efforts in philanthropy and reform were yielding much fruit, inspired by the power of their union, and prepared to step out in more overtly political ways, Montreal's activist women were publicly announcing their involvement in nation-building from their home base, Montreal – where the local and international worlds intersected, where could be found the heart of Canada, the nation of two nations, their platform for carrying out the great duty of securing a New Day through the building of a new nation.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

In the autumn of 1914, Julia Parker Drummond set out on an important voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. Though her voyage was also concerned with the playing out of empire and nation, this voyage had none of the optimism and enthusiasm of Joséphine Marchand Dandurand's trip to Paris in 1900 for the Exposition universel. This voyage, too, was about responding to the call of empire. It was about living out the responsibilities of citizenship in Canada and the British Empire as a woman and as a mother. But this trip was based around war and the clash of empires, not a celebration of empires or of a modern world. Parker Drummond was headed to London where she was a tireless worker for the Red Cross during the years of the First World War. She also opened and funded an Information Bureau for Canadian soldiers and their families, aiding in the process of keeping families in Canada aware of the condition and location of their sons, brothers, fathers, and friends. In this endeavour, she was not alone. Other women had responded to the Motherland's call to arms and relocated to London for the war years, both Montrealers and women from elsewhere in the British Empire.

The declaration of war on 14 August 1914 sent shockwaves that were felt across the globe. As empires clashed, old nations were obliterated and new ones were created. Millions of young men stood across no-man's lands from each other, using new technologies to mow down their "enemies" and suffocate their opponents. The earth was scarred with endless trenches that yet testify to this

black time in history. The Western powers were fighting for land, resources, military strength, and world dominance. Even those living on the very edges of empires were called to the battlefields of Europe where they gave their lives and limbs in defence of their nation, their empire, and their citizenship.

So thoroughly embedded in a system of international networks, not the least of which was the British Empire, Montreal was far from removed from the impacts of the First World War. Individuals enlisted, financiers gave, factories produced, citizens conserved, politicians debated, and families were split up.<sup>1</sup> The call to arms was not just to the men of the empire though. The war impacted women's lives as well. They sent their sons to battle, they made do in wartime shortages, they fundraised, and they entered the public work force en masse. Women were integral on the front lines as nurses and on the home front they comforted themselves and their children who would never see their fathers or husbands or sons again. In many ways, the First World War has been heralded by historians as a time of great social advancement for women. Their energetic response to the war and the way they were seen to "do their part", is said to have altered the way society envisioned women's roles.<sup>2</sup> Historian Linda Quiney argued: "During the Great War, Canadian women were seen steadfastly to have 'rallied to the call', whatever their age, marital status, or social class, although

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<sup>1</sup> Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers' Families in the Great War*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004)

<sup>2</sup> This narrative is so common that it appears even in tertiary sources. See, for example, Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad, *History of the Canadian Peoples: 1867 to the Present*, Vol. 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc, 2002), 186-187.

class largely determined whether their service would be paid or voluntary.”<sup>3</sup> Their contributions to nation and empire have been identified as the reason for being “rewarded” with full suffrage rights. Whether or not their wartime experiences were responsible for the extension of their citizenship rights, their identity as citizens was acknowledged in new and formal ways that changed the trajectory of their experiences and opportunities in Canada.

Julia Parker Drummond was in London during the war because she was devoted to the empire, to her nation, and also to her son. He was fighting in the fields of Flanders, his wife at Parker Drummond’s side. Guy Melfort Drummond did not live to see the end of the first year of the war. He was killed at Ypres in April 1915. Parker Drummond remained in England following his death. Her husband had died several years earlier and she saw little reason to return home. Instead, she remained in England doing her part for other mothers and other sons. Her experience during the war is in many ways a playing out of the themes that have been discussed in this thesis. Her move to London for the duration of the war was possible because, as an elite woman, she was at ease in a trans-Atlantic world and because she had the finances to facilitate it. Her presence there was the result of her own action. Neither the Red Cross nor the Canadian (or British) government requested her presence. She was not employed by an organization nor was she a member of any military body. She was there as a volunteer. She had approached the Canadian Red Cross about establishing the Information Bureau and she had built the endeavour from a three-woman

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<sup>3</sup> Linda Quiney, “ ‘Bravely and Loyal They Answered the Call’: St. John Ambulance, the Red Cross, and the Patriotic Service of Canadian Women During the Great War”, *History of Intellectual Culture*, 2005, Vol. 5, No. 1.

operation into a two thousand plus woman operation.<sup>4</sup> Parker Drummond constructed a role for herself in wartime England and through her own personal means, she carried out that duty. She was there as a mother, as a citizen, and as a philanthropist. These three roles intertwined so that even when her son was killed, she still felt a duty to remain in England, doing her part to support the empire. At the end of the war, Mary MacLeod Moore wrote of Parker Drummond:

In the front rank of women war workers from Canada are those associated with the Canadian Red Cross Society. Many of them, headed by a much-loved leader, Lady Drummond of Montreal...have been working steadily since the autumn of 1914...Lady Drummond arrived from Canada a few weeks after the war broke out, and at once began to apply her great ability, her sympathy, and her many advantages for the benefit of the fighting men from Canada... The women of Canada owe her a great debt, for her generous care for the men, both well and ill, has been untiring.<sup>5</sup>

I have argued in this thesis that elite women in Montreal lived out an identity that highlighted their role as mothers in a way that united them across ethnic and religious lines. In the power of their union, elite women were able to negotiate a space for themselves outside of the home where their identity as mothers and as citizens was put into action. They created opportunities to wield power and to see it multiplied. Careful to build these experiences around issues that bound them together, notably issues related to their class, gender, and Judeo-Christian social reform ideas, they avoided many of the pitfalls that threatened to

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<sup>4</sup> More information on the Information Bureau can be found in Mary MacLeod Moore, "Canadian Women War Workers Overseas", *The Canadian Magazine*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (January 1919), 737-751. Moore listed the eight specific departments that made up the Bureau as well as those in charge of each department.

<sup>5</sup> Moore, "Canadian Women War Workers Overseas", 739-741.

divide them. Differences of religion, politics, language, and ethnicity were very real and present challenges in their day-to-day lives. Yet their motivation and optimism were firmly rooted in religious language. Their identity as mothers and as citizens did not signal a movement towards secularization, but rather aligned with individual and corporate spiritualities. As they envisioned their influence to be growing out of their homes, across the city of Montreal and extended to the nation and empire, elite women in Montreal, as elsewhere, engaged the political world long before full citizenship rights were extended to them.

Women of Montreal did receive the right to vote in federal elections by the end of the war. And yes, women had been welcomed into the workforce in an unprecedented manner (though this was of lesser significance for elite women except in the increased difficulty they would have in finding domestic help.) But the war also irritated places where tensions had long been simmering in Montreal. Veronica Strong-Boag wrote that the war “energized and united women as never before.”<sup>6</sup> While this is very true for women across Canada and is especially evident in the National Council of Women of Canada to which Strong-Boag was referring, it was less true in Montreal. The war signalled the breakdown in cooperation among elites. Differences that had threatened to rupture common effort in the past, broke through and created chasms between ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups. The formation of the *Fédération nationale St-Jean Baptiste* had perhaps forewarned that differences of ethnicity and religion could grow into formal breaks, though it is true that even after its formation a significant degree of cooperation remained. The energy and union that Strong-Boag and others

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<sup>6</sup> Strong-Boag, *The Parliament of Women*, 290, 292.



correctly identify in wartime Canada was based primarily on patriotism and imperial enthusiasm. But for many French-Canadians, this war had very little to do with them or their nationalism and conscription magnified all the frictions that had existed under the surface. Even those women who viewed Canada as the country of two nations within an empire had a hard time reconciling themselves with Canada automatically fighting on behalf of Great Britain. Furthermore, tensions developed between pacifists and non-pacifists.<sup>7</sup> This created a great deal of conflict within the Montreal Local Council of Women, in particular. Finally, it was during the war that the question of women's suffrage came to a head across Canada. Where Lady Aberdeen had so carefully tread, hesitant to position the council as either for or against women's suffrage but only always in favour of women, a line was drawn in the sand. A new generation of women were moving into key positions in the MLCW.<sup>8</sup> Those who supported women's suffrage became extremely proactive, taking over many of the leadership roles within the council and those who did not support suffrage felt increasingly unwelcomed in the MLCW and other similar activist organizations. By and large, these differences mirrored ethnic and religious differences. The pressure from the Roman Catholic Church and French-Canadian nationalism combined to position most Francophones as anti-suffragists at least in public though several notable exceptions have been made by historians.<sup>9</sup> Though the MLCW as an organization

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<sup>7</sup> Tarah Brookfield, "Divided by the Ballot Box: The Montreal Council of Women and the 1917 Election", *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 89, no. 4 (December 2008), 473-501.

<sup>8</sup> Grace Ritchie-England and Carrie Derick among others assumed strong positions of leadership in this second generation of council women. Brookfield deals with the intricacies of this leadership transition in her article "Divided by the Ballot Box".

<sup>9</sup> Marie Gérin-Lajoie was the most prominent pro-suffrage Francophone of these difficult years.

continued beyond this break between Francophone and Anglophone women, it was from that point on almost exclusively an Anglophone Protestant organization. Where cooperation of effort had characterized elite women's activism in Montreal the war clearly served as a break in this.

By 1918 the world had changed. Boundaries had been redrawn, empires had been reconstructed and millions of soldiers and civilians had given their lives. Parker Drummond and Felice deKalisz Stephens returned to Montreal having lost their sons. Parker Drummond had now lost both children and her husband. As a widow, she embraced her role as grandmother to her son's son who had been conceived just before his death. Her efforts during the war had won her many accolades and official recognitions of honour. She returned to Montreal, fully recognized as a citizen of Canada, having had the right to vote federally extended to her during the war. Yet she could not vote provincially, nor would she until the final two years of her life. Life in Montreal for Parker Drummond still revolved around the customs of elite culture but it was a world changed. Her dear friend Lady Marguerite Allan, whose son had also died in the war and who had lost two of her three daughters on the *Lusitania*, closed her home to entertaining for several years while in mourning. Unabashed optimism for the future was replaced with memories of four years of battles so fierce an entire generation of Canadian young men was decimated. Parker Drummond continued with her philanthropic and social reform work. She still sat on organizations and was a frequent spokesperson for a plethora of causes. She still believed in a better world and the important role of women as mothers in seeing this world borne.

Yet the setting had been altered and the methods of seeing this through were changed. Elite society would be negotiated on new terms following the First World War. The first generation of the self-made men were mostly passed on and there was a very real and noticeable rupture between elite Anglophones and Francophones. Where previously their union had provided them power and authority, women's activism was crippled by this division. Unable to find ways to bridge these differences on various organizational levels, women's experiences and their identities as citizens came under fire by members of the clergy and by politicians. The campaign for suffrage at the provincial level suffered from this rupture and became a series of failed attempts for more than two decades.

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I will conclude the way I began. This has been a study of rich, white women. I have attempted to use the techniques of the new social and political histories to explore the lives of elite women. Set in industrializing Montreal, questions of class, gender, ethnicity, religion, and language have framed the understanding of identities and group formation. Positioning understandings of nation and empire next to each other, identities have emerged as being complex and multiple. The project was not without significant challenges, most notably the unevenness of sources. But what has emerged, I am hopeful, is a complex picture of life in turn-of-the-century Montreal for twenty elite women.

“Mothering Citizens” has demonstrated the ways a collective biography can unpack women's experiences in rich and fruitful ways. This approach has effectively responded to the ways elite and upper class groups have appeared together in the historiography as an undifferentiated group of those who held

power and, as such, has revealed a sophisticated and nuanced negotiation of identity and class structure by elites. It has positioned individual experiences in the context of group experiences in a way that allows commonalities and differences to emerge. The thesis brings to light the ways women actively created common experiences and the ways they carefully navigated places of conflict and tension. Set in Montreal, this study has obvious implications for the history of this city. The unique demographic and historical background of Montreal presents a setting where ethnicity and religion could be held up against class and gender in distinctive and rich ways. In so doing, the thesis has brought Francophone and Anglophone historiographies into a point of dialogue and has hopefully presented ways this dialogue ought to continue. But its relevance goes beyond Montreal as well. The conclusions that have been reached in this thesis can and ought to be tested in other settings. Did class and gender create bridges across other societal divisions? Perhaps most importantly, however, this thesis has responded to the invisibility of women as actors in traditional political histories. Its goal has been to position women at the centre of a new political history tradition by questioning how they experienced citizenship and political activism. In particular, it has challenged the way women have been left out of political analyses in the years before the suffrage campaign and has revealed the ways a political reading of women's pre-suffrage activism has much to divulge about political identities and understandings of citizenship.

Many questions remain. The most obvious of these questions is what happened next? How does the story go after the First World War? How did access to post-secondary education and new professions impact women's

experiences? How did the right to vote federally alter women's understandings of citizenship and politics? What happened to the sons and daughters of these women? How did they experience the playing out of class, gender, and political identity? But equally important would be the question what happened before? What was the groundwork laid for this generation? Where did their ideas about citizenship, gender, class, and nation come from? What was the world of their mothers and grandmothers like? What continuity can be found and what breaks would be revealed by replicating this type of study in a generation earlier? Similarly, what would a comparison with elite women from other locations reveal? What would a comparative collective biographical study reveal about women's experiences of citizenship in other parts of the British Empire? How would this compare to women's experiences in France or in French colonies?

I hope that these women have not been heroized or portrayed as singularly good-intentioned characters. Their lives were multi-faceted and their experiences were complex. Motivation and intentions were not always clear either to the historian or to their fellow citizens. What is apparent is that elite women created strategies whereby they could position themselves at the centre of influence and power in a world that determined they would do so at a disadvantage. Class, gender, race, place, time, and faith intersected in their lives and created a tableau from which they could shape an identity that was both maternal and political. I have sought, wherever possible, to use the words of the women themselves. In this spirit, I leave the last words to the women:

We, women of Canada, sincerely believing that the best

good of our homes and nation will be advanced by our own greater unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, and that an organized movement of women will best conserve the highest good of the Family and the State, do hereby band ourselves together to further the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Women of Canada*, 241.

## APPENDIX I : BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



*Ishbel Maria Coutts Majoribanks,  
Countess of Aberdeen, Montreal, QC, 1895*  
Wm. Notman & Son  
II-109197© McCord Museum

**(Lady) Ishbel Marjoribanks Aberdeen<sup>1</sup>**

b. 15 March 1857

m. 7 November 1877

d. 18 April 1939

Religion: Protestant - Presbyterian

Ishbel was born into an old Scottish family that had managed to increase its fortunes in banking and commercial interests during the nineteenth century. She grew up splitting her time between the Scottish Highlands and the busy life of London during the season. At the age of twenty she married John Hamilton Gordon, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Aberdeen. The couple had five children: George, Marjorie, Dorothea (died in infancy), Dudley, and Archibald. Aberdeen had an active political career as a Liberal and ardent supporter of Gladstone that quickly positioned him in diplomatic roles as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Governor General (1893-1898) of Canada. Ishbel had much energy and devotion to give to a very wide range of philanthropic interests. She was President of the ICW for thirty-six years. In addition, she was responsible for the founding of many organizations, not the least of which were the NCWC (and its branches) and the VON in Canada. Even after her move away from Canada, she maintained very close relationships with her friends including Julia Parker Drummond and Joséphine Marchand Dandurand. Her accomplishments were plentiful and Queen's University made her the first woman to receive an honorary doctorate in Canada. She died at the age of 82.

<sup>1</sup> See John T. Saywell, *The Canadian Journal of Lady Aberdeen, 1893-1898*. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1960) ; Doris French, *Ishbel and the Empire. A Biography of Lady Aberdeen*. (Toronto: Dundurn Press Limited, 1988)



### **Caroline Dessaulles Béique<sup>2</sup>**

b. 13 October 1852

m. 15 April 1875

d. 8 August 1946

Religion: Roman Catholic

Caroline Dessaulles was born in St-Hyacinthe and lived there with her parents and grandmother, the sister of Louis-Joseph Papineau. In 1860, the family moved to Montreal where Caroline was educated by the Dames du Sacré-Coeur. At the age of 22, Caroline married Frédéric-Liguori Béique, a young lawyer in Montreal, later appointed as a senator during Sir Wilfrid Laurier's government. The couple had ten children: Louis, Henri, Frédéric, Paul, Eugène, Caroline, Victor, Georges (died in infancy), Alice, Jean. She was a long-time executive member of the MLCW and one of the co-founders (along with Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie) of the FNSJB. She was also very involved in the movement for a Juvenile Court in Québec. Her philanthropic involvements were plentiful and included the Institution des Sourdes-Muettes, l'Institut des Aveugles de Nazareth, l'Orphelinat de la Providence, l'Orphelinat Catholique, the Red Cross, the MWCC, the Club Libéral des Femmes, Khaki League, the DPHND, and the MPP among others. In 1912, she was awarded the title "Lady of Grace" by the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England. She died at the Hotel Dieu hospital at the age of 93.

<sup>2</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Dessaulles (Béique) Family Fonds (P010), McCord Museum; See also Madame Béique, *Quatre-vingts ans de souvenirs* (Montréal : Editions Bernard Valiquette /Editions A.C.F., 1939). Image from: "La fête nationale", *L'album universel*, Vol. 22, no. 1105, p. 228





*Mrs. Clouston, Montreal, QC, 1885*  
 Wm. Notman & Son, 1885  
 II-76135.1 © McCord Museum

**(Lady) Annie Easton Clouston<sup>3</sup>**

b. unknown

m. 16 November 1878

d. unknown

Religion: Protestant - Anglican

Annie Easton Clouston was born and raised in Brockville, Ontario and was educated at Bishop Strachan School in Toronto. She was the daughter of George Easton, the Collector of Customs and his wife Isabelle Jane. In 1878, she married Edward Seaborne Clouston of Montreal. He was the son of an HBC trader and an aboriginal-Scottish mother and rose to great stature in Montreal, eventually taking over the Presidency of the Bank of Montreal. The Clouston family house was set on Peel Street. Annie was very close to her two daughters, Osla and Marjorie, and spent a great deal of time travelling with them. While she is recorded as handling social obligations with grace, she battled timidity around those not in her intimate circle of family and friends. Her involvement in philanthropic and organizational activity was somewhat limited and seems to have been borne out of social obligation. In particular, she was a member of both the Women's Protective Immigration Society and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire. Easton Clouston suffered great grief when her daughter Osla died suddenly in 1905 from a brain tumour.

<sup>3</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Clouston Family Fonds (P007), McCord Museum; Carman Miller, "Clouston, Sir Edward Seaborne", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*; "Sir Edward Seaborne Clouston, 1849-1912", *Montreal: Pictorial and Biographical* (Montreal: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914);



Image from *Le Canada Français*

### **Joséphine Marchand Dandurand<sup>4</sup>**

b. 5 December 1861

m. 12 January 1886 (Raoul Dandurand)

d. 2 March 1925

Religion: Roman Catholic

Joséphine Marchand was one of eleven children born to Liberal politician (and later Premier of Quebec), Félix-Gabriel Marchand and Hersélie Turgeon at St-Jean, Quebec. She was educated in St-Jean by the Dames de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame and had an early penchant for writing and language. Upon her marriage to Raoul Dandurand in 1886, the couple moved to Montreal where they settled in among Montreal's elite society. Later that year she gave birth to her only child, Gabrielle, though she had multiple miscarriages throughout her adult life. Raoul was appointed a senator in 1898 and much later served as a delegate of the League of Nations. Marchand Dandurand was consistently writing for publication throughout her life, even establishing her own newspaper entitled *Le Coin de Feu*. She was a founding member of the MLCW and a vice-president of the NCWC. She was involved with the Aberdeen Association, the National Home Reading Union, the VON, the Women's Historical Society, the FNSJB, and the MPPA. She was created an *officier d'academie française* in 1898 and was a Commissioner of the Canadian Government in Paris, 1900. She maintained a close friendship with Ishbel Aberdeen throughout her life. Marchand Dandurand died at home in 1925.

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<sup>4</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Collection Dandurand-Marchand (R8219-0-2-F), LAC; Joséphine Marchand, *Journal Intime, 1879-1900*, (Lachine : les éditions de la pleine lune, 2000); Line Gosselin, "Marchand, Joséphine", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Image available at <http://canadafrancais.com/150/index.php/josephine-marchand-pionniere-du-journalisme-feminin/>



*Mrs. C. De Sola, Montreal, QC, 1902*  
Wm. Notman & Son, 1902  
II-141241 © McCord Museum

### **Belle Maud Goldsmith DeSola<sup>5</sup>**

b. 1875

m. 16 October 1901 (Clarence Isaac DeSola)

d. 1965

Religion: Orthodox Jewish

Belle Goldsmith was born and raised in Cleveland. Her family was devoutly Orthodox Jewish yet liberal in their views on education. Goldsmith DeSola received a B.A. from Western Reserve University in 1898. As a young woman she became very involved in the National Council of Jewish Women (as Vice-President) and the Zionist movement. She met and married Clarence Isaac DeSola of Montreal in 1901. The couple returned to Montreal where they quickly built upon the already strong reputation of the DeSola family name. Clarence DeSola amassed a significant fortune in steel and shipping, and was appointed Belgian Consul in 1905. They built a Spanish-inspired mansion on Pine Avenue that still stands. They had four children (two daughters and two sons). While they spent a great deal of time, energy, and money on the Zionist cause, they were also very instrumental in the formation of the Red Cross Society of Canada. Goldsmith DeSola was a member of the VON, the Royal Edward Institute, and the MPPA. After Clarence's death in 1920, Goldsmith DeSola moved to England where she died in 1965.

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<sup>5</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the DeSola Family Fonds at the CJCCC. See also Gerald Tulchinsky, "DeSola, Clarence Isaac", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*; "Esther I. Blaustein, Rachel A. Esar, and Evelyn Miller, "Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue (Shearith Israel) Montreal, 1768-1968"



### **Katherine Samuel DeSola<sup>6</sup>**

b. 28 March 1858

m. 3 August 1887 (Aaron David Meldola DeSola)

m. July 1923 (Joseph Lambert)

d. 16 October 1930

Religion: Orthodox Jewish

Katherine Samuel DeSola (known as Katie) was the daughter of Reverend Isaac Samuel, First Reader at Bayswater Synagogue London. She was one of ten children and was provided with extensive musical training as a child. During her young adult years, she was an acquaintance of George Bernard Shaw. Her marriage to Meldola DeSola, Rabbi of the Shearith Israel Synagogue in Montreal, took place when she was twenty-nine years old. Presumably the result of a nearly-arranged marriage, Katie moved to Montreal with her new husband and stayed there until her husband's death in 1918. She returned to England and in her later years married her childhood sweetheart, Joseph Lambert. While in Montreal she was a charter member of the MLCW and the NCWC, as well as President of the Canadian branch of the National Council of Jewish Women. She was a member of the Dames Patronnesses de l'Hôpital Notre Dame and an ardent supporter of Zionism. As in her childhood, Katie was very involved with musical societies in Montreal. She and Meldola DeSola had four children.

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<sup>6</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the DeSola Family Fonds at the CJCCC. See also Dan H. Laurence, "Katie Samuel: Shaw's Flameless 'Old Flame'", *Shaw: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* XV (1995), 3-19. Esther I. Blaustein, Rachel A. Esar, and Evelyn Miller, "Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue (Shearith Israel) Montreal, 1768-1968". Image from "La kermesse de l'Hôpital Notre-Dame : Groupe des patrons et patronnesses" *Le Monde illustré*, vol. 12 no 598. pp. 368-369



*Miss Dougall, Montreal, QC, 1891*  
 Wm. Notman & Son  
 II-95874.1 © McCord Museum

### **Lily Dougall<sup>7</sup>**

b. 16 April 1853

d. 9 October 1923

Religion: Protestant – Anglican

Lily Dougall was the daughter of John Dougall and Elizabeth Redpath. She was the cousin and close friend of Amy Redpath Roddick. Growing up in a newspaper family (her father was editor of the *Montreal Witness*), Lily was introduced to writing and publication early in her life. An untraditional but strong Christian experiential faith guided her life and she wrote frequently about her faith. In Montreal, she was involved in the Montreal Local Council of Women. She wrote two essays for *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work* that was compiled for the Paris exposition universel 1900. At the age of 50, she moved to England with her lifelong companion, Sophie Earp. The couple eventually settled at Oxford where Lily pursued a life of writing and theological debate. She lived her final days in England and was buried there in a cemetery alongside Sophie.

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<sup>7</sup> See Joanna Dean, *Religious Experience and the New Woman: The Life of Lily Dougall*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007)



*Mrs. George A. Drummond, Montreal, QC, 1894*  
Wm. Notman & Son  
II-105875 © McCord Museum

**(Lady) Grace Julia Parker Drummond<sup>8</sup>**

b. 1861 at Montreal

1<sup>st</sup> m. 1879 George Hamilton; 2<sup>nd</sup> m. 1884 George Alexander Drummond

d. 1942

Religion: Protestant – Anglican

Julia was one of the few women in this study actually to be born in Montreal. Her father, Alexander Davidson Parker, immigrated to Canada from Scotland. He was instrumental in the founding of the Sun Life Assurance Company in Montreal. Parker Drummond attended the Montreal Ladies' Education Association (a precursor to RVC). Born and raised a Presbyterian, Parker Drummond made the transition to Anglicanism upon her marriage to George Hamilton, the young vicar of Trinity Church in Quebec City. He died in France in 1880. As a young widow (just nineteen years old), Julia returned to Montreal. There she met and married George Alexander Drummond, himself a widower and father of seven children. The couple had two children: Julien (died in early childhood) and Guy Melfort (died during the First World War). Julia was very active in philanthropic circles, the extent of which was unmatched in this study. She was the first President of the MLCW and was instrumental in the founding of the COS. She was involved in many other organizations including the Red Cross, the MPPA, the MWCC, and the MSA among many others. Julia was considered an exceptional public speaker and was the second woman in Canada to receive an honorary doctorate.

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<sup>8</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Drummond Family Fonds (P015), McCord Museum. A good biographical description of Parker Drummond and her many social activities can be found in Jeanne M. Wolfe and Grace Strachan, "Practical Idealism: Women in Urban Reform, Julia Drummond and the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association", *Life Spaces: Gender, Household, Employment*, eds. Caroline Andrew and Beth Moore Milroy (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988)



### **Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie<sup>9</sup>**

b. 19 October 1867

m. 11 January 1887

d. 1 November 1945

Religion: Roman Catholic

Marie was born the eldest of thirteen children to Marie-Louise Globensky Lacoste (also part of this study) and Alexandre Lacoste. Upon completion of her schooling at the Couvent d'Hochelaga, Marie, unable to attend law school the way her brothers could because women were not permitted, convinced her father (a lawyer, judge, and law professor) to instruct her. Frustrated at the unfair disadvantage given to women under the law, Marie published *Traité de droit usuel* in 1902. This book was revised and translated several times during her lifetime. Marie was an important member of the MLCW executive, a position she maintained even as she acted as co-founder of the FNSJB along with her friend Caroline Dessaulles Béique. Her commitment to improving women's position in Quebec society extended to women's suffrage and she became an important leader in the early suffrage movement in Quebec, often heading delegations and suffrage projects. Her husband, Henri Gérin-Lajoie, supported her activism and the couple formed a powerful political duo. They had four children: Marie, Henri, Alexandre, Léon. Despite the fact that it sometimes led to conflict because of her liberal social positions, Marie retained a strong connection to the Roman Catholic Church throughout her lifetime. She died at the Institut Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Conseil on 1 November 1945, just five years after the vote had been extended to women in Quebec.

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<sup>9</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Fonds Famille Lacoste (P76) BANQ. Anne Marie Sicotte, *Marie Gérin-Lajoie: Conquérante de la liberté* (Montreal : Remue-ménage, 2005); Marie Gérin-Lajoie. *Traité de droit usuel*. (Montréal : Beauchemin, 1902). Image from Archives de l'Institut Notre-Dame de Bon Conseil de Montréal.



**(Lady) Margaret Josephine Macdonald Hingston<sup>10</sup>**

b. 1847

m. 16 September 1875 (William Hales Hingston 1829-1907)

d. 7 November 1936

Religion: Roman Catholic

Margaret was born at Alexandria, Ontario. She was the second daughter of Hon. Donald Alexander Macdonald (Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, 1875-1880) and Catherine Fraser. As a young woman she was educated in Montreal where she met her husband, William Hales Hingston M.D., a chief surgeon and mayor of Montreal. Margaret gave birth to six children: William (a Jesuit priest), Donald (a surgeon and founder of St. Mary's Hospital), Katherine Eleanor (died at four days old), Mary Aileen (died along with her fiancé in an inexplicable sailing accident), Reginald Basil (killed in action in the First World War), Edmond Harold (injured during the First World War). Macdonald Hingston was a devout Roman Catholic who attended mass every morning at 6:30 and was at ease in both the Francophone and Anglophone worlds of Montreal. Her philanthropic activity was extensive. She was the first President of the Parks and Playgrounds Association and a Vice-President of the Montreal Local Council of Women. She was also involved with the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, the Catholic Sailors' Club, the Aberdeen Association, the Red Cross, the Canadian Patriotic Fund, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, the Victorian Order of Nurses, and the Institut des Écoles Ménagères among many others.

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<sup>10</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Hingston Family Fonds at the Concordia University Archives. See also Alan Hustak, *Sir William Hingston: Montreal Mayor, Surgeon, Banker* (Montreal: Price-Patterson Ltd, 2004). Image from Henry J. Morgan, *Types of Canadian women and of women who are or have been connected with Canada* : (Volume 1), 1903





*Mrs. Lacoste, Montreal, QC, 1880*  
Notman & Sandham  
II-58362.1 © McCord Museum

**(Lady) Marie-Louise Globensky Lacoste<sup>11</sup>**

b. 2 February 1849

m. 8 May 1866

d. 11 December 1919

Religion: Roman Catholic

Marie-Louise Globensky was born in Montreal. Her grandfather, August-Franz Globensky (Głabiński), was a Polish physician who had served as a surgeon in the American Revolutionary War. Afterward he had settled in Verchères, Quebec and the family quickly became prominent in Quebec society. At the age of 17, Marie-Louise married Alexandre Lacoste, a lawyer. He held a variety of prestigious positions including Senator, Speaker of the Senate, and Chief Justice of Quebec. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1892. The couple had thirteen children (Marie, Louis, Henriette, Blanche, Paul, Justine, Jeanne, Yvonne, Alexandre, Arthur, Thaïs, Berthe, René), the eldest daughter being Marie Lacoste Gérin-Lajoie, also one of the members of this study. The large Lacoste family home was located on St. Hubert Street in Montreal. Marie-Louise was a devout Roman Catholic (attending mass every morning) and saw her philanthropic work as a living-out of her faith. She was a dame patronnesse of the Hôpital Notre-Dame and one of the early members of the MLCW and the FNSJB. She was involved with the Red Cross, the VON, the MPPA, and the Antiquarian and Numismatic Society as well as serving in various charitable roles within her own parish church. She and her husband were particularly committed to the Institut des Sourdes-Muettes in Montreal. Marie-Louise died very suddenly in her home one evening at the age of 70.

<sup>11</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Fonds Famille Lacoste (P76) BANQ. See also Sylvio Normand, "Lacoste, Sir Alexandre", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*; Anne Marie Sicotte, *Marie Gérin-Lajoie: Conquérante de la liberté* (Montreal : Remue-ménage, 2005)

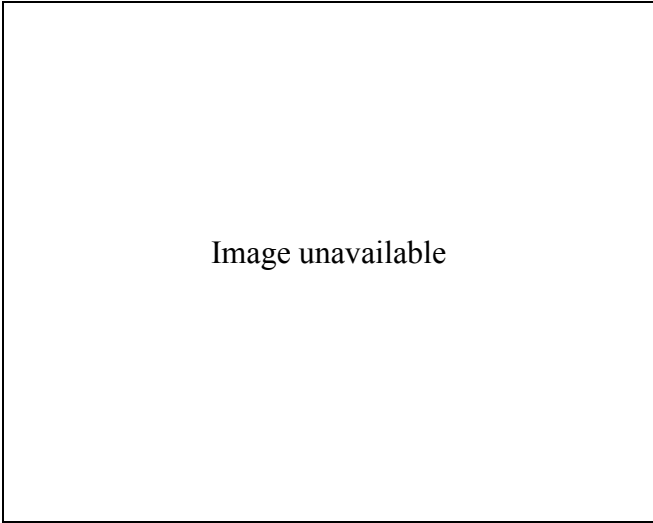


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**Charlotte Smithers Learmont<sup>12</sup>**

b. 25 August 1845

m. 1882 (Joseph Bowles Learmont)

d. unknown

Religion: Protestant – Congregational

Born in Waterford, Ireland, Charlotte Smithers immigrated to Montreal with her family in 1847. Her father, Charles F. Smithers made a successful transition into the business world of Montreal, producing a comfortable life for his family and eventually holding the prestigious position of president of the Bank of Montreal. As a child and young adult, Charlotte attended Miss Lyman's School in Montreal. A very talented, inspired and productive woman, Smithers was an extraordinary worker and great visionary. Her list of philanthropic involvements is huge and included working for the YWCA, the Montreal Day Nursery, the MLCW, the NCWC, the MMPA, the COS, and the VON. She was involved both in the conceptualization and actualization of two major exhibitions in Montreal – the Montreal Exhibition for the Prevention of Tuberculosis (1908) and the Child Welfare Exhibit (1912). When she was 37, Learmont married widower Joseph Bowles Learmont and moved into his home on Dr. Penfield (then Macgregor Ave) where he lived with his one son, Holton. Learmont had no children of her own. She was a life-long member of the Congregationalist Church.

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<sup>12</sup> See The Architecture of Edward and W.S. Maxwell: The Canadian Legacy, "J.B. Learmont House" *Canadian Architecture Collection*, McGill University; See "Joseph Bowles Learmont", and "Mrs. Joseph B. Learmont", William Atherton, *Montreal from 1535 to 1914 Volume III Biographical*; "Mrs. Joseph B. Learmont, Montreal, Que", G. J. Drummond, *Women of Canada*, 1930.



**(Lady) Isabelle Brenda Allan Meredith<sup>13</sup>**

b. 1867

m. 15 November 1888

d. 1959

Religion: Protestant - Presbyterian

Brenda Allan was the youngest daughter of Andrew Allan, President of the Allan Line and Merchant's Bank. Born and raised in Montreal's elite circles, she was particularly close with the Clouston family and spent many vacations with them. She married H. Vincent Meredith in an elaborate wedding ceremony at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in 1888. As a wedding gift, her father gave the couple a parcel of land on Pine Avenue. The house they built, *Advarna*, still stands as part of McGill University. The couple had no children. Allan Meredith had a passion for horses and golf and helped to found the Montreal Ladies' Golf Association. She was heavily involved with the IODE, the Red Cross, the SPCA, and the WPIS. At the end of the war, she set up a rehabilitation centre in her house for soldiers returning from the front. Allan Meredith was a loyal Presbyterian.

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<sup>13</sup> See The Architecture of Edward and W.S. Maxwell: The Canadian Legacy, "Advarna" *Canadian Architecture Collection*, McGill University; Duncan McDowell, "Meredith, Sir Henry Vincent" *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. XV. Image from The Marjorie Howard Fletcher Photo Collection, McGill University Library, Image FUT1\_028-002\_P.

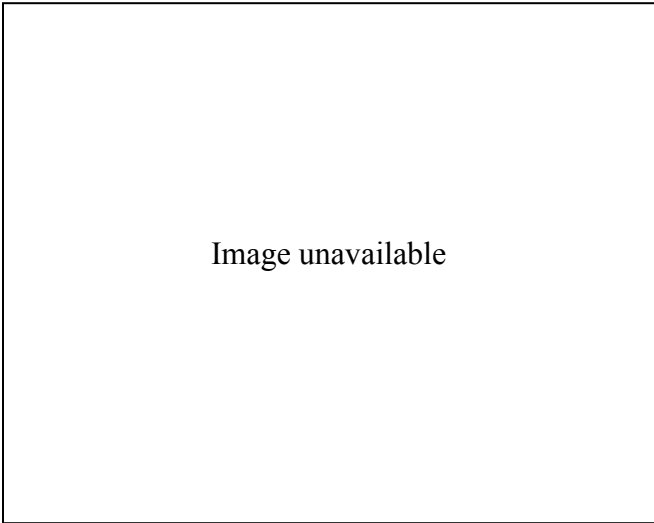


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**Eliza Ann MacIntosh Reid<sup>14</sup>**

b. 30 October 1841

m. 12 September 1867

d. 8 January 1926

Religion: Protestant - Unitarian

Eliza Ann MacIntosh was born in Montreal, one of four daughters to Nicholas and Margaret Brown. In 1867 she married Robert Reid (born and educated in Scotland), proprietor of the Montreal Sculpture and General Marble and Granite Works. The couple had two children – Robert Hudson (1868) and Helen Richmond Young (1869-1941). MacIntosh Reid was a bold and sympathetic voice for (elite) women in Montreal. She lobbied on behalf of women being admitted to McGill University and to the Board of Management of her own church – the Church of the Messiah. As a lifelong adherent of the Unitarian faith, MacIntosh Reid was liberal in theology as well as in politics. Her commitment to social reform shaped her daily life as her list of involvements indicates. Of particular note is the role she played in the founding of the Montreal Women's Club in 1892 and in the Montreal Local Council of Women in 1893. Along with these two major commitments, she was involved with the VON, the MPPA, the COS, the WPIS, the WCCM, the Boy Scouts of Montreal, and the Board of Management of the Church of the Messiah. MacIntosh Reid died in 1925.

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<sup>14</sup>These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Archives of the Unitarian Church of Montreal. See also Louise Bienvenue, "McIntosh, Eliza Ann (Reid)", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Vol. XV.



Rose Shallow and Amy Redpath Roddick  
 Creator: Unknown,  
 Rare Books and Special Collections Division,  
 McGill University Library

**(Lady) Amy Redpath Roddick<sup>15</sup>**

b. 16 May 1868

m. 3 September 1906 Thomas George Roddick

d. 15 February 1954

Religion: Protestant - Anglican

Amy was born into one of the wealthiest and most prolific families in Montreal. On her paternal side, she was granddaughter of John Redpath, the founder of Redpath Sugar Company and a plethora of other interests. Her mother was Ada Mills Redpath, the daughter of a wealthy merchant and Montreal mayor, John Easton Mills. Mills Redpath brought significant wealth into her marriage and bequeathed it to her daughter. Educated by private tutors in Europe and Montreal, Redpath Roddick was fluent in English, French and German. The only daughter in a family of five children, Redpath Roddick managed most household affairs by the time she reached adulthood. Her father died when she was sixteen years old and her mother remained chronically ill for the remainder of her life. At the age of thirty-eight, Redpath Roddick married Dr. Thomas George Roddick, himself a widower. The couple had no children. Redpath Roddick enjoyed creative writing and published multiple stories, plays, and articles throughout her lifetime. She was especially interested in aboriginal culture and became “a friend to the Mohawks” at Kahnawake.

<sup>15</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Redpath-Roddick Family Fonds at the Rare Books, McGill University Library. See also Joseph Hanaway, “Roddick, Sir Thomas George” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Vol. XV.



*Mrs. F. Stephens, Montreal, QC, 1886*  
 Wm. Notman & Son  
 II-80081.1 © McCord Museum

### **Felice deKalisz Stephens<sup>16</sup>**

b. 1853

m. 1875 (Sheldon Stephens)

d. 1853

Children: Sheldon Harrison (died age 19) and Lawrence (died age 38)\

Religion: Protestant - Anglican

Little is known about the life of Felice (Flickie) deKalisz Stephens before she married Sheldon Stephens of Montreal. She was born in Poland in 1853 and spent the majority of her life in Montreal. The couple initially lived on Lower Lachine Road but moved to 221 Drummond Street in the Square Mile in the mid-1880s. Felice had two sons, both of whom she outlived. An astute business woman, she took over the family's business affairs during the 1910s and made very successful investments, accruing a significant fortune. Along with Julia Parker Drummond, Felice lived in London during the First World War, while her only living son was on the battlefields in Europe (he was killed in action in 1916). She provided significant financial aid to humanitarian efforts during the two wars and she was especially instrumental in helping Polish refugees to Canada after the Second World War, welcoming them into her own home as was needed. She and her husband travelled in Europe extensively. Felice DeKalisz Stephens was a member of the Ladies' Morning Musical Society and the Art Society of Montreal. She died a century after her birth, in 1953.

<sup>16</sup> The best description of Felice deKalisz Stephens is offered in the description of the fond itself at the McCord Museum, Stephens family fonds (P020) "Administrative History - Biographical Sketch" Available at: [http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/scripts/explore.php?Lang=1&tableid=18&tablename=fond&elementid=155\\_true](http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/scripts/explore.php?Lang=1&tableid=18&tablename=fond&elementid=155_true)



Mrs. Joseph Rosaire Thibaudeau,  
Montreal, QC, 1895  
Wm. Notman & Son  
II-111420 © McCord Museum

### **Marguerite Lamothe Thibaudeau<sup>17</sup>**

b. 6 March 1853

m. December 1873 (Joseph Rosaire Thibaudeau)

d. 6 October 1939

Religion: Roman Catholic

Marguerite Lamothe Thibaudeau, commonly known as Loulou, was the eldest daughter of Guillaume La Mothe (Postmaster of Montreal) and Marguerite de Savoye of France. She was educated by the *Dames du Sacré-Coeur* in Montreal. At the age of 20, she married Rosaire Thibaudeau who would become a Canadian Senator as well as Sheriff of Montreal. She spoke French and English with ease and maintained close friendships with her childhood friend Marie Globensky Lacoste, Margaret Macdonald Hingston, and Julia Parker Drummond. Like her friends, she was very active in the philanthropic milieu of Montreal. She served as the President of the Dames Patronnesses de l'Hopital Notre Dame, l'Orphelinat Catholique, and the Ladies' Branch of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society. She served in executive positions for the MLCW, the NCWC, the MPPA, the Institut des Écoles Ménagères, the VON, and the Montreal League for the Prevention of Tuberculosis among others. She received many honours including the médaille de Reconnaissance française and the Cross of Mercy. In 1915 she was accorded the title Lady of Grace of St. John of Jerusalem, as her friend Julia Parker Drummond had several years earlier. Loulou retained a strong connection to her Roman Catholic roots throughout her life. She had two daughters.

<sup>17</sup> See Henry Morgan, "Madame Thibaudeau", *Types of Canadian Women Past and Present*, Montreal, 1903; Madeleine Huguenin, "Madame Rosaire Thibaudeau (Marguerite LaMothe)", *Portraits des femmes*.



*Mrs William Van Horne, Montreal, QC, 1889*  
Wm. Notman & Son  
II-89974 © McCord Museum

**(Lady) Lucy Adaline Hurd Van Horne<sup>18</sup>**

b. 1837

m. 26 March 1867

d. 29 January 1929

Religion: Protestant - Unitarian

Adaline Hurd Van Horne was born in Illinois to a middle-class family. She was extremely well-educated for a woman of her era, having received a B.A. from Lombard College in 1856. When her father, a civil engineer, died the following year, Adaline commenced teaching music to provide a living for herself and her mother. She taught for ten years until she met and married William Cornelius Van Horne, six-years her junior. He was an up and coming young star in the railway industry. The couple (along with both mothers and one sister) moved frequently in the early years of their marriage, eventually settling in Montreal in 1882 when William assumed the position of General Manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway. They had three children: Lucy Adaline (Addie Jr.), William ("Willie" who died at age 5) and Richard Benedict (Bennie). A rather shy and quiet woman of consistently poor health, Hurd Van Horne nevertheless had extensive hosting duties and kept up an active slate of philanthropic involvements. She was involved in the early years of the MLCW, the MPPA, the Homeopathic Hospital and the MAA among others. Both she and William were Unitarians and were members of the Church of the Messiah. The Van Horne family had their primary residence on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal and a summer home, Covenhoven, in St. Andrew's, New Brunswick. Adaline died 29 January 1929.

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<sup>18</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Van Horne Family Papers, LAC (R7719-0-8-E). See also Valerie Knowles, *From Telegrapher to Titan: The Life of William C. Van Horne*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2004)





*Miss Van Horne, Montreal, QC, 1891*  
 Wm. Notman & Son  
 II-94875.1 © McCord Museum

### **Mary Van Horne<sup>19</sup>**

b. 1852

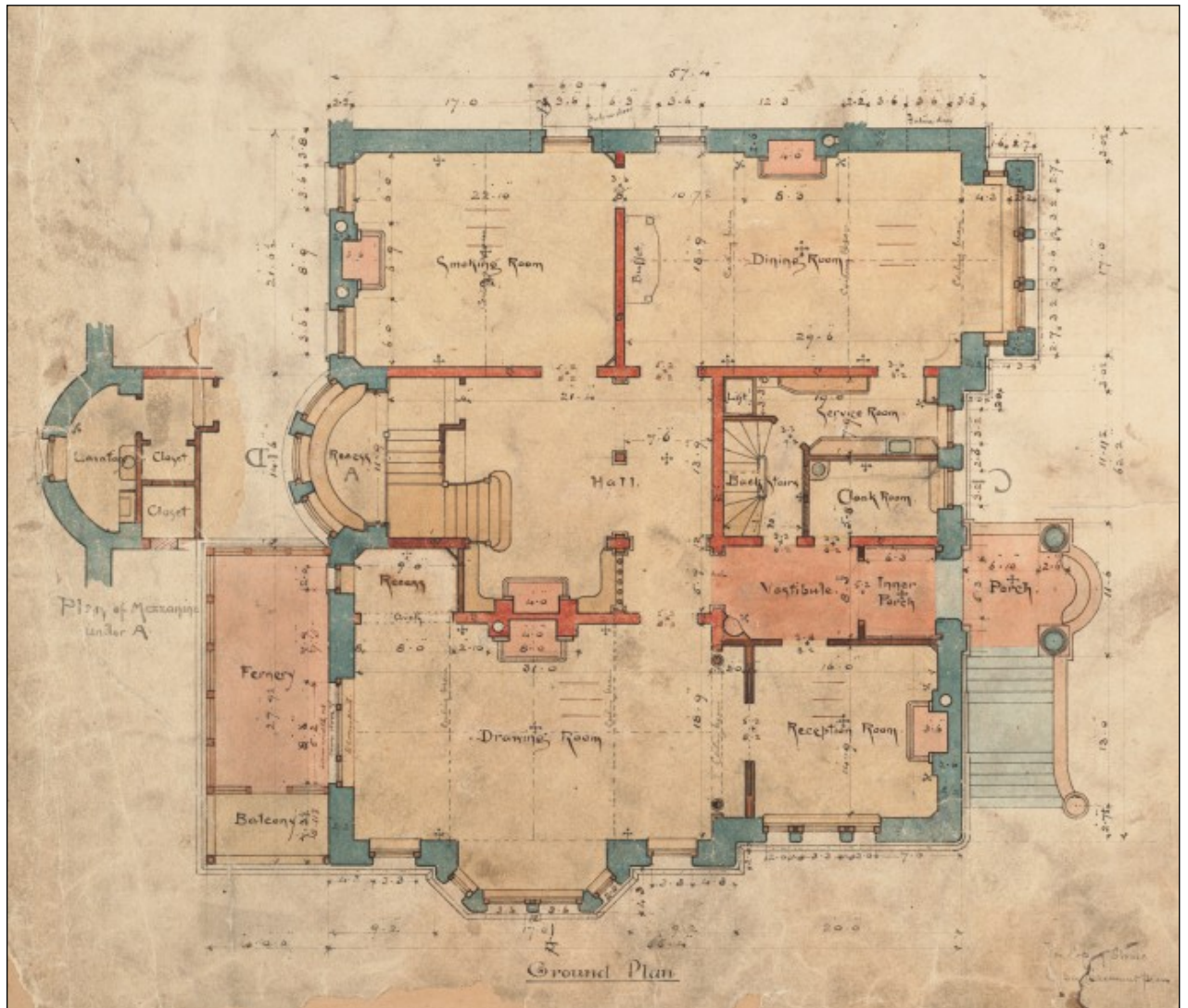
d. 1904

Religion: Protestant – Unitarian

Mary Van Horne was the sister of William Cornelius Van Horne. They were two of five children born as a result of their father's second marriage to Mary Richards. (He had five children with his first wife as well.) Mary attended teacher's college in La Crosse, Wisconsin. As a single woman, she lived with her brother and his family for the majority of her life. She was particularly close to Van Horne's daughter, Addie Jr. Mary shared the responsibilities of household management and hosting with the other women of the household. She had a deep love for art and many of her own works were donated to the McCord Museum. Her most important philanthropic interest was the Homeopathic Hospital of which she served as the treasurer for many years. She was also involved in the Montreal Art Association. Like her brother and sister-in-law, she was a very involved member of the Church of the Messiah in Montreal. She died in Montreal in 1904.

<sup>19</sup> These biographical details are from my own personal research of the Van Horne Family Papers, LAC (R7719-0-8-E ). See also Valerie Knowles, *From Telegrapher to Titan: The Life of William C. Van Horne*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2004)

# APPENDIX II : DRUMMOND HOUSE PLANS



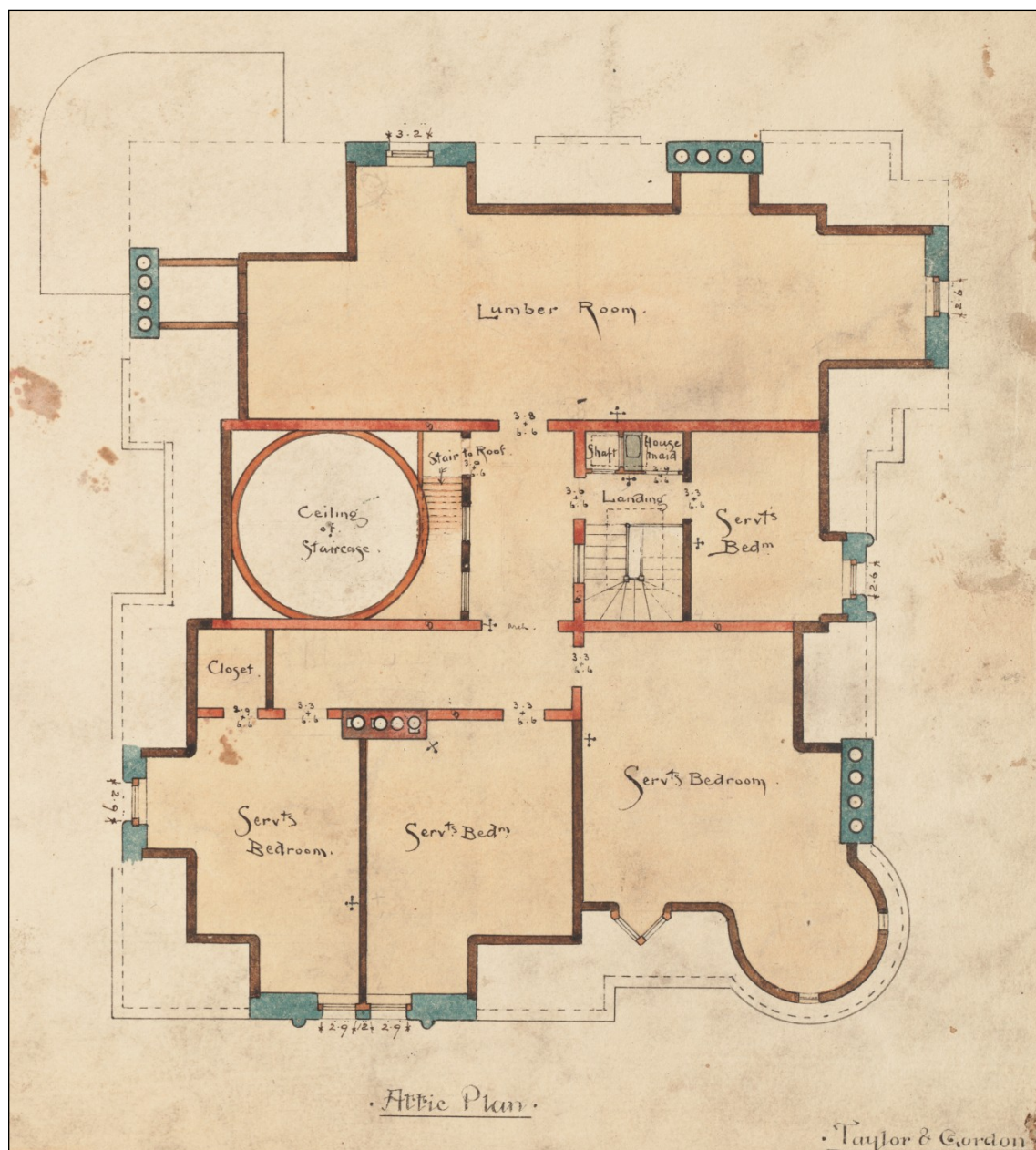
Drummond House: Ground Floor  
 Taylor and Gordon, Accession #7  
 Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University







Drummond House: Second Floor  
 Taylor and Gordon, Accession #7  
 Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University



Drummond House: Attic  
 Taylor and Gordon, Accession #7  
 Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University



Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University

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Fonds Marie Gérin-Lajoie (P578)

Fonds Fédération nationale St-Jean-Baptiste (P120)

Fonds de l'Institut Notre-Dame du Bon Conseil de Montréal (P783)

Fonds Montreal Council of Women (P653)

##### **CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS CHARITIES COMMITTEE**

DeSola Family (P0164, P0049, P0047)

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada (I0048)

##### **LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA (LAC)**

Lord and Lady Aberdeen (R5319-0-1-E)

Dandurand-Marchand Family Fonds (R8219-0-2-F)

National Council Women of Canada (R7584-0-0-E)

Van Horne Family Fonds (R7719-0-8-E)

Victorian Order of Nurses (R2915-0-7-E)

##### **UNITED STATES LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (LOC)**

National Council of Jewish Women (mm 87061810)

##### **MCCORD MUSEUM (MM)**

Fonds Drummond Family (P015)

Fonds Dessaulles-Béique Family (P010)

Fonds Clouston Family (P007)

Fonds Stephens Family (P020)

Fonds Women's Art Society of Montreal (P125)

Fonds Women's Canadian Club of Montreal (P722)

Notman Photographic Archives

##### **MCGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES (MUA)**

Amy Redpath Roddick, Rare Books

Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association (M.G. 2079)

##### **CANADIAN ARCHITECTURE COLLECTION, MCGILL UNIVERSITY**

The Architecture of Edward and W.S. Maxwell : The Canadian Legacy

Taylor and Gordon, Accession #7

**ARCHIVES DE VILLE DE MONTREAL (AVM)**

Fonds de conseil de ville de Montréal

**ORGANIZATIONS**

Red Cross Society of Canada, Ottawa

Diocesan Office of the Anglican Church of Canada, Montreal

Unitarian Church of Montreal

**GOVERNMENT SOURCES**

Census of Canada 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911

Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada

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