*The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching: A Nineteenth-Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study**

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North American studies of the sexual division of labour in teaching have stressed the connections between the development of urban school systems, the feminization of teaching and the development of occupational hierarchies in the profession. The fact of early feminization in most of rural Quebec and in several counties of eastern Ontario, however, revealed the inadequacy of these formulations, leading us to seek alternative explanations. These explanations are presented as they relate to the shifting age structure, ethnicity, and marital and household status of male and female teachers in selected regions of Quebec and Ontario between 1851 and 1881.

Dans les études sur l'enseignement en Amérique du Nord où l'on analyse la répartition du travail selon le sexe, on a mis l'accent sur les relations entre le développement de réseaux scolaires urbains, la féminisation de l'enseignement et l'aménagement d'une hiérarchie des tâches à l'intérieur de la profession. Or les hypothèses qui y sont formulées ne conviennent pas parfaitement à l'analyse de la situation observée dans la plus grande partie des campagnes québécoises ainsi que dans plusieurs comtés de l'est de l'Ontario, où l'on constate une féminisation hâtive de l'enseignement. Cela nous incite à chercher d'autres explications. Celles-ci sont liées à des changements, parmi les enseignants des deux sexes, dans la structure par âge, l'origine ethnique, l'état matrimonial et la place de l'instituteur ou de l'institutrice à l'intérieur du ménage, comme le démontre la présente analyse de quelques régions-témoins du Québec et de l'Ontario des années 1851 à 1881.

Shortly after her marriage to a widower with four children in December of 1916, country-school teacher Leila V. Middleton recorded the wedding and her hopes as a stepmother in her diary.

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> I was married Wed. Dec. 27 and came to my new home Sat. evening after spending a few days in Toronto. I feel that I am taking on a big responsibility with four young step children. I hope my teaching experience of 5 years may be of help to me in doing for each what is best....[1]

In seeing teaching as appropriate preparation for her new role, Leila Middleton was expressing a commonly held view. It was a view which had developed out of the experience of thousands of North American women who, since the early decades of the nineteenth century, had spent the years between the end of their own schooling and marriage as the mistresses of rural schools. It was a view which had been put forward by early promoters of women teachers such as Catharine Beecher and was also carefully nurtured by hundreds of school administrators, those makers of educational ideology for whom it was convenient that a labour pool of idealistic and uncomplaining young women should continue to fill poorly paid teaching posts in thousands of rural schools. The belief that teaching was an ideal preparation for motherhood was of course meant to apply to all female teachers, not just those living in the country. Urban women, persuaded that their role was to teach the youngest children in the graded schools of towns and cities, were also subject to such domestically oriented ideology.

For the many women teachers who did not marry, the mystique of the teacher-in-training-for-motherhood must have had a hollow ring and because of them there was another twist to the tale. To schoolmistresses of the nineteenth century who remained celibate, the mission of the school was less a preparation than a substitute for woman's divine calling in the home. For these women, teaching was held up as a vocation and was often in fact a life-time career.[2]

If women were seen to be either preparing for or playing a mothering role in the school room, the implied ideal role for the male teacher was that of the patriarchal father. Often a young man would use school teaching as a stepping stone to another more lucrative profession; if he stayed in teaching it was usually in the hope of exerting his natural authority as a principal, as a model school or high school teacher, or as an inspector or superintendent of schools.[3]

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[1] Leila V. Middleton Diary, kindly lent to one of the authors by her granddaughter, Sharon Trewartha, 1974-75.

[2] For discussions of the ideology surrounding the role of the woman teacher, see Kathryn Kish SKLAR, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Joan N. BURSTYN, "Catharine Beecher and the Education of American Women", *New England Quarterly,* XLVII (September 1974): 386-403; Glenda RILEY, "Origin of the Argument for improved Female Education", *History of Education Quarterly,* 9, 4 (Winter 1969): 450-70; and Keith E. MELDER, "Woman's High Calling: The Teaching Profession in America, 1830-1860", *American Studies,* 13 (Fall 1972): 19-32.

[3] See Alexander Forrester's comments about the importance of reserving headmasterships and the more advanced classes for male teachers in *The Teachers' Text-Book* (Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1867), pp. 565-66. In the case of Quebec, see the remarks of school inspector Jean Crépault printed in QUEBEC (PROVINCE), *Report of the Minister of Public Instruction for the Province of Quebec* (1872-73), pp. 51-52, in which he insists that the model schools be reserved for male teachers.

Historians investigating the history of teaching have been impressed with the extent to which these ideal constructs reflected reality. The vast majority of nineteenth- and even twentieth-century women teachers, like women employed in other occupations, have tended to leave their schools to become wives and mothers. On the other side of the coin, the proportionally fewer men who have been teachers since the development of public school systems, have had better than average chances of progressing from the classroom to administrative jobs. School teaching has thus presented a classic case of the sexual division of labour. In general, women have held the lower paying jobs at the bottom of educational occupational ladders and men have been favoured at the top.[4]

But to make such general statements is to talk about the tip of the iceberg only. Investigations of the movement into public school teaching have begun to reveal that there is a great deal hidden beneath the surface. Segregation by gender in school teaching, it turns out, is far from a simple or static fact. It is, rather, a complex phenomenon which has not only undergone important changes over time, but has manifested major regional and national variations as well.

A striking area of complexity and the one most thoroughly examined to date is the comparison between urban and rural teachers in the past. Focussing largely on the nineteenth century, studies of school systems have revealed that it was the larger schools of cities that tended to spawn occupational hierarchies in teaching. It was in these schools that women teachers were segregated in lower paying positions as the instructors of the junior grades and men slotted into higher paying positions as senior teachers, principals and superintendents. Where such urban hierarchies developed, the proportion of women teachers tended to be higher than average for the region or period in question (Graph 1). At the same time, the gap between male and female salaries tended to grow wider.[5]

In contrast, historians have noted, rural areas were generally slower to develop a segmented labour market in teaching. Although women teachers gradually became the majority in country schools, male teachers

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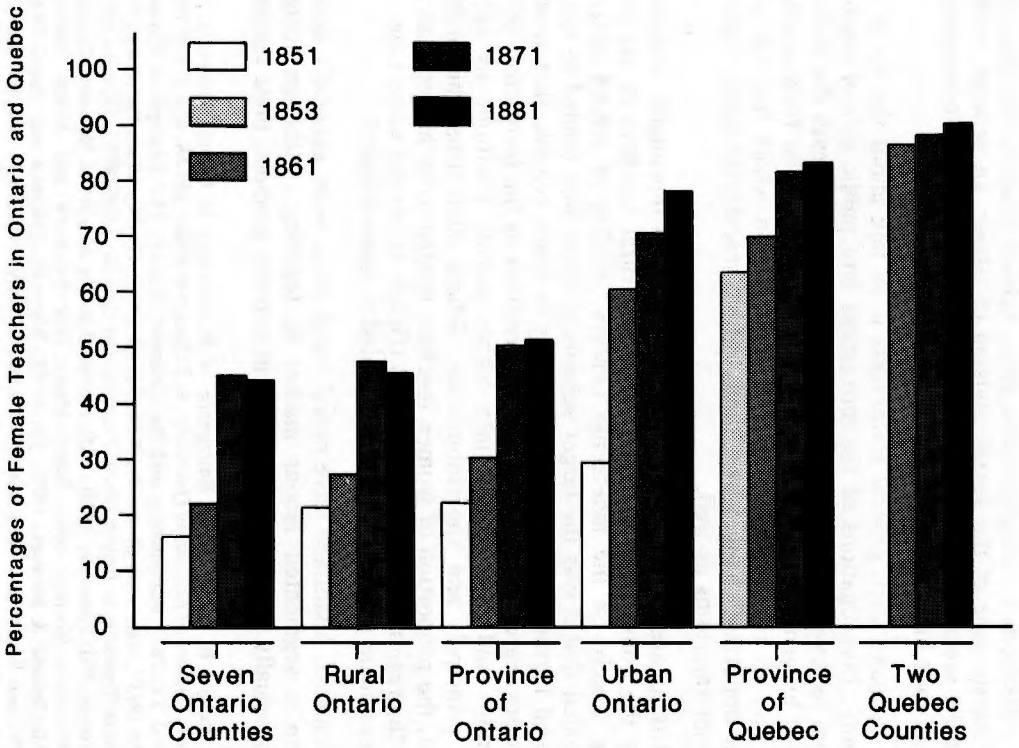
[4] Michael B. KATZ, "The Emergence of Bureaucracy in Urban Education: The Boston Case", *History of Education Quarterly*, 8, 2 (Summer 1968): 155-88, and 3 (Fall 1968): 319-57; David TYACK, "Bureaucracy and the Common School: The Example of Portland, Oregon, 1851-1913", *American Quarterly*, XIX, 3 (Fall 1967): 475-98; Alison PRENTICE, "The Feminization of Teaching in British North America and Canada, 1845-1875", *Histoire sociale — Social History*, VIII (mai-May 1975): 5-20, reprinted in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History*, eds.: Susan Mann TROFIMENKOFF and Alison PRENTICE (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977), pp. 49-65; Myra H. STROBER and David TYACK, "Why do Women Teach and Men Manage? *Signs*, 5, 3 (Spring 1980): 494-503; David B. TYACK and Myra H. STROBER, "Jobs and Gender: A History of the Structuring of Educational Employment by Sex", in *Educational Policy and Management: Sex Differentials*, ed.: Patricia SCHMUCK and W.W. CHARLES (San Diego: Academic Press, 1981).

[5] PRENTICE, "The Feminization of Teaching", pp. 12-13; Myra H. STROBER and Laura BEST, "The Female/Male Salary Differential in Public Schools: Some Lessons from San Francisco, 1879", *Economic Inquiry*, XVII, 2 (April 1979): 218-36. By sophisticated manipulation of statistics, Strober and Best were able to show that education and experience were less important than gender in determining the average teacher's "position and type of school of employment", as well as salary differentials, in San Francisco in 1879.

Graph 1. — PERCENTAGES OF FEMALE TEACHERS IN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC, 1851-1881



Sources: For the two Quebec counties and the seven Ontario counties, Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), Statistics Canada, RG 31, Census Records, 1851-1881 (microfilms); for the rest, Department of Public Instruction reports for the provinces in question.
Note: The Department of Public Instruction statistics for Quebec did not begin until 1853.

held their own in the one-room rural school house well into the latter years of the nineteenth century. Rural authorities worried about the ability of women teachers, particularly if they were young, to manage schools attended by young men and about the ability of women to "govern" children in general.[6] In some rural regions young women may have been less available for school teaching because of the demand for domestic labour of the typical family farm.[7] Finally, it has been argued, rural society presented fewer alternative opportunities to young men and therefore teaching was likely to seem more attractive to rural males than it might have to their urban contemporaries.[8] Whatever the reasons for the generally more equal numbers of male and female teachers in rural areas over a longer period in the nineteenth century than was the case for urban North America, this greater general equality in numbers was reflected both in wages and conditions. The gap between female and male salaries tended to be narrower than that found in cities. And because the job generally consisted in the management of a one-room school, the work experience of women and men who taught rural schools was more comparable than the contrasting roles usually played by male and female teachers in hierarchically organized urban schools.[9]

This situation of relative equality did not last, however. Broad statistical studies, in this case dealing exclusively with the United States, are beginning to demonstrate how measures of formalization, such as a longer school year or a larger number of teachers per school, even in more rural parts of the country, correlated with growing proportions of women teachers almost everywhere. Men who had once combined teaching with farming in economies where women teachers were able to take the schools in the summer, appear to have been forced out of the occupation by the lengthening school year. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, continuing urbanization signalled increasing hierarchy, widening gaps between female and male wages, and more women in the occupation, presumably filling the lower ranks even in village schools where there were now three or four teachers instead of one. By the early twentieth century there was a clear sexual division of labour in rural as well as urban schools.[10]

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[6] STROBER and TYACK, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?", pp. 497-98.

[7] Ibid., p. 497. In much of rural North America, there is evidence that women were heavily involved in domestic textile production until at least the 1840s, and consequently spent long hours spinning and weaving. Even after the wide-spread adoption of factory-made textiles, much clothing was made at home in rural households until the advent of ready-made garments and catalogue shopping at the turn of the twentieth century. Finally, girls and women had year round work in the preparation of food and care of dairy and poultry yards, not to mention seasonal work as well, if they were responsible for vegetables or fruit grown on the farm.

[8] Ibid., p. 497.

[9] STROBER and BEST, "The Female Salary Differential"; STROBER and TYACK, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?"; TYACK and STROBER, "Jobs and Gender".

[10] Myra H. STROBER and Audri Gordon LANDFORD, "The Percentages of Women in Public School Teaching: A Cross-Section Analysis, 1850-1880", paper presented at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association, Nashville, Tennessee, October 1981. Similar conclusions were reached by Jo-Ann DAY and James O'CONNOR in "Urbanization, School System Variables and The Sex Composition of Teaching: An Historical View", paper pre-

Whether urban or rural, both nineteenth- and early twentieth-century female teachers emerge in most of the studies that have been done to date as malleable, commandable beings. Young and socialized to obedience in a patriarchal family setting, they were the ideal people to fill the growing number of jobs in schools which were increasingly governed by rules and regulations emanating from above, whether from immediate superiors such as principals and trustees, or from more distant authorities such as state or provincial departments of education. Male teachers, on the other hand, are portrayed as either the seekers of such authority for themselves or, in one case, as the only sex capable of fighting against bureaucratic authority and promoting the professional status of their occupation.[11]

If these are the stereotypes, it is also true that several studies have stressed the potential for development and affirmation of self that teaching provided many nineteenth-century North American women, as well as occasional connections that can be traced between teacher activism and nineteenth- and early twentieth-century feminism.[12] An examination of the relations between male and female teachers in France, moreover, has uncovered government legislation favouring the advancement of women over that of men teachers in the 1890s and the eventual emergence of a significant alliance between schoolmasters and schoolmistresses against what those allied saw as the enemy of correct republican education, the Roman Catholic Church.[13]

Such studies clearly illustrate the importance of taking into account local or regional contexts in any examination of the evolution of sexual divisions of labour in teaching. They also suggest that if the historian looks at the sexual division of labour in schools from the perspective of the

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sented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto, Ontario, March 1978. A study of at least one set of Ontario rural trustee records confirms this finding. The minute books for S.S. No. 11, Norwich North, in Oxford County, indicate the firm intention of the trustees of this two-story village school to hire a male headmaster and female assistants, during the period covered by the books, when the school expanded from a staff of two to four teachers. Public Archives of Ontario, Education Records, RG 51, 108 61, No. 2.

[11] André LABARRÈRE-PAULÉ, *Les instituteurs laïques au Canada français, 1836-1900* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1965), dwells on the struggle of Quebec male lay teachers to professionalize in the period in question and sees the "intrusion" of women into teaching as one of the major obstacles to this desired goal, because of their failure to resist clerical authority. STROBER and TYACK, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?", p. 500, have argued that "accustomed to patriarchal authority", women teachers "mostly did what their male superiors ordered" and that differences in gender therefore "provided an important form of social control". In "Jobs and Gender", however, they have gone on to call attention to the militancy of women teachers on their own behalf by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[12] Geraldine Joncich CLIFFORD, "Teaching as a Seedbed of Feminism", paper presented at the Fifth Berkshire Conference on Women's History, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, June 1981.

[13] Peter V. MEYERS, "From Conflict to Cooperation: Men and Women Teachers in the Belle Epoque", in *The Making of Frenchmen*, eds.: David N. BAKER and Patrick J. HARRIGAN (Waterloo, Ontario: Historical Reflections Press, 1980), especially pp. 495-500; Wendy E. BRYANS, "Virtuous Women at Half the Price: The Feminization of the Teaching Force and Early Women Teacher Organizations in Ontario" (M. A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1974).

women teachers themselves, a complex picture, one that is neither completely positive nor completely negative, is likely to emerge.

I

The present study explores the evolution of a predominantly female workforce in teaching in the context of two regional political economies, those of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, during the period from 1851 to 1881. While the two Canadas[14] shared many characteristics with each other and with parts of the United States in the nineteenth century, they were also unique and in some ways sharply contrasting societies. With its French population dating back to the beginnings of New France, Quebec was an established rural society, but a rural society with a difference. Wheat production insufficient to feed the growing population and a serious land shortage in the older colonized parishes and counties produced by mid-century a great migration of Quebec families to new lands in the north of the province and in eastern Ontario and, most noticeably perhaps, to the industrializing cities of New England. Quebec's largest city, Montreal, was also experiencing industrial development and the influx of large numbers of migrants, first from Ireland and then from its own rural hinterland. Last but not least, resource industries like lumbering played a increasingly important role in the Quebec economy.[15]

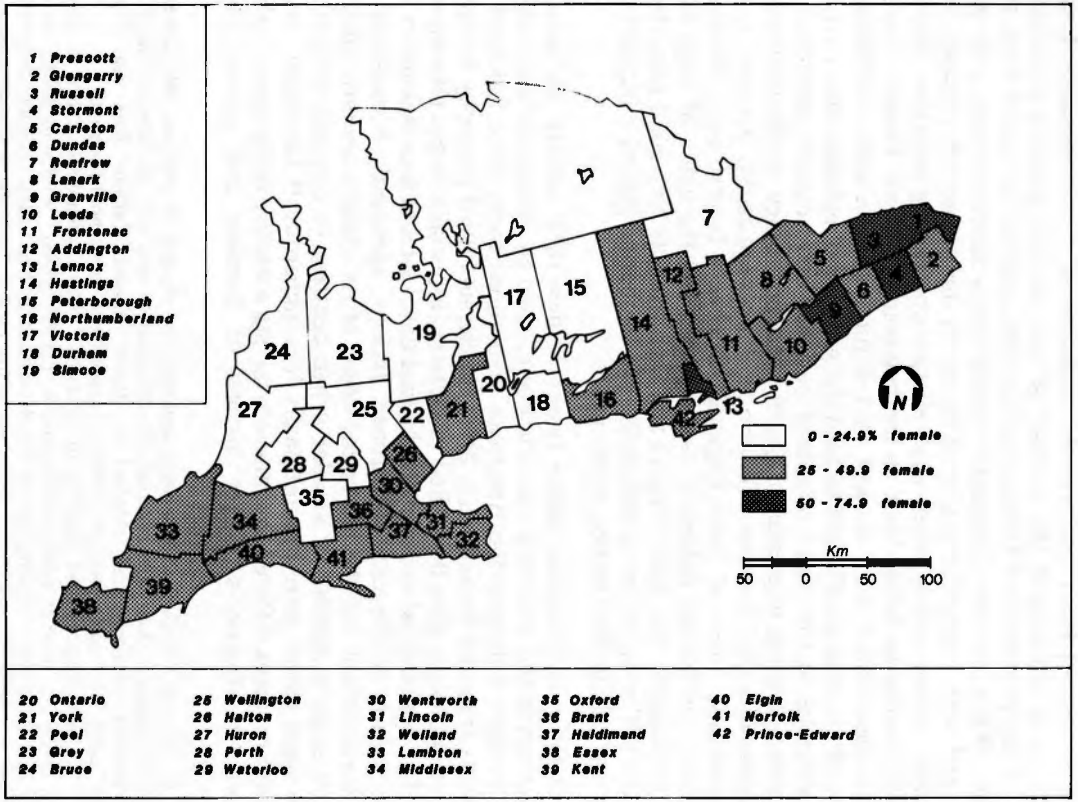
Ontario, by contrast, was a relatively new rural society. Indigenous populations in this province had first been joined by American landseekers and Loyalists following the American revolution; these were followed by emigrants from the British Isles. Most immigrants lived primarily by farming, but lumbering also flourished in Ontario, especially in the Ottawa valley, while commercial and some industrial development was making an important centre of the city of Toronto. Indeed, apparently because of its later development and the marketing needs of its wheat economy, Ontario boasted quite a number of smaller urban centres, in contrast to Quebec where small towns were proportionally less numerous.[16] Materially, then, the two provinces differed in Ontario's having a more evenly spread urban network; in Quebec's longer history of farming and greater rural

[14] Ontario and Quebec underwent constitutional changes in 1840 and 1867 and both resulted in changes in their official names. For the sake of simplicity we have sacrificed minute historical accuracy and referred to Lower Canada/Canada East and Upper Canada/Canada West as Quebec and Ontario, respectively, throughout the paper.

[15] Gilles PAQUET and Jean-Pierre WALLOT, "The Agricultural Crisis in Lower Canada, 1802-1812: mise au point. A Response to T.J.A. LeGoff", *Canadian Historical Review*, LVI, 2 (June 1975): 133-61, discuss the changes in Quebec's rural economy from wheat production to a more diversified one. Their article also outlines the various historical interpretations of the "agricultural crisis" in early nineteenth century Quebec. John MCCALLUM, *Unequal Beginnings: Agriculture and Economic Development in Quebec and Ontario until 1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), discusses the role of resource industry in the development of Quebec's rural economy. See especially pp. 25-53. It is worth noting as well Normand SÉGUIN's study of the forestry industry in *La Conquête du sol au 19e siècle* (Québec: Boréal Express, 1977).

[16] This point is emphasized in MCCALLUM, *Unequal Beginnings*.

Map 1. — PERCENTAGES OF FEMALE TEACHERS IN ONTARIO COUNTIES, 1861



Source: CANADA (PROVINCE), *Report of the Superintendent of Schools for Upper Canada*, 1861 (Data courtesy of the *Historical Atlas of Canada* Project).

overcrowding; and, possibly, in the French province's greater rural poverty during much of the nineteenth century. The greatest cultural contrast between the two provinces, aside from the obvious difference in dominant languages, was the Roman Catholic character of Quebec by the third quarter of the nineteenth century,[17] compared with the increasingly Protestant identity of Ontario. All of these contrasts led to the first question addressed by this paper. How did the different economic, social and cultural settings of education in Quebec and Ontario affect the evolution of the sexual division of labour in teaching in the two provinces?

A second goal was to look more closely at rural patterns of development. For not only was Canada predominantly rural in the nineteenth century, but rural teaching patterns have been insufficiently studied. Like researchers elsewhere, we were convinced that the development of urban bureaucracies did not fully explain the eventual feminization of the occupation in the predominantly agricultural societies of North America. In addition to these concerns, we also realized that the province of Quebec and at least some Ontario counties did not fit very well into the general North American picture of shifting male/female ratios in teaching.

Indeed, the most cursory look at central Canadian educational statistics for the nineteenth century reveals two startling facts. The first is that in Ontario, although women teachers were clearly a minority overall until the 1870s, certain counties in the eastern part of the province favoured them much earlier. Prescott, Stormont, Dundas, Russell and Grenville already began to report female majorities to the Department of Education during odd years in the 1850s. By the early sixties quite a few of the eastern counties were consistently reporting a majority of women teachers (Map 1). The second and more obvious fact is that Quebec women teachers already outnumbered men in the province as a whole by mid-century. Moreover, one of the first complete sets of school inspectors' reports revealed that men in rural settings were no more likely than their counterparts living in urban centres like Montreal, Quebec City, and Sherbrooke to take up teaching as an occupation. Contrary to what historians have found to be the case in the United States at that time, the work of teaching in Quebec belonged to country as much as city women (Graph 1 and Table 1).

The point at which women became the majority of the teaching force in Quebec remains a mystery. Some historical accounts suggest that they outnumbered men as early as the 1830s.[18] Given the possibility that women

[17] Jean-Pierre WALLOT has documented and explained the relative weakness of the Roman Catholic Church in French Canada during the first third of the nineteenth century. See "Religion and French Canadian Mores in the Early Nineteenth Century", *Canadian Historical Review*, LII (March 1971): 51-94. An overview of the changing role of the Church in the second half of the nineteenth century can be found in P.-A. LINTEAU, R. DUROCHER, and J.-C. ROBERT, *Histoire du Québec contemporain: De la Confédération à la crise* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1979), pp. 232-39 and 517-25.

[18] LABARRÈRE-PAULÉ, *Les instituteurs laïques*, p. 93, makes the following observation: "Autant que nous puissions en juger en l'absence de statistiques précises, les instituteurs ne sont pas très inférieurs en nombre aux institutrices en 1836". He clearly believes that women were in the majority.

Table 1. — NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE AND MALE TEACHERS IN INSPECTORAL DISTRICTS OF QUEBEC, 1883

Inspector	*District*	*Female Teachers*		*Male Teachers*		*Total Teachers*
		No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*
M. Lanctôt	Huntingdon, Beauharnois	84	63.6	48	36.4	132
M. Child	Stanstead, Sherbrooke, Drummond	185	79.4	48	20.6	233
P. Hubert	St. Maurice, Champlain	53	59.6	36	40.4	89
W. A. Adamson	City of Quebec (Protestant)	2	50.0	2	50.0	4
J.-H. Morin	Saguenay	2	66.7	1	33.3	3
J.-G. Lespérance	Gaspé	2	66.7	1	33.3	3
J. Crépault	Bellechasse, L'Islet	88	79.3	23	20.7	111
C. Germain	Terrebonne, Two Mountains	70	59.8	47	40.2	117
G. Tanguay	Kamouraska, Rimouski	107	79.3	28	20,7	135
J.-N.-A. Archambault	Chambly, Verchères, Richelieu	83	64.8	45	35.2	128
R. Parmelee	Missisquoi, Rouville, Shefford, Stanstead	117	67.6	56	32.4	173
F.-X. Valade	Montréal, Vaudreuil	67	54.0	57	46.0	124
P.-M. Bardy	Portneuf, Québec, Montmorency	57	50.4	56	49.6	113
A.-P.-J. Consigny	St. Hyacinth, Rouville	82	67.2	40	32.8	122
B. Maurault	Yamaska, Nicolet	73	83.9	14	16.1	87
P.-F. Béland	Dorchester, Lotbinière	166	81.8	37	18.2	203
G.-A. Bourgeois	Drummond	8	57.1	6	42.9	14
J. Bruce	Beauharnois, Two Mountains	52	38.8	82	61.2	134
C. Chagnon	Leinster, Berthier	54	44.3	68	55.7	122
C. Cimon	Saguenay	12	44.4	15	55.6	27
W. Hume	Dorchester, Bellechasse, Mégantic	11	36.7	19	63.3	30
B.-F. Painchaud	Gaspé	0	0.0	4	100.0	4
P. Winter	Bonaventure, Gaspé	4	10.5	34	89.5	38
J. J. Roney	Ottawa	25	37.9	41	62.1	66
Totals		1404	63.5	808	36.5	2212

Source: CANADA (PROVINCE), *Report of the Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada* (1853).

in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Lower Canada may have been more literate than men and that at the time of the Conquest, following government restrictions on recruitment to male religious orders, girls' schools run by religious women or by laywomen trained in convent schools were more abundant than educational institutions for boys, it may even be that women teachers were in the majority during much of French Canada's early history.[19] But whatever the early history of the sexual division of labour in Quebec, it is clear that by the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century self-conscious school promoters, who shared the educational philosophies of men like Ontario's Egerton Ryerson and Massachusetts's Horace Mann, were concerned about what they thought was a new trend. Who taught school, how male and female teachers con-

[19] For a discussion of literacy in Quebec as well as an overview of the literature on the topic, see Allen GREER, "The Pattern of Literacy in Quebec, 1745-1899", *Histoire sociale — Social History*, XI (novembre-November 1978): 293-335. The author argues quite convincingly on page 326 that "the 1842-61 and 1862-71 female educational cohorts in Quebec have proportionately more semi-literates *and* more literates than the male cohorts". The observation is also made that in Ontario in contrast to Quebec in this period men were more literate.

ducted themselves in the classroom, and what roles women and men were to play in the developing school systems were questions much pondered by the architects of public schooling in Quebec.

In this context, not only was the growing presence of women teachers noted, but its causes and consequences were studied. School inspectors and educational administrators remarked that the rapid multiplication of schools in the 1860s and 1870s, the ratepayers' opposition to high educational costs, and the school commissioners' policy of hiring the least expensive teachers ensured the dominance and eventual monopoly of teaching by women. Understanding the connection between the influx of women into teaching and the money-saving policies of local school commissioners, school promoters realized that as long as custom and prescription dictated a lower pay scale for women and a qualitatively higher one for men, the flow of women could not be stemmed. They lamented the marginalisation of male teachers, yet too few were prepared (or even able) to change that situation by equalizing the salaries of men and women.[20]

If the low price at which women teachers sold their services led to the virtual elimination of the schoolmaster, the popular practice among the agricultural and working classes of removing boys from school at a younger age than girls also favoured the proportional increase of women in teaching. Girls were allowed to remain in school longer, inspectors noted, because parents and employers placed a higher value on the work of young men. Sons were expected to set books aside and to help with the labour intensive work of farming and lumbering. Girls presumably could spend many of their days in school and still help with the household chores in the late afternoons and evenings. One school inspector contrasted the practice of withdrawing sons from school to the encouragement given by parents to their daughters as follows: "Nothing", he wrote, "is neglected as far as the girls are concerned; they are even sent to the superior schools...."[21]

While our second concern, then was to explore this very early development of predominantly female teaching forces in eastern Ontario and in Quebec, the third goal evolved from the decision to use the manuscript census as a source. Scrutinized for the years 1851 to 1881 for Ontario, and 1861 to 1881 for Quebec, the manuscript census permitted us to examine such variables as the ethnicity of Canadian female and male teachers, as well as their ages, household and marital status over time. We wanted to know how these variables affected the evolution of the sexual division of labour in the schools.[22]

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[20] One need only skim the reports of the school inspectors to see how keenly interested they were in the feminine take over of schooling. It is especially worth noting the following in QUEBEC (PROVINCE), *Report of the Minister of Public Instruction* (1871), p. 34; (1872), pp. 51-52; (1873), pp. 54-55.

[21] Remarks made by Inspector Maurault and recorded in CANADA (PROVINCE), *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Lower Canada* (1861), p. 188.

[22] The 1851 manuscript census was not used for the Quebec case study because many county boundaries were changed in the 1850s. Montmagny, one of the counties in which we were interested, did not exist in 1851.

Before examining these problems it is important to recognize that statistical information on Ontario and Quebec before the middle of the nineteenth century is minimal. The result is that we are left somewhat in the dark about divisions of labour in teaching prior to the full-scale emergence of state-supported school systems, a situation which makes it easy to blur the origins of the phenomenon we are studying. It would be of considerable interest to know more about male/female ratios in the traditional, "non-public" schools that existed before the development of a sexual division of labour in state supported schools. Of equal interest is the extent of formalization that was to be found in the common and parish schools of mid-century. Were the high proportions of women teachers in Quebec or the counties of eastern Ontario related to longer school years and larger schools, as suggested in American studies, or were the causes more likely to be found in a tradition of women in teaching and the particular exigencies of regional economies, as school inspectors of the time seemed to believe?

Certainly, in central Canada, as in other parts of North America, state involvement in schooling altered the character of the schools. But, although this involvement began early in the nineteenth century in both Ontario and Quebec, government financial assistance to schools was minimal until the 1840s and it is unclear how effective or uniform early attempts at government intervention in the conduct of schools may have been. Ontario studies have suggested, in fact, that even in the 1840s and 1850s government controls were slow to take hold.[23] And, if in Ontario a tax-supported system of public, primary schools had by 1871 largely replaced the voluntaristic and predominantly domestic schooling which had prevailed earlier, in Quebec the move from private and locally oriented education to genuinely state-controlled schools seems to have proceeded more slowly.[24] In both provinces there was considerable resistance to government interference in education.

In Quebec the resistance produced a wave of rural school burnings and riots at mid-century.[25] In eastern Ontario the protest was less violent but not necessarily less pervasive. Take, for example, the county of Prescott where women teachers early became a majority. Stretched along the Ottawa River and settled by British immigrants who at mid-century were being joined by migrants from Quebec, Prescott was far removed both physically and psychologically from the centre of Ontario's educational power in Toronto. The length of the school year in Prescott seems to have been average for Ontario, wavering between 9 months and 8 days and 9

[23] See R. D. GIDNEY and D. A. LAWR, "The Development of an Administrative System for the Public Schools: The First Stage, 1841-50", in *Egerton Ryerson and His Times*, eds.: Neil MCDONALD and Alf CHAITON (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), especially pp. 178-79.

[24] Louis-Philippe AUDET, *Histoire de l'enseignement au Québec* (Montréal: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971).

[25] For instance school inspector J.-N.-A. Archambault reported to the superintendent that parishes in his district were teaming with "firebrands" hostile to educational legislation. See CANADA (PROVINCE), *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Lower Canada* (1853), p. 72. A similar report was submitted by Inspector Maurault for the county of Yamaska. Ibid., p. 113.

months and 29 days in the early 1850s. A long school year preventing men from combining teaching with farming cannot therefore be the explanation for the feminization of teaching in Prescott. Nor did the other counties where 45 percent or more of the teachers in any given year were women deviate greatly from the Ontario average in the length of their school years. Their significant common characteristic seems simply to have been distance from the metropolis, rather than any high level of formalization in the conduct or organization of their schools.[26]

It is more fruitful to look for common features uniting these counties of eastern Ontario with rural Quebec. Immediately apparent is the fact that in both regions there was considerable rural poverty. If farm families were having to leave many parts of Quebec at mid-century, settlers were just beginning to come into many parts of eastern Ontario. Surplus cash to pay school taxes and hence to supplement provincial funds to remunerate teachers was not readily available. Eastern Ontario school superintendents reported that the bush was just being cleared, that both people and schools were widely scattered, and finally that trustees were simply "unwilling" to pay salaries sufficient to attract a "better class" of teachers into the schools. In 1855, the problems of poverty and lack of interest were outlined with particular clarity in the report on the Prescott township of Alfred.

> All the teachers in the township are young girls under eighteen years of age, as none other would teach for the salaries that the trustees are able to pay them, on account of the difficulty of collecting, or rather the disinclination of paying, local rates.[27]

The disinclination was clearly shared by the rioting farmers and school burners of Quebec.

In 1850, a teacher from Russell County analysed the problems of poverty and poor salaries in the Canadas in an irate letter to Ontario's Chief Superintendent of Schools. No wonder there were riots in Lower Canada, James Breakenridge complained. The government grants to teachers were paltry and local trustees endured endless trouble to procure them, including journeys of up to sixty miles. Far from assisting local teachers to do better, the new "School Machinery", it would appear from Breakenridge's account, was little more than an irritant in poor and thinly settled regions.[28]

Evidence that poverty was at the root of such troubles and the cause in many cases of hiring women school teachers is to be found in Education Department statistics on school building materials. The relative prosperity of some Ontario counties was made manifest in these statistics by the high proportions of schools that were of frame construction or were built of brick or stone. With the single exception of Lennox, the eastern counties showing high proportions of female teachers in the early 1850s indicated

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[26] Annual reports of the Department of Public Instruction for Upper Canada in the 1850s.

[27] Ibid., for the years 1851 (p. 69), 1852 and 1856 (p. 216).

[28] Public Archives of Ontario, Education Records, RG 2 C-6-C, James W. Breakenridge to Egerton Ryerson, 23 May 1850.

their poverty by reporting higher than average proportions of log school houses, compared to the province as a whole.[29]

If poverty was the major characteristic shared by many eastern Ontario counties and parts of the province of Quebec, another was the presence of the "resource frontier". As John Abbott and Charles Gaffield have argued for turn-of-the-century Algoma and mid-nineteenth century Prescott County, respectively, resource frontier economies differed from older and more agricultural rural economies in their attitudes to and support for schooling.[30] In places like Prescott, Russell or Stormont and in many Quebec counties, especially in the northeast, lumbering was an important industry attracting large numbers of young men into the bush during the winter season, when in other places they might have been available to teach. Thus it seems male unavailability was, at least in part, responsible for female predominance in teaching in these regions.

What we are proposing essentially is a third and possibly a fourth model of the sexual division of labour in teaching. To the early urban pattern, in which women teachers quickly filled the lower ranks of expanding city school systems, and the later rural pattern, where high proportions of women teachers were related to gradually increasing formalization and the repetition of urban patterns on a smaller scale in rural towns and villages, we would add an early rural model, characteristic of troubled agricultural regions and the resource frontier, to explain the sexual division of labour in teaching. In this model, poverty, and the presence of industries such as lumbering calling young men into the bush rather than the school, combined to produce a majority of women teachers almost from the beginning of the introduction of public schooling. Our fourth model is suggested by the special characteristics of Quebec. We would argue that a factor which affected the early sexual division of labour in teaching in French Canada, and may also have had an impact elsewhere, was the presence of an important tradition of women in teaching *prior* to the emergence of government supported schooling. This tradition dates back to the involvement of nuns in education since the founding of New France; it may also have been related to the sexual division of labour in the rural household economies, as described by nineteenth-century school inspectors. The rapid growth of women's teaching religious orders in the second half of the nineteenth century merely strengthened the female presence in education.[31]

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[29] Annual reports of the Department of Public Instruction for Upper Canada in the 1850s.

[30] John Roblin ABBOTT, "Educational Policy Formation and Implementation on the Ontario Primary Resource Frontier: The Case of the District of Algoma, 1903-1922" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983); Charles M. GAFFIELD, "Cultural Challenge in Eastern Ontario: Land, Family and Education in the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1978).

[31] For a discussion of the expansion of the Congregation of Notre-Dame during the second half of the nineteenth century and its work in education during this period see Marta DANYLEWYCZ, "Taking the Veil in Montreal, 1840-1920: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood", (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1981).

II

In Ontario, the counties of Northumberland, Ontario and Oxford, Dundas and Essex, and Prescott and Grey were chosen for intensive study using the manuscript census.[32] The growing proportion of female teachers[33] recorded in the census for the seven counties follows the basic pattern for Ontario, but at a slower pace (Graph 1). From the Department of Public Instruction annual reports, we see in 1851 a higher proportion of women teachers for the province as a whole (25.2 percent) and for rural Ontario (21.8 percent) compared to the average for the seven counties of 16.1 percent derived from the manuscript census. But this is to be expected given the apparent underenumeration of female teachers in the early census reports, a phenomenon probably resulting from the fact that the 1851 and 1861 censuses were taken in the wintertime, a season during which fewer women taught.[34] In 1861, the Ontario rural average indicated by the Department of Public Instruction annual reports was still generally higher than the seven counties' average derived from the manuscript census, but the two averages were much closer to each other. If we examine the counties individually, the education records for 1861 also reveal the diversity of the seven counties, with Prescott reporting, as it had several times in the 1850s, a majority of female teachers; Dundas, Northumberland and Essex repeating the pattern of the early 1850s of between 25 and 49.9 percent women; while Oxford and Ontario actually dropped to join Grey County with fewer than 25 percent of all teachers female (Map 1).

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[32] Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), Statistics Canada, RG 31, Census Records, 1851-1881 (microfilms). For exact references to the microfilms of the censuses that have been used, see Thomas H. HILLMAN, *Catalogue of Census Returns on Microfilm/ Catalogue de recensements sur microfilm, 1666-1881* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, Federal Archives Division, 1981). We chose these counties because they represented different stages and types of settlement during the period under study. Oxford, Ontario, and Northumberland were relatively prosperous and densely inhabited by the 1850s; all three were fairly close to the metropolitan centre of Toronto, and considerable portions of Ontario and Northumberland, at least, had been settled by people of European descent quite early in the history of the province. Dundas and Essex, too, had welcomed white migrants relatively early and were thus "old" counties, but both were more remote from Ontario's cultural capital, appear to have been less densely settled and, relatively speaking, were probably less prosperous by the 1850s than Oxford, Ontario and Northumberland. Finally, Grey and Prescott were new counties and rather poor. Grey, especially, was a very young county at mid-century. Age-sex ratios derived from the aggregate census for 1851 for Grey indicate a population biased towards males as well as towards youth.

[33] For the purposes of the Ontario study, a number of teacher categories listed in the manuscript census returns, such as "governess", "music teacher" and "professor" were eliminated. Those counted as school teachers were the individuals listed as "teacher", "common school teacher", "school teacher" "school mistress" and "school master". This was because we wished to focus on teachers in the "public" (in the sense of "non-domestic") schools and also to eliminate colleges from the study.

[34] When census statistics were compared to the numbers collected by departments of education for the years 1851 and 1861, we discovered the numbers did not match, with female teachers tending to be more prominent in the latter than the former. We suspect that this was not only because the census failed to reflect the widespread sexual division of labour that occurred in rural schools where men taught in the winter and women in the summer, but also that census enumerators were more likely to take note of male than female employment.

What does the manuscript census reveal about teachers in the seven counties considered as a group? Certainly one of the most significant revelations is the important difference between male and female teachers, between 1851 and 1881, in terms of age (Table 2). While in every decade there were some adolescent males teaching in the seven counties, they were never more than 12 percent of all male teachers and, in the first three census years studied, fewer than 10 percent of the male teachers were under 20 years of age. Most schoolmasters were between 20 and 29, especially in 1871 and 1881, but male teachers who were 30 and over were also an important category.

Table 2. — Ages of Common School Teachers, Seven Ontario Counties, 1851-1881

Census	*Age group*	*Female Teachers*		*Male Teachers*	
		No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
1851	19 & under	5	11.9	10	4.6
	20-24	17	40.5	50	23.1
	25-29	11	26.2	47	21.8
	30 & over	9	21.4	109	50.5
	Total	42	100.0	216	100.0
1861	19 & under	34	27.6	33	7.7
	20-24	49	39.8	119	27.7
	25-29	13	10.6	101	23.5
	30 & over	27	22.0	177	41.2
	Total	123	100.0	430	100.0
1871	19 & under	74	24.3	28	7.5
	20-24	144	47.4	107	28.6
	25-29	39	12.8	77	20.6
	30 & over	47	15.5	162	43.3
	Total	304	100.0	374	100.0
1881	19 & under	116	25.1	70	12.0
	20-24	204	44.2	201	34.4
	25-29	78	16.9	102	17.5
	30 & over	64	13.9	211	36.1
	Total	462	100.0	584	100.0

Source: PAC, RG 31, Census Records 1851-1881 (microfilm): Dundas, Essex, Grey, Northumberland, Ontario, Oxford, and Prescott Counties.

Note: The table does not include teachers whose age is not given.

Women, in contrast, were young. Indeed, 52.4 percent of the women were under 25 years of age in 1851, compared to only 27.7 percent of the men. Although male teachers in the under 25 age group increased to 35.4 percent in the following decade, the women in this group had by then jumped to 67.4 percent of all women teachers. The percentages for women under 25 stabilized at approximately 70 during the next two census years; but by 1881, although their numbers and proportion had increased, men under 25 were still only 46.4 percent of all male teachers. The shift, then,

for both men and women teaching in the seven counties was towards greater youth. But in all census decades the women were on the average much younger than the men.

This seems an important contrast, given the greater equality between nineteenth-century female and male rural teachers, in terms of numbers, conditions of employment and wages, that has been emphasized in existing studies. If the four decades are averaged, over half of all male teachers were 25 and older between 1851 and 1881, whereas only about 37 percent of the women were in this older group. Still, the very presence of older women in teaching is important. Although both their numbers and relative proportions in the seven counties were much smaller than those for men, there clearly were some "career" teachers among the rural women in the four census decades. At least a few of the women teachers in the 25 and older category had avoided the typical pattern of only three or four years of school teaching followed by marriage and withdrawal from the public labour force. Such women occasionally surface in literary records as well. Catherine Carter, née Plantz, of Dundas County, taught from the age of 14 or 15 to the age of 35 before she withdrew from teaching in 1872 to marry.[35]

If female teachers tended to be younger than male teachers in the seven counties, they also tended to be more often Ontario-born than their male counterparts (Table 3). It is true that this was largely a reflection of their age. The younger the teacher of either sex in Ontario, during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the more likely she or he was to have been born in the province. Or, to put it another way, the tendency of male teachers to be non-Ontario born was related to their greater average age. Yet a glance at the proportions of Ontario and non-Ontario born among male and female teachers in 1881 suggests that the situation gradually shifted. Whereas in previous census decades the proportions of Ontario-born women teachers approximated their proportions in the general seven counties' population, in 1881 fully 86.1 percent of schoolmistresses had been born in Ontario, compared to only 75.8 percent of the population at large.[36] By this time male teachers, who although they were slightly younger than in previous census decades were still clearly a good deal older on the average than the women, were now very close, as far as birth place was concerned, to the seven counties' average. It may thus be that the age structure of the men teachers was now more typical of the general population.

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[35] John Graham HARKNESS, *Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry: A History, 1784-1945* (Oshawa, Ontario, 1946); Smyth CARTER, *The Story of Dundas* (Iroquois, Ontario: St. Lawrence News Publishing House, 1905), p. 128; Manuscript Census for Dundas County, 1871 (PAC reels C-10005 to C-10007). The fact that Catharine Carter was not listed in either 1851 or 1861 confirms our belief that female teachers were underenumerated in those census years, since both of the other sources indicate a teaching career spanning the years between 1851 and 1872. Since she appears on the 1871 census return as Plantz, her marriage must have taken place in 1872 or later, and therefore does appear to have ended her teaching career.

[36] Information on place of birth for the population at large was found in the *Census of Canada, 1881.*

Table 3. — Place of Birth of Common School Teachers, Seven Ontario Counties, 1851-1881

Census	*Birthplace*	*Female Teachers*		*Male Teachers*		*Total County Population*	
		No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
1851	Ontario	25	59.5	59	26.9	80,995	54.4
	Quebec	1	2.4	4	1.8	10,261	6.9
	England	2	4.8	43	19.6	13,890	9.4
	Scotland	1	2.4	31	14.2	13,718	9.2
	Ireland	6	14.3	58	26.5	19,387	13.0
	Other	7	16.7	24	11.0	10,524	7.1
	Total	42	100.0	219	100.0	148,775	100.0
1861	Ontario	78	62.9	168	38.7	139,261	61.7
	Quebec	2	1.6	8	1.8	11,119	4.9
	England	9	7.3	51	11.8	19,362	8.6
	Scotland	7	5.6	89	20.5	17,860	7.9
	Ireland	17	13.7	91	21.0	23,016	10.2
	Other	11	8.9	27	6.2	15,041	6.7
	Total	124	100.0	434	100.0	225,659	100.0
1871	Ontario	221	72.5	178	47.9	185,250	70.8
	Quebec	10	3.3	9	2.4	8,806	3.4
	England	19	6.2	41	11.0	18,968	7.2
	Scotland	18	5.9	57	15.3	16,264	6.2
	Ireland	20	6.5	60	16.1	19,184	7.3
	Other	17	5.6	27	7.3	13,257	5.1
	Total	305	100.0	372	100.0	261,729	100.0
1881	Ontario	398	86.1	419	71.7	229,451	75.8
	Quebec	17	3.7	19	3.3	11,251	3.7
	England	10	2.2	47	8.0	19,420	6.4
	Scotland	14	3.0	41	7.0	13,574	4.5
	Ireland	10	2.2	39	6.7	16,045	5.3
	Other	13	2.8	19	3.3	12,991	4.3
	Total	462	100.0	584	100.0	302,732	100.0

Source: See Table 2.

Note: The table does not include teachers whose birthplace is not given.

Whatever the relationship between age and place of birth, the over-representation of the non-Ontario born among male teachers is suggestive. It seems entirely possible that the existence of a pool of older, immigrant men, who were willing and able to teach, may well have played an important role in rural Ontario's resistance to the trend towards predominantly female teaching forces. Perhaps because, as immigrants, they had special needs for cash to subsidize the purchase of farms or to supplement farm incomes, and/or fewer opportunities or skills for employment in other fields, immigrant men may have been available for teaching when their Ontario-born counterparts were not.

Statistics on the marital status of teachers support the picture we have already drawn of a rural teaching force in which women tended to be younger than men. Women teachers in the seven counties, predominantly single in 1851 (78 percent), were overwhelmingly so by 1881 (95 percent). The percentages for male teachers show a slight movement away from the married state, especially between 1871 and 1881 (from 46 to 36 percent), when the downward shift in age was also clearly in evidence. But overall, rural schoolmasters tended, far more often than rural schoolmistresses, to be married.

Table 4. — Household Status of Common School Teachers, Seven Ontario Counties, 1851-1881

Census	*Status*	*Female Teachers*		*Male Teachers*	
		No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
1851	Head	5	12.2	92	42.4
	Boarder or Relative	17	41.5	91	41.9
	Child	13	31.7	34	15.7
	Other	6	14.6	0	0.0
	Total	41	100.0	217	100.0
1861	Head	8	6.6	159	36.6
	Boarder or Relative	70	57.8	191	44.0
	Child	33	27.3	74	17.1
	Other	10	8.3	10	2.3
	Total	121	100.0	434	100.0
1871	Head	13	4.3	164	44.3
	Boarder or Relative	79	25.8	81	21.9
	Child	207	67.6	124	33.5
	Other	7	2.3	1	0.3
	Total	306	100.0	370	100.0
1881	Head	15	3.2	216	37.1
	Boarder or Relative	118	25.5	121	20.8
	Child	325	70.2	245	42.1
	Other	5	1.1	0	0.0
	Total	465	100.0	582	100.0

Source: see Table 2.
Note: The table does not include teachers whose household status is not given.

Naturally enough, the household status of the teachers in the seven counties reflected these facts (Table 4). Not all married male teachers were heads of households,[37] but most were, the proportions fluctuating be-

[37] The designation "head of household" does not appear on the census returns, and the instructions to the enumerators refer only to "heads of families occupying lands, whether male or female" under the heading "Agricultural Census" in 1861. The designation is a historical convention which presumably corresponds to nineteenth-century views on the nature of

tween 36 and 44 percent of all male teachers over the period. Female household heads corresponded fairly closely to the number of widows in each census decade, although the correspondence is not exact, suggesting that a few single women teachers were also heads of their own households in these rural counties during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Even more interesting than the findings on heads of households is the fact that the number of teachers identifiable as boarders, relatives, or children was far from stable, proportional to all teachers, in the period between 1851 and 1881. For both sexes, the boarder/relative category[38] was reduced by almost one half; a corresponding increase took place in the proportion of teachers who were children living in their parents' households. This shift was especially pronounced among women teachers because so many of them were young. By 1881, over 70 percent of all female teachers in the seven counties were daughters living at home with their parents.

This trend may have reflected a shift away from boarding among young people generally. Certainly such a change has been noted for Hamilton, Ontario during the same census decades.[39] But it is also true that a vigorous campaign was conducted by mid-nineteenth century education authorities against teachers boarding out in the homes of others. Anxious to promote an image of teachers as stable and settled members of their communities, Department of Public Instruction officials and professionally oriented teachers heaped scorn on the boarding teacher who moved "from house to house like a begger".[40] What they put forward as the ideal, however, were mature schoolmasters with households of their own, not the youthful daughters, or even the sons, of local farmers.[41]

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the family and household. The head is taken to be the first person listed in each household group on the census returns. The person listed first is invariably the husband in the case of a married couple, or the oldest husband in the case of two married couples. Widows and widowers are listed first, and thus as heads, in households with no married children, but when living with married children, are usually found as relatives. In the Ontario census, young teachers were rarely found living in non-family situations.

[38] Because of the difficulty of distinguishing between boarders, relatives (those who were not children of the head of household) and visitors on the manuscript census, we decided to incorporate these categories into a single group in the Ontario research, labelled "boarder/relative", for the sake of simplicity and also because visitors would likely have been a very small group in any case. For the present analysis, the main distinction to be made was between children of household heads and persons whose relationships to household heads were more distant.

[39] Michael KATZ, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 276 and 280, noted an increase in the length of time young men and women remained at home with their parents before moving out, either to board, become servants or marry and set up their own households, between 1851 and 1861 in Hamilton. For young men, who could be linked from one census to the next, 41.5% of those 20-24 years of age were boarding in 1851, compared to only 15.6% of this age group in 1861.

[40] Public Archives of Ontario, Education Records, RG 2 C-6-C, "Resolutions of the School Association of the Eastern District", in D.P. Mcdonald to Egerton Ryerson, 9 July 1850. See also "The Superintendent of Schools for the London District on the Working of the School Act of 1846, February 1848" in *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*, ed.: J.G. HODGING (Toronto, 1894-1910), VII, p. 130; Public Archives of Ontario, RG 2 C I, Letterbook C, p. 160, Superintendent, Scott Township, to Ryerson, Education Records, 22 February 1851 and ibid., Ryerson to John Hendry, 7 November 1846.

[41] Until the late 1860s, there was little of the idealization of the female teacher in Ontario that was to be found in many other parts of North America. PRENTICE, "The Femini-

What was happening is revealed even more clearly when household heads, sons, daughters and boarders or relatives are considered as percentages of all teachers. If the proportion of heads of households remained stable as far as male teachers as a group were concerned, male heads declined sharply from 35.7 to 20.6 percent of all teachers by 1881, while sons increased from 13.2 to 23.4 percent. But it was daughters who made the larger leap, from a mere 5 to 31 percent of the total teaching force by the end of our period. Interestingly, the major part of the decline in boarding took place among the men teachers. In sum, women (and to some extent men) living at home with their parents were replacing both male household heads and male boarders among rural Ontario teachers. Looking at age in terms of all teachers is equally revealing. Women were increasing in all categories but the women teachers who were under 30 years of age grew from 12.8 to 38.1 percent of all teachers. At the same time, schoolmasters who were 30 and older declined from almost one half (42.3 percent) to one fifth (20.2 percent) of the teaching force in the seven counties between 1851 and 1881.

If in Ontario important shifts in the age structure, ethnicity and household status of teachers accompanied the change in elementary school teaching from a male to an increasingly female occupation, in Quebec the combined effect of elementary school expansion and preferential hiring, the availability of other work for men, and the greater tendency of boys to leave school at a very early age had already created an essentially female teaching force by the middle of the nineteenth century. The virtual disappearance of the schoolmaster in Quebec, however, proceeded at an uneven pace. In the period studied some regions never had more than one or two male teachers, in others 30 to 40 percent of the teaching force was male, and in still others the numbers of men teachers vacillated between a handful to a significant minority of the educating corps. In order to explore these variations, we selected two rural counties, Montmagny and Terrebonne, for detailed study in the years 1861, 1871 and 1881.[42]

The inspectoral districts in which the counties of Montmagny and Terrebonne were located registered a majority of women teachers in 1853 (Table 1). In fact, the percentages of schoolmistresses in these two districts in 1853 and in the two counties over the three census decades were slightly higher than the provincial average. By 1881, 84 and 99 percent of the teachers in Terrebonne and Montmagny, respectively, were women. Pro-

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zation of Teaching", pp. 7-11, describes changing attitudes to women teachers among education officials in British North America and Canada during the mid-nineteenth century.

[42] Montmagny and Terrebonne were chosen for this study because they represent different types of economies, the former sending men to the Gaspé where they worked in fishing or lumbering and the latter providing work on the homestead. The location of Terrebonne in the Montreal Plain, north of the city, and of Montmagny on the St. Lawrence River, close to Quebec City, also provided interesting points of contrast. It should be noted as well that in the process of coding the following were recorded: music teacher, English teacher, teacher, master, mistress, brother and sister. All religious men and women listed as living in a teaching convent or monastery were included. From the manuscript census it is impossible to tell which of the nuns and brothers were not teaching, but it is unlikely that more than two or three of the entire sample were engaged in work outside the classroom.

Table 5. — TEACHERS BY GENDER AND VOCATIONAL IDENTITY, MONTMAGNY AND TERREBONNE COUNTIES, 1861-1881

Census and County	*A* *Lay Teachers*	*B* *Teaching Brothers*	*C* *Total*	*Male Teachers as a % of All Teachers*	*D* *Lay Teachers*	*E* *Teaching Sisters*	*F* *Total*	*Female Teachers as a % of All Teachers*
				C ÷ (C + F)				*F ÷ (C + F)*
1861:								
Montmagny	3	4	7	14.6	34	7	41	85.4
Terrebonne	10	0	10	13.5	55	9	64	86.5
1871:								
Montmagny	3	5	8	13.6	45	6	51	86.4
Terrebonne	8	0	8	10.5	51	17	68	89.5
1881:								
Montmagny	1	0	1	1.5	55	9	64	98.5
Terrebonne	9	6	15	15.6	64	17	81	84.4

Source: PAC, RG 31, Census Records, 1861-1881 (microfilm): Montmagny and Terrebonne Countries.

vincially, men had a slightly better showing; they were 16.7 percent of the teaching force in the province during that year. Even more striking is the fact that of the few men who were teaching in the two rural counties, a great many were members of religious orders (Table 5). The lack of interest in teaching among laymen in rural Quebec is clearly illustrated by the fact that, as in Ontario, a substantial proportion of the male teachers in our two counties were foreign-born. Of the handful of laymen engaged in teaching in Terrebonne and Montmagny in 1861, 1871 and 1881, nearly one third, or 31 percent, had migrated from either Scotland or Ireland to Quebec, most probably during the great migrations of the 1840s and 1850s.[43]

If Terrebonne and Montmagny had in common few male teachers and a high proportion of foreign born among those men, the differences between these two counties in terms of proportions of male and female teachers suggest the usefulness of examining them more closely. What factors could account for the more rapid feminization of Montmagny, compared to Terrebonne, and by 1881, the virtual absence of male teachers in the former?

Enclosed by the St. Lawrence River on one side and the state of Maine on the other, Montmagny borders L'Islet County which leads to the Gaspé peninsula. To the east, the county of Bellechasse stands between Montmagny and Quebec City. Although the land in Montmagny is exceptionally fertile and was plentiful in the period studied, farming was not necessarily the major and only occupation of its male inhabitants. Large numbers of men travelled annually to the Gaspé or across the river to the Saguenay and Lac St. Jean where the likelihood of finding adventure and making money was much greater than in the sedentary and low-paying occupation of teaching.[44] Terrebonne, on the other hand, is in the Plain of Montreal north of the city. But unlike most of the counties surrounding the city of Montreal, it did not suffer economic stagnation and population loss during the second half of the nineteenth century. With the extension of the railway, Terrebonne became a way station for pioneering men and women hoping to establish themselves in the uncolonised land of the Laurentians. At the same time, the prospering saw and grist mills in several of the county's villages attracted new settlers and further development. Most important was St. Jerome. In the late 1870s developers and entrepreneurs enticed by the promise of government subsidies and tax cuts flocked to this village and transformed it into a booming industrial town.[45]

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[43] The 31 percent represents the average for the three census years. Because the number of male lay teachers was so small, providing a table on the place of origin of male teachers did not seem useful.

[44] The census taker in 1861 for one of the villages in Montmagny provided detail about the work of fishermen in the county. For his description see Manuscript Census of Canada, Montmagny County, St. Thomas, 1861 (PAC reel C-1299). For a study of Montmagny and the counties surrounding it see Raoul BLANCHARD, *L'Est du Canada français* (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1935).

[45] Raoul BLANCHARD, *Le Centre du Canada français. Montréal et sa région* (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1953), is a good general introduction to the economic history of the Plain of Montreal. An account of industrialization in St. Jerome can be found in Élie J. AUCLAIR, *Saint-Jérôme de Terrebonne* (St-Jérôme: Imprimerie-photogravure Labelle, 1934).

In Montmagny, it must have been the presence of the resource frontier which helped to deflect men from school teaching and to reinforce the tradition of female involvement in popular education. Men in Terrebonne, on the other hand, were less prone to leave the farm and spend long periods in the bush or at sea fishing and for that reason were more likely than in Montmagny to be engaged in teaching.[46]

Of equal interest are the differences between the two counties in terms of religious and lay teachers, in the context of the growing numbers of religious engaged in teaching in the province as a whole during the second half of the nineteenth century. Provincially the proportion of teaching brothers and sisters grew from 11 percent of the entire teaching force in 1853 to 22 percent in 1874[47]; and in Terrebonne, the percentage of religious teachers grew from 12 to 24 percent between 1861 and 1881. In Montmagny, however, the exact opposite occurred. Religious men and women declined in strength in the twenty-year period from 23 to 14 percent, a shift indicating that lay women were solely responsible for the rise in the number of teachers in the county (Table 5).

The decreasing importance of the religious teacher in Montmagny is significant and suggestive. It makes clear yet another peculiarity in the evolution of the teaching force in late nineteenth-century Quebec. While the number of religious teachers increased with each decade, the presence of teaching brothers and sisters was not equally felt in the province. As the figures in the aggregate census and the histories of the Catholic Church show, the most rapid expansion in religiously-run schools and the most impressive rise in the number of religious teachers took place in the Montreal region during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.[48] At that time counties outside the Montreal Plain and especially those further in the hinterland remained almost immune to the expansion of religiously-administered schooling.

In addition to representing the varying degrees of religious involvement in education, the differences between Terrebonne and Montmagny bring to light an important variation in the evolution of occupational hierarchies during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. If in many places in North America the proportion of women teachers tended to be higher where the teaching force was hierarchically structured, in Quebec the number of women was the greatest in the areas *least* likely to have taken on the appearance of a bureaucratized and industrialized society.

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[46] One school inspector put it quite succinctly: "Men prefer engaging as servants, or following some other vocation to that of teaching". CANADA (PROVINCE), *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Lower Canada* (1853), pp. 93-94.

[47] These percentages are taken from LABARRÈRE-PAULÉ, *Les instituteurs laïques*, pp. 179, 300.

[48] Bernard DENAULT has mapped the location of women's and men's religious communities during the latter half of the nineteenth century. "Sociographie générale des communautés religieuses au Québec (1837-1970)," in Bernard DENAULT et Benoît LÉVESQUE, *Éléments pour une sociologie des communautés religieuses au Québec* (Sherbrooke: Université de Sherbrooke, and Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1975), pp. 77-78.

Furthermore, the category that grew most vigorously in strength and size in the centres where urban-type hierarchies were taking form was the religious teacher.

The clustering of religious men and women in the most advanced and centrally located regions of the province shows up clearly in the location and structure of educational institutions in Montmagny and Terrebonne. Brothers and sisters taught only in villages that were easily accessible by train or ferry and showed promise of economic prosperity. In function and structure their schools were the harbingers of modern educational institutions: two to three storeys high, built of brick, graded and serving a student body of about two hundred. Teaching in the one-room schools that were scattered throughout Terrebonne and Montmagny was not the fate of nuns, but of lay schoolmistresses.[49] They were the missionaries of public schooling to the rural hinterland and, like most missionaries, were subjected to harsh and often unbearable conditions of work. The lowest paid category of the teaching force, rural schoolmistresses (for whom the school often doubled as a home) found little material or psychological compensation for the work they performed. Yet their numbers continued to grow and, ironically enough, the more of them there were, the less able they seemed to better their conditions of work.[50]

The rise of the one-room school and the increasing tendency of teachers to reside in their place of work are reflected in the changing household status of women teachers. As in the seven Ontario counties, the number of teachers who boarded with strangers or relatives outside the nuclear family dropped between 1861 and 1881 from 29 to 13 percent in Montmagny and from 27 to 11 percent in Terrebonne. But in contrast to Ontario where with the passing of each decade increasing numbers of men and women teachers remained with their parents while working, the gradual disappearance of the boarding teacher went hand in hand with an impressive rise in the percentage of teaching women living alone as heads of households in schoolhouses. Indeed, by 1881 in Terrebonne and Montmagny 44 and 33 percent of the women teachers, respectively, belonged to this category (Table 6).

It may be that the persistence of the linear mode of land settlement, a pattern dating from the earliest days of colonisation, played an important role in the proliferation of one-room schools.[51] Contrary to the hopes of school inspectors and other high ranking educational officials, who called for

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[49] The location of the schools and the names of the teachers who inhabited them can be traced through the manuscript census.

[50] A study of the conditions under which rural teachers in late nineteenth century Quebec worked is yet to be done. Firsthand accounts, however, create the impression that life indeed was difficult for the country schoolmistress. Among these descriptions are the memoir of Vénérande DOUVILLE-VEILLET, *Souvenirs d'une institutrice de petite école de rang* (Trois-Rivières: Imprimerie du Bien Public, 1973) and the oral interviews with teachers reprinted in Jacques DORION, *Les écoles de rang au Québec* (Montréal: Les Éditions de l'Homme, 1979), pp. 229-70.

[51] Pierre DEFFONTAINES, "The Rang: Pattern of Rural Settlement in French Canada", in *French Canadian Society*, eds.: Marcel RIOUX and Yves MARTIN (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1964), pp. 3-19.

Table 6 — Household Status of Lay Teachers, Montmagny and Terrebonne Counties, 1861-1881

Census and Status	Montmagny				Terrebonne			
	Female Teachers		Male Teachers		Female Teachers		Male Teachers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1861:								
Head[1]	2	5.9	1	33.3	0	0.0	2	20.0
Schoolhouse occupant[2]	3	8.8	1	33.3	14	25.5	5	50.0
Spouse	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.6	0	0.0
Child	12	35.3	0	0.0	19	34.5	2	20.0
Relative[3]	7	20.6	0	0.0	5	9.1	1	10.0
Boarder	10	29.4	1	33.3	15	27.3	0	0.0
	34	100.0	3	100.0	55	100.0	10	100.0
1871:								
Head	1	2.2	1	33.3	2	3.9	0	0.0
Schoolhouse occupant	20	44.4	1	33.3	27	52.9	5	62.5
Spouse	2	4.4	0	0.0	1	2.0	0	0.0
Child	16	35.6	0	0.0	11	21.6	1	12.5
Relative	3	6.7	1	33.3	3	5.9	0	0.0
Boarder	3	6.7	0	0.0	7	13.7	2	25.5
	45	100.0	3	100.0	51	100.0	8	100.0
1881:								
Head	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Schoolhouse occupant	18	32.7	0	0.0	28	43.8	5	55.6
Spouse	3	5.5	0	0.0	3	4.7	0	0.0
Child	14	25.5	0	0.0	24	37.5	1	11.1
Relative	13	23.6	0	0.0	2	3.1	0	0.0
Boarder	7	12.7	0	0.0	7	10.9	3	33.3
	55	100.0	1	100.0	64	100.0	9	100.0

Source: See Table 5.

[1] Head designates head of household and family.

[2] Schoolhouse dweller includes teachers living in the school and residing alone or with a dependent (younger sibling, or assistant teaching). In most cases, however, the teacher was listed in the census as the only resident.

[3] Relative indicates sibling or grandchild.

greater centralization, the French Canadian pattern of rural settlement dictated that the one-room school would be an enduring feature of the rural educational landscape. And an enduring feature of this school was that it was not only taught in but often inhabited by its schoolmistress.

The shift from the teacher as boarder to the teacher as dweller of a schoolhouse took place at the same time as the running of schools became more the work of the "professional" teacher and less a family enterprise. In 1861 in Montmagny and Terrebonne 27 percent of the teachers worked in pairs with a brother or sister. Twenty years later only 14 percent taught with one of their siblings.[52] The formalization of teaching, the "intervention" of boards of examiners and normal schools in the process of educating educators, raised the standards in the profession and the schools. By the same token, this process lowered the level of family input in the preparation of teachers. No doubt the family unit still played an important role in influencing the career choices of its members. Its involvement, however, was no longer as direct, as it might have been earlier, in the passing along of classroom management skills.[53]

Table 7. — AGES OF LAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, TERREBONNE AND MONTMAGNY COUNTIES COMBINED, 1861-1881

Census	*Age group*	*Female Teachers*		*Male Teachers*	
		No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
1861	19 & under	47	52.8	1	7.7
	20-24	25	28.1	3	23.1
	25-29	10	11.2	2	15.4
	30 & over	7	7.9	7	53.8
	Totals	89	100.0	13	100.0
1871	19 & under	20	20.8	2	18.2
	20-24	45	46.9	1	9.1
	25-29	19	19.8	3	27.3
	30 & over	12	12.5	5	45.4
	Totals	96	100.0	11	100.0
1881	19 & under	31	26.1	0	0.0
	20-24	40	33.6	3	30.0
	25-29	22	18.5	2	20.0
	30 & over	26	21.8	5	50.0
	Totals	119	100.0	10	100.0

Source: see Table 5.

[52] The tendency of family members to work together in teaching was not as pronounced in Ontario as in Quebec.

[53] The changing role of the family at the time of developing school systems in Canada is discussed in Michael KATZ, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment", *History of Education Quarterly*, 16 (Winter 1976): 381-405.

If indeed the formalization of teacher training was responsible for the lower rate of members of the same family pursuing the same trade, this might also help to explain the evident aging of the teaching force in Terrebonne and Montmagny. Instead of getting slightly younger, schoolmistresses in these two counties were actually older by the end of the third quarter of the century,[54] resembling by 1881 the average age of female teachers in the seven counties of Ontario (Tables 2 and 7).

III

The changes we have noted in the gender, age, ethnicity, household status, and lay or religious identity of Ontario and Quebec teachers make clear the inadequacy of existing models of the sexual division of labour in nineteenth century teaching. Not only must these models be refined and nuanced in order to explain the manifold short-term and regional variations lying beneath the surface or even on the periphery of long-term trends; but it is also necessary to develop alternate ones, appropriate to the peculiar evolution of the teaching force in Quebec and parts of Ontario.

In most regions of central Canada, urban hierarchies among teachers and many other aspects of formalization were hardly to be found in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Instead, in some of these regions, factors such as poverty, the presence of a resource frontier, the traditional roles of women in the family and the legacy of nuns in teaching, appear to have encouraged a remarkably early sexual division of labour in rural schools.

In some regions of the two provinces, moreover, the sexual division of labour in rural teaching occurred side by side with other developments which must have had a profound effect on this transformation. In Ontario, rural teachers were slightly younger as the decades wore on and tended increasingly to be single women. Teachers who were boarders tended to be replaced during the third quarter of the nineteenth century by the daughters of local farmers who lived at home with their parents. In both provinces, a disproportionate number of male rural teachers were foreign-born, suggesting that, to the extent that school authorities found men who were willing to teach, they were able to do so only because of a pool of potential candidates among immigrants. In Quebec, the increasing feminization of an already predominantly female rural teaching force was accompanied by the gradual clericalization of that teaching force. Religious teachers favoured the wealthier, more densely settled regions of the province, leaving the one-room schoolhouses in the poorer and more remote parishes to lay teachers. More and more often, in fact, the lay women teachers of the counties of Terrebonne and Montmagny were not only teaching in but living in the school houses of their villages. If fewer siblings were to be found teaching

[54] Legislation implemented in the 1850s demanding of prospective teachers a diploma from a normal school or the successful completion of a qualifying exam in the presence of a board of examiners or the school inspector may have had the effect of discouraging the very young from assuming the responsibilities of tending school.

in 1881 than was the case in 1861 when several female teachers to a family was not uncommon, it is also true that the average age of women teachers in Montmagny and Terrebonne was increasing.

It is difficult to generalize about what this may have meant to the women who became rural school teachers. For many, teaching may have provided an opportunity for relative independence and self-development. Certainly those teachers whose careers spanned a decade or more, and the average ages of women teachers and biographical data suggest that these women were far from rare, must have become figures of some authority in their local communities. For the Leila Middletons who married after several years in the school room, teaching evidently provided useful experience in child management, as well as a period of relative autonomy between their own schooling and the beginning of married life.

But rural teaching also had its dark side. Many young women who taught school for a few years were making vital contributions to the support of their families and controlled little or nothing of their meagre wages. From Quebec sources documenting the lives of individuals who both taught and lived in remote and isolated school houses, we learn that teaching could mean not only an impoverished existence, but a lonely and even frightening one.[55] For such women, the burden of their position may well have outweighed the potential for growth described above. Poor pay was clearly common to all rural women teachers. Low status, dependency and isolation were also the lot of many of those who presided over rural school rooms during the period when country teaching was becoming "women's work".

[55] See footnote 50 for sources on school teachers' experiences in some rural regions of Quebec.