

“Whate’er the duty of the hour demands”:  
The Work of Middle-Class Women  
in Halifax, 1840–1880

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*In mid-nineteenth-century Halifax middle-class women performed a variety of work, both inside and outside their homes, and made important contributions to their household economies. Women’s economic contribution has been obscured by the prevailing gender ideology of separate spheres and a legal code which both limited their economic activities and made them nearly invisible to historians. An examination of women’s work and its relationship to gender and class ideology is essential, however, if we are to understand the ways in which women and men collaborated in the formation of the middle class.*

*Dans le Halifax du milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, les femmes de la classe moyenne effectuaient toutes sortes de travaux, tant chez elles qu’à l’extérieur, et contribuaient de manière importante à leur économie domestique. L’apport économique des femmes a toutefois été occulté par l’idéologie sexuelle dominante des sphères distinctes et par un code de justice, qui, dans les deux cas, limitaient leurs activités économiques et les rendaient presque invisibles aux historiens. Il faut absolument examiner le travail des femmes et son rapport avec l’idéologie des sexes et des classes pour comprendre la façon dont les femmes et les hommes ont collaboré à la formation de la classe moyenne.*

MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN in Victorian Halifax made important contributions to their household economies. Like their working-class counterparts, middle-class women developed a wide variety of economic strategies according to their families’ needs and occupations, their roles in the household, their ages, and their skills. Both the paid and unpaid work they performed shaped and was shaped by deeply held ideas about the nature of women and appropriate feminine behaviour. The themes of ideology and

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## 2 Histoire sociale / Social History

economics were thoroughly entangled. As Mary Poovey points out, “despite the fact that women contributed materially to the consolidation of bourgeois wealth and political power, their economic support tended to be translated into a language of morality and affection.”<sup>1</sup> This “translation” has obscured women’s economic contribution, but Poovey’s metaphor also reminds us of their important role in creating middle-class ideology and identity.

Those who performed and supervised the work in their households in accordance with the demanding social codes of their culture contributed to the social status and reputation of their husbands and children. Middle-class mothers were concerned with the physical well-being of their children, but also with assuring them a place in middle-class life when they grew up. Despite a gender ideology which posited a private domestic ideal for bourgeois women and a legal code which constrained their economic activities, middle-class women sometimes contributed direct cash income to the household. Some of these women earned wages or conducted their own businesses. Others produced goods and services which are more difficult to evaluate in economic terms, and the line between paid and unpaid work was often a very fine one.

The value of studying middle-class women is not simply in recovering lost economic heroines, but in understanding the complex process of the formation of the middle class and the varied, overlapping, and competing roles of women and men within it. Women were active participants in forging the economic, social, cultural, and ideological contexts of their lives. We cannot understand the emergence of the middle class as a group with a disproportionate amount of economic, social, and cultural influence without understanding the active role of women in the process. The importance lies not in suggesting that there was equality within often oppressively patriarchal middle-class households, but in acknowledging women’s agency and complicity in creating the unequal social relations of their society. A recognition of the economic activities of middle-class women has significant implications for our understanding of the mid-nineteenth-century ideas about middle-class femininity and masculinity and the relationship between women and men. It also allows a closer examination of the sexual division of labour within the middle class, which is still too often obscured by the gender ideology of separate spheres.

Placing middle-class women in history requires a sensitivity to their specific class experience and to the intersection of class and gender. Historians such as Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall as well as Mary Ryan provide very convincing evidence of the role of both women and men in the economic, social, and ideological work of the formation of the middle class in England and the United States, but to date the economic role of urban

<sup>1</sup> Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 10.

middle-class women in Canada has received little attention.<sup>2</sup> Social historians working in the Marxist tradition have too often ignored the role of middle-class women in the process of class formation. Bourgeois men have been accorded important roles, and the struggles of working-class men have also received considerable attention in the past few decades. More recently the efforts of feminist historians on working-class women have been successful in adding more knowledge of that group to our understanding of social history. But the characterization of Victorian middle-class women as idle and parasitic, serving only as symbols for their husbands' wealth and position, has been remarkably resilient. The attention to late-nineteenth-century middle-class women in the struggles for suffrage and prohibition, with the implication that they did not become actors in history until the 1870s, has perhaps added credibility to that characterization. As well, more recently the historiography of middle-class women has been shaped by a critique of feminist historians in the 1970s who tended to treat the experiences of middle-class women as representative of all women. While this reaction has contributed to our understanding of differences among women, it has tended to marginalize further middle-class women in Canadian history.

The lack of research about the economic activities of middle-class women has been in part due to the frustrations of finding reliable information. Both the ideological biases of nineteenth-century census takers and the legal doctrine of *couverture* create serious problems, especially with regard to married women.<sup>3</sup> Whether trying to count businesswomen or attempting to measure the value of women's economic contribution to urban middle-class households, historians are plagued with the certainty that they are missing as much as they are collecting. In addition, the economic sources that are available rarely help to address the question of class satisfactorily. Middle-class status is not easily identified from economic sources alone, and it is necessary to examine middle-class women's lives in as broad a context as possible.

My argument is not based on the precise dollar value of the contribution

2 Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Poovey, *Uneven Developments*; Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830–1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

3 Nancy Folbre, "The Unproductive Housewife: Her Evolution in Nineteenth-Century Economic Thought", *Signs*, vol. 16, no. 3 (1991); Constance Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1991), especially pp. 176–180; Brian Young, "Getting Around Legal Incapacity: The Legal Status of Married Women in Trade in Mid-19th Century Lower Canada" in Peter Baskerville, ed., *Canadian Papers in Business History* (Victoria: Public History Group, University of Victoria, 1989), pp. 1–16.

#### 4 Histoire sociale / Social History

of middle-class women to their families' wealth. Among the women in this study there are some, such as brewer Susannah Oland, who did substantially improve the financial status of their families. Others, like Annie Brown Hamilton, whose illness prevented her from building the nest egg she hoped to bring to her marriage, were much less successful. This study takes a qualitative approach to the question of middle-class women's economic role. It is based on the experiences of a number of middle-class women in mid-nineteenth-century Halifax, and also on what Haligonians and Nova Scotians had to say about women's economic activities. This approach has many benefits, important among them an acknowledgement of the complexity of the relationship between economic and cultural change.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, middle-class Haligonians recognized and assessed one another's position in the social hierarchy quickly and easily — often at a glance — by their conformity to codes of dress, speech, and behaviour. For historians, and especially for historians of women, the task is more difficult. For the purposes of this study, middle-class status is accorded on the basis of a combination of wealth, occupation, social status expressed through associations such as family, and adherence to a set of shared values. However, none of these can be considered in isolation. A middle-class widow, for example, was not necessarily declassed by the loss of her husband's income, especially if she were able to maintain her familial and social connections. Occupational designations, such as boardinghouse keeper or dressmaker, often cut across class lines and do not reveal wealth or social status. Nor can the class position of women be determined simply by the status of male family members, because middle-class women played such a central role in maintaining and enhancing the social status of their families. The problem of definition is further complicated by the fact that there was certainly no monolithic middle-class experience. As Carol Dyhouse points out, there were degrees of "middle classness".<sup>4</sup> The women who are the subjects of this study represent different degrees of middle classness. Nonetheless all belonged to families with claims to middle-class status based on combinations of wealth, social status, and association with other middle-class people.<sup>5</sup>

4 Carol Dyhouse, "Mothers and Daughters in the Middle-Class Home" in Jane Lewis, ed., *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family 1850–1940* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 27.

5 While in Canada the formation of the middle class has received relatively little attention, there is a growing literature on the United States and Britain. Virtually all historians of the middle class emphasize the importance of association in determining social class. David G. Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment and Social Mobility in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), provides a useful but disappointingly gender-blind discussion of the formation of the middle class in the Canadian context. See also Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*; Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*; S. M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); F. M. L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social*

The choice of Halifax from 1840 to 1880 for this study has a number of advantages, including the availability of excellent primary sources and a rich secondary literature. The roles of the city as a British garrison and naval station and its economic and cultural links with Britain and the United States help the historian to explore the relationship between economic and cultural change. The timing of the emergence of a relatively coherent middle class varied from place to place, but in Halifax, as in Brantford, Ontario, the mid-century decades were pivotal.<sup>6</sup> The 40-year period also permits an examination of the impact of the life cycle of several middle-class marriages. While I make no claim for the representativeness of Halifax, the city does provide a useful case study of the experiences of middle-class women in a Canadian context.

In general, middle-class Haligonians espoused and promoted a gender ideology which supported assigning women to private roles within the family throughout the period.<sup>7</sup> There was a certain ambiguity about just what women's domestic roles entailed, however. Most of those who wrote on the question of women's proper sphere left the specific work of women very vague. In 1836 political reformer Joseph Howe assigned women a role in promoting the economic prosperity of the province, and virtually all insisted on women's moral influence in their society.<sup>8</sup> While theirs was a very limiting conception of women's role, based on fundamentally unequal power relationships, it demanded significant effort from women and allowed considerable leeway in the kind of work women might be expected to do in the interests of their families. P. S. Hamilton, a Halifax lawyer and writer,

*History of Victorian Britain, 1830–1900* (London: Fontana Press, 1988); Geoffrey Crossick, "The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion" in Geoffrey Crossick, ed., *The Lower Middle Class in Britain, 1870–1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), pp. 11–60. For a review of the literature on the middle class, see Jonathan Barry, "The Making of the Middle Class", *Past and Present*, vol. 145 (November 1994), pp. 194–208. For a further discussion of my use of the term, see Janet Guildford, "Public School Reform and the Halifax Middle Class, 1850–1870", (Ph.D. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1990).

6 Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*; Guildford, "Public School Reform and the Halifax Middle Class".

7 See, for example, Joseph Howe, "The Moral Influence of Women", lecture delivered to the Halifax Mechanics Institute, September 1836, in *Poems and Essays, by the Hon. Joseph Howe* (Montreal: J. Lovell, 1874), pp. 248–274; George R. Young, *On Colonial Literature, Science and Education; written with a view of improving the Literary Educational and Public Institutions of British North America*, vol. 1 (Halifax: J. H. Croskill, 1842), p. 126; Anon., "Improvement of Female Education" in *Essays on the Future Destiny of Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1846); Anon. (probably Mary Jane Katzmann), "Review of 'The Female Sex', a Lecture to the Saint John Mechanics Institute", *The Provincial or Halifax Monthly Magazine* (March 1852), p. 89; Robert Sedgewick, "The Proper Sphere and Influence of Women in a Christian Society" in Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson, eds., *The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 8–34; William Garvie, *The Light and Shadows or Christianity the Ideal of our Race* (Halifax: Wesleyan Conference, 1860).

8 Howe, "The Moral Influence".

## 6 Histoire sociale / Social History

expressed this flexibility in a poem published in 1878, near the end of the period considered here.<sup>9</sup>

Woman's task of life, like man's  
Is, waiving rights, to dare to do, and do,  
With all the powers of her mind and heart,  
Whate'er the duty of the hour demands,  
Ignoring all cast-iron, social codes.<sup>10</sup>

The verse was part of his long poem, "The Feast of Saint Anne", a cycle of Nova Scotian historical legends. He used the popular story of Madame LaTour, an early Acadian heroine, to introduce a "rambling converse on 'women's sphere'" and the "clashing theories of 'women's rights'".<sup>11</sup> Hamilton presented this conclusion as the general common-sense response to the questions he raised. It certainly reflected his own experience.

Hamilton was an ambitious man from an educated farm family in rural Colchester County who wanted to be regarded by his contemporaries as a "gentleman and a man of honor", but the wealth and status he sought were elusive and difficult to attain.<sup>12</sup> In the late 1840s he married Annie Brown, the daughter of the family he boarded with while he was articling for the bar in Truro. Shortly before the wedding Annie Brown joined relatives in Roxbury, Massachusetts, where she hoped to earn some money "with her needle". Although he later wrote that he would have preferred her not to be gainfully employed, as a penniless law clerk Hamilton accepted Annie's decision without argument.<sup>13</sup> Annie's plans were thwarted by illness and she spent the summer convalescing with her relatives. Her failure to build a nest egg for her marriage foreshadowed the constant financial problems that plagued the household. After they were married, Annie did not engage in paid labour, but she did devise other strategies for helping to resolve family money problems. On a number of occasions when her husband's business affairs hovered on the brink of ruin, she and her children moved in with relatives in the country. While Annie's family supported her and the children, the Hamiltons avoided the cost of maintaining the family home in the city, allowing her husband to invest a larger share of the family's meagre financial resources in his speculative business ventures. Hamilton's

9 William B. Hamilton, "Peter Stevens Hamilton", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 405–407.

10 Pierce Stevens Hamilton, "The Feast of Saint Anne" in *The Feast of Saint Anne and Other Poems* (Halifax, 1878).

11 *Ibid.*

12 Emphasis in the original. Public Archives of Nova Scotia (hereafter PANS), MG1, vol. 335, Pierce Stevens Hamilton, *Diary*, p. 113. This document is less a diary than a series of autobiographical fragments begun in 1861.

13 Hamilton, *Diary*, p. 111.

willingness to accept his wife's sacrifices and her family's support are especially significant in light of his obsessive concern with manly independence, a recurrent theme in his autobiographical writing.<sup>14</sup> While he adamantly refused to become dependent on anyone outside the family, he had no such qualms about depending on his wife's economic support.

Three other middle-class Halifax marriages, begun between 1840 and 1870, offer variations on the themes in the Hamiltons' lives. All three of the wives were members of families with strong claims to middle-class status, but all performed remunerative work before their marriages. Artist and teacher Maria Morris married Garret Trafalgar Nelson in 1840; poet, editor, and bookstore owner Mary Jane Katzmann married William Lawson in 1869, and Annie Affleck, who worked in Sarah Howard's elegant dressmaking and millinery shop, married John S. D. Thompson in 1870. These three women made what were considered to be good marriages by the standards of their time and class. Maria Morris's and Mary Jane Katzmann's husbands were not only very wealthy, but belonged to socially prominent Halifax merchant families. Annie Affleck's husband became prime minister of Canada. The success of these women in the local marriage market suggests that participation in economic activity did not disqualify women from retaining their middle-class status. The experiences of each of these couples after marriage were quite different, but all of them help us to understand the varied roles women played within their households.

While these three marriages, together with Annie Hamilton's, provide examples of the active economic role played more generally by middle-class women over the course of their lives, making sense of their experiences also requires an analysis of the ideas about class and gender these couples shared. These ideas shaped the economically valuable work that women performed, but women's work also shaped middle-class gender ideology in a variety of complex ways. Middle-class women, like their working-class counterparts, most often earned (and saved) money by performing traditional women's work such as cooking, sewing, taking in boarders, or child care. Before their marriages Annie Brown Hamilton and Annie Affleck Thompson were both involved in the production and sale of clothing. Annie Brown also provided domestic services for boarders in her family home. Mary Jane Katzmann's and Maria Morris's professional careers in literature and art also had close associations with the domestic work of middle-class women. While these fields were not the exclusive domain of women — any more than the clothing industry was — they were areas in which middle-class women had created significant roles for themselves.<sup>15</sup> Within certain genres, art and literature had come to be regarded as suitable accomplishments for middle-class women. The Nova Scotian wildflowers that were the

14 Hamilton, *Diary*.

15 Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

subject of Maria Morris Miller's work tapped into the close ideological association between women and nature.<sup>16</sup> In the context of the promotion of the social, intellectual, and economic development of Nova Scotia by middle-class reformers, her choice of local wildflowers also had patriotic connotations.<sup>17</sup>

The separate spheres gender ideology was reflected in the paid and unpaid work of all four women. The imprint of this ideology clearly marked the paid work of women of all classes in mid-nineteenth-century Halifax. Of the 164 businesswomen listed in the *Halifax City Directory* in 1871, for example, just over 45 per cent were involved in the clothing business and 37 per cent in food and lodging.<sup>18</sup> Public school teaching in Halifax was dominated by women by 1871, as were domestic service and boardinghouse keeping.<sup>19</sup>

At the same time that it restricted the kinds of economic activity regarded as suitable for women, middle-class gender ideology opened new markets in producing and selling the special goods and services required to confirm women's standing in the middle class, to demonstrate their conformity with social roles and rules.<sup>20</sup> The style of life developed by the mid-Victorian bourgeoisie was very labour-intensive. Much of that labour was performed by working-class women and men, providing domestic work in the household or producing goods and services for the marketplace, but much was also provided by middle-class women.

Elaborate dress rituals and the demands of fashion required not just a vast amount of labour in the production of clothing, but also reliable advice on choosing the appropriate wardrobe. Producing and selling the clothing associated with the complex codes which marked membership in the middle class had an important ideological dimension; clothing was the most visible sign of women's identity. Middle-class women's clothing in the middle of the nineteenth century was distinctively feminine; these costumes were not simply signs of femaleness, however, but also of class. Mary Jane Katzmann

16 See Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., *Women, Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 67–88.

17 See D. C. Harvey, "The Intellectual Awakening of Nova Scotia" in G. A. Rawlyk, ed., *Historical Essays on the Atlantic Provinces* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1967), pp. 99–121. Historian Marie Elwood has suggested that Joseph Howe may have used Maria Morris Miller's drawing of the mayflower as the masthead illustration for *The Novascotian*.

18 *Halifax City Directory*, 1871. For a fuller discussion of women in business in Halifax, see Janet Guildford, "More than Idle Ladies: Business Women in 19th-Century Halifax" (paper presented to the Atlantic Canada Studies Conference, Memorial University, 1992).

19 *Ibid.*; Janet Guildford, "'Separate Spheres': The Feminization of Public School Teaching in Nova Scotia, 1838–1880" in Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, eds., *Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), pp. 119–144.

20 Lucy Eldersveld Murphy identifies the same pattern, although she is much less attentive to the question of social class, in "Business Ladies: Midwestern Women and Enterprise, 1850–1880", *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Spring 1991), pp. 65–89.

Lawson's derision of African Nova Scotian women dressed in middle-class fashions in her *History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston and Lawrencetown* provides striking evidence of the sense of class specificity surrounding dress codes. She wrote that before summer baptism services "there is a great demand for articles of dress: parasols, hoop-skirts, sash-ribbons, veils and fans", which she mockingly suggests the participants regarded as "necessary adjuncts" to the ceremony.<sup>21</sup>

It was not necessary to be either a woman or middle class to serve this market, but middle-class women, familiar with the social codes of appropriate middle-class behaviour, were able to reassure their women customers about the correctness of their purchases. The complex rules surrounding middle-class women's dress demanded a wide variety of expensive clothing, millinery, and footwear. There were the clothing rituals associated with Victorian mourning and weddings and, for the wealthiest women, special clothing worn at different times of the day.<sup>22</sup> In 1876 Sarah Howard's elegant shop on Hollis Street, where Annie Affleck had worked before her marriage, was described as "a shrine at which the city's daughters of fashion make haste to offer their devotions".<sup>23</sup> Dressmakers, milliners, and drygoods merchants could offer women the material goods they needed to demonstrate their membership in middle-class social circles.

Other women created and sold the less tangible status symbols such as an education in ladylike behaviour and the arts and graces a woman might bring to her domestic life, literary expositions which taught women about middle-class standards of taste, and decorative objects to serve as proof of refinement. Middle-class standards of taste and decoration created a market for artistic products such as Maria Morris's lithographs, and a number of articles in Halifax newspapers left little doubt that ownership of her work conferred status. In 1836 a reporter somewhat condescendingly commented, "ladies whose purses are well stored and even those of moderate means, by putting a wreath or two less of artificial flowers on their heads, might adorn their drawing rooms with a beautiful collection."<sup>24</sup> The next year an article in the *Novascotian* proposed:

Every wealthy family in the Province should send Miss Maria Morris an order. The boudoir or the drawing room should claim her volume as its most appropriate ornament; aye, although all the vases, petrified dogs, shell boxes, *et hoc genus omne*, which now cumber the round tables were swept into the

21 Mrs. William Lawson (Mary Jane Katzmann), *The History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston and Lawrencetown, Halifax County, N.S.*, edited by Harry Piers (Halifax: Morton, 1893), pp. 190–191.

22 Lenore Davidoff, *The Best Circles* (London: Croom Helm, 1973); Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*.

23 *Halifax and Its Business* (Halifax: NS Print Co., 1876), p. 132.

24 *Novascotian*, September 15, 1836.

## 10 Histoire sociale / Social History

fire to make room for it. The “Wild Flowers” would convey a distinct and favourable impression.<sup>25</sup>

A few days later another journalist joked that “I should be half-induced to propose to one of the daughters of a household in possession” of her work.<sup>26</sup> Maria Morris also taught taste and polite artistic accomplishment in her drawing school.

The market for literature aimed at middle-class women was also growing. Many kinds of literature could serve as guides to correct behaviour. Keeping up with the latest novels and periodicals offered women the substance for polite conversation, information about changing social conventions, and the latest trends in manners and dress. Mary Jane Katzmann unsuccessfully attempted to capture this market with her *Provincial Magazine*, but later had more success with her bookstore. Middle-class women who produced and taught art and literature were shaping and influencing ideas about gender and class, and they remind us how closely the themes of ideology and economics were related.

The formation of the middle class can be understood as the creation of a system of alliances and partnerships, and the central partnership was the family, the conjugal couple and their children. The family was a model of the kind of partnership that characterized relationships within the middle class. It was patriarchal and hierarchical. The unequal economic partnership of husband and wife was implicit in almost all aspects of middle-class life, and it was explicit in the laws which governed property transactions. Philip Girard and Rebecca Veinott have effectively demonstrated that married women’s property law in Nova Scotia retained a clear vision of the family as an economic community of interest until nearly the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Husbands and wives were therefore economic partners, if unequal ones, and, while the division of labour between the partners frequently conformed to the dictates of the separate spheres gender ideology, it was often very flexible.

The economic activities of wives have been very elusive, and a closer examination of the marriages of Maria Morris, Mary Jane Katzmann, and Annie Affleck helps to illustrate how these changed over the course of several years. These marriages also help us to understand the complex relationship between economic activity and gender ideology.

Maria Morris, born in 1810 to a socially prominent Halifax merchant family, was the first Nova Scotian woman to gain recognition as a professional artist.<sup>28</sup> Her father’s death in 1813 left the family in difficult finan-

25 *Novascotian*, January 19, 1837.

26 *The Times*, 1840, p. 179.

27 Rebecca Veinott and Philip Girard, “Married Women’s Property Law in Nova Scotia, 1850–1910” in Guildford and Morton, eds., *Separate Spheres*, pp. 67–92.

28 The Nova Scotia Museum holds a collection of 102 of Maria Morris Miller’s watercolours. *Annual*

cial circumstances, and Maria's mother, Sibylla (Leggett) Morris, opened a school to support her family. Either because of or in spite of the family's straightened circumstances, Sibylla Morris encouraged her daughter's artistic interests and provided her with lessons from local professional artists.<sup>29</sup> The lessons were a sensible investment. When Maria was 20 years old she joined the staff of her mother's school; three years later she set up her own drawing school where she taught "fine art in all its branches".<sup>30</sup> Her major work as an artist was a series of botanical illustrations of Nova Scotia wildflowers which she began in 1834 and continued to expand over the next several decades. Many of her original watercolour illustrations were reproduced as coloured lithographs, designed for sale in the local market.<sup>31</sup>

In 1840 Maria Morris married Garrett Trafalgar Nelson Miller, and by the conventions of Maria's world he was a thoroughly appropriate husband.<sup>32</sup> The Miller family were Loyalists and had prospered in the West Indies trade and through land speculation.<sup>33</sup> Maria and Garrett were part of the same social group in Halifax, and she met him through her friendship with his sister; the two were also distantly related by marriage. Over the next ten years Garrett and Maria had five children. Despite its apparent suitability the marriage was not a happy one.<sup>34</sup> Although the couple remained legally married, they intermittently lived apart, and in the early 1850s Maria reopened her drawing school in Halifax. She continued to work on her botanical illustrations and published further series of lithographs in 1853 and 1867.<sup>35</sup> The children lived in the city with her, and Garrett came and went.<sup>36</sup>

Maria Morris Miller's career as a professional artist and art teacher fit comfortably within the limits of acceptable middle-class feminine activity,

*Report* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1976). For a fuller discussion of Maria Morris Miller, see Janet Guildford, "Maria Morris Miller: The Many Functions of Her Art", *Atlantis*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1995), pp. 113–124.

29 Elizabeth Styring Nutt, "An Incident in the Golden Age of Fine Art in Nova Scotia", *Journal of Education* (Nova Scotia), February 1932, pp. 71–75.

30 *Report of the Provincial Museum* (Halifax: Nova Scotia, 1927), pp. 13–15.

31 I would like to thank Marie Elwood, Curator of History at the Nova Scotia Museum, for sharing both her knowledge of Maria Morris's life and her affection for the wildflower illustrations. See Nutt, "An Incident in the Golden Age of Fine Art in Nova Scotia"; Mary Sparling, "The British Vision in Nova Scotia 1749–1848: What Views the Artists Reflected and Reinforced" (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1978), pp. 89ff.

32 *Novascotian*, July 9, 1840.

33 Rev. W. Bowman Tucker, *The Romance of the Palatine Millers: A Tale of Palatine Irish-Americans and United Empire Loyalists* (Montreal: Southam Press, 1929).

34 While she was living at Garrett's family home in LaHave, Maria was very unhappy and believed that her mother-in-law was deliberately causing trouble for her in her marriage. PANS, MG1, vol. 3078, no. 10, Phyllis Blakeley Papers, Maria Morris Letters.

35 Sparling, "The British Vision"; *Wildflowers of Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, n.d.).

36 See *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1863, 1866, 1869. *Census of Canada*, 1871, Halifax, Ward 1, Division 1, no. 412. In 1873 Maria was absent from the listing, and she died in 1875.

but the fact that she was paid for her work was important to her and to her family. Before marriage her work enabled her to acquire the financial resources to remain within the middle class after the death of her father. Afterward it gave her the excuse, and perhaps the means, to live apart from her husband without causing a great deal of attention.

Mary Jane Katzmann was born in suburban Dartmouth in 1828 to Christian Katzmann, a German-born half-pay officer, and Martha Prescott Katzmann, the daughter of another socially prominent Loyalist family. Although the family was never very prosperous, their financial worries were increased by the lengthy illness and death of Christian Katzmann in the 1840s. Shortly after his death Mary Jane, her mother Martha, and her unmarried sister Ann sold the family home and moved into Halifax. For the next two decades Mary Jane Katzmann struggled to find ways to earn a living. In 1851, having already established a local reputation as a poet, she embarked on her first business enterprise with the publication of *The Provincial, or Halifax Monthly Magazine*, a general interest magazine. Although her brother-in-law, George Morton, a Halifax printer and publisher, provided some backing for the publication, *The Provincial* was not a financial success and quickly ran into difficulty; it ceased publication after just two years. For the next several years Mary Jane Katzmann continued to write and publish poetry, and in 1866, again with George Morton's support, she opened a bookstore in downtown Halifax. This enterprise was more successful, and she continued in the bookstore business until 1869 when, at the age of 40, she married William Lawson, the son of a wealthy merchant family who was ten years her junior. When she married she turned the bookstore over to her unmarried sister Ann who ran it until her death in 1876.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike Maria Morris Miller, Mary Jane Katzmann Lawson withdrew entirely from the marketplace following her marriage. She had one daughter, born in 1870, and devoted the rest of her life to the care of her family, church work, and charity. She did continue to write poetry, however, and to maintain her reputation as the local "poet laureate". She also wrote a history of Dartmouth and its surrounding townships which was awarded the Nova Scotia Historical Society's Akins prize. After her death in 1890 a collection of her poetry and her history of Dartmouth were published.<sup>38</sup>

Mary Jane Katzmann Lawson received considerable recognition for her poetry and history in Halifax during her lifetime and at her death, but the fact that she had earned money for her work as an editor, writer, and bookstore owner went unremarked. As already mentioned, her economic activity

37 Lois Kernaghan, "MJKL — A Victorian Contradiction", *Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly*, vol. 5 (1975), pp. 231–241.

38 Mrs. William Lawson, (M.J.K.L.), *Frankincense and Myrrh: Selections from the Poems of the Late Mrs. William Lawson*, selected and edited by Harry Piers and Constance Fairbanks (Halifax: Morton, 1893); Lawson, *The History of the Townships*.

did not prevent her from marrying into a wealthy and socially prestigious family, and it could be argued that Mary Jane Katzmann added lustre to the Lawson family's reputation. Her enthusiasm for the Anglican church and for British imperial heroes suggests that she was quite conservative in her social views and would have repudiated any suggestion that she was a pioneer for middle-class women's rights.<sup>39</sup>

Annie Affleck is the last of this series of women whose marriage will be considered in some detail. She was born in Halifax in 1845, the daughter of a sea captain. As a young woman she worked for Halifax dressmaker and retailer Sarah Howard.<sup>40</sup> In 1870 she married John S. D. Thompson, a Halifax lawyer with political ambitions. After their marriage Annie Thompson withdrew from waged work, but she played a very active role in encouraging and supporting her husband's political career, often showing more enthusiasm for his political activities than he did himself.<sup>41</sup> John Thompson's political career took him to Ottawa in 1885 and eventually, in 1892, to the prime minister's office. Although Annie Affleck Thompson disliked formal social activities, she performed effectively as a politician's wife. She managed the household alone during her husband's long and frequent absences, often without adequate financial resources, and she regularly represented her husband's interests in Halifax. In 1888 she moved her household to Ottawa where, despite her misgivings, she quickly assumed the duties of political hostess, which often involved considerable labour on her part.<sup>42</sup> In 1892, the year that Thompson became prime minister, the Thompsons were short of money and dispensed with the services of a cook. Over the course of the 1892 session of Parliament, Annie Thompson cooked dinner for 250 guests.<sup>43</sup> Her roles as cook and hostess were both important to her husband's career, and her role as cook, at least, made a real material contribution to the household economy.

The lives of Annie Affleck Thompson, Annie Brown Hamilton, Maria Morris Miller, and Mary Jane Katzmann Lawson introduce the major themes in the economic experience of middle-class women in Halifax in the middle of the nineteenth century. Participation in market activity did not preclude

39 See Lawson, *Frankincense and Myrrh*. See also "Review of 'The Female Sex'" which was probably written by Mary Jane Katzmann Lawson while she was editor of *The Provincial Magazine*, and which expressed support of the idea of distinct roles for men and women and a lack of support for the women's rights movement in the United States.

40 P. B. Waite, *Sir John S. D. Thompson: The Man from Halifax* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 22. For details of Annie Affleck's early life, see chap. 3. Evidence of Annie Affleck's place of employment is slim; it came in the form of a handwritten note in a copy of the *Halifax City Directory* of 1866 held by the Public Archives of Nova Scotia in the margin of the listing for S. Howard and Sons.

41 Waite, *The Man from Halifax*.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 223–224.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 403.

their membership in the middle class, but the nature of their economic activity was shaped and constrained by middle-class gender ideology. An examination of the lives of other middle-class Halifax women — wives, daughters living with their families, and women who lived in female-headed households — substantiates these themes.

The evidence of wives' economic contributions is fragmentary, but nonetheless compelling. We must be prepared to generalize from the brief glimpses we catch of women like Annie Thompson saving the cost of a cook by preparing elaborate dinners for parliamentarians. Susan Ann Howe, the wife of politician and journalist Joseph Howe, provides another example. She routinely managed and edited her husband's newspaper, *The Nova-scotian*, in the 1830s and 1840s during his frequent absences from Halifax, and correspondence between them often included specific discussion of business questions. In one letter, for example, Joseph Howe deferred to his wife's opinion on the grounds that she was an "experienced editress".<sup>44</sup> Women who were married to professional men also shared their husbands' workload. After her marriage to J. Scott Hutton, the principal of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Halifax, in 1860, Mary Hutton frequently served as an unpaid teacher. Despite the scientific patina her husband sought to impart to the institution, the school was very much a family business. Although Mary Hutton was not paid for her services during her husband's lifetime, her contribution and expertise were briefly recognized by the Nova Scotia government when she was appointed acting principal of the school after Scott Hutton's death in 1891.<sup>45</sup> The wives of clergymen also participated actively in their husbands' work and often took leading roles in the women's organizations associated with their husbands' congregations.<sup>46</sup>

As Maria Morris Miller's experience attests, some middle-class married women also conducted businesses of their own, entirely unrelated to their husbands' work. Most often in these cases the wife's business involved performing some kind of domestic work for money. Margaret Backman's husband Benjamin was the first clerk at the Post Office in Halifax, where he earned an adequate and reliable living. Mrs. Backman added to the family income by running a very respectable boardinghouse. She employed two cooks, two housemaids, a laundress, and a porter, and she attracted

44 PANS, MG1, vol. 3043, no. 6, Phyllis Blakeley Papers, Joseph Howe Papers, Harvard College, Reel 23, Joseph Howe to Susan Ann.

45 Janet Guildford, "James Scott Hutton", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 460–461.

46 In 1843, for example, we find Mrs. A. Croscombe, wife of a Wesleyan minister, leading the names on the Committee of Halifax Wesleyan Female Benevolent Society. Halifax Wesleyan Female Benevolent Society, *Report* (Halifax, 1843). Mrs. Scott was a member of the St. Matthews District Visiting Society founded at the urging of her husband Rev. Scott. St. Matthews District Visiting Society, *1st Report* (Halifax, 1846). Elizabeth G. Uniacke was the secretary treasurer of the District Visiting Society of her husband's church in 1853. St. George's District Visiting Society, *13th Annual Report*, (Halifax, 1853).

lodgers such as the prominent Halifax barrister Nepean Clark and his son Henry.<sup>47</sup> The income from her boardinghouse must have made a considerable difference to the family's standard of living and no doubt played a role in permitting her teenaged children to remain in school. Kate Sinclair also pursued a separate and successful business. For at least five years at the height of the hoop-skirt craze, Kate Sinclair was a hoop-skirt manufacturer. In 1871 she employed seven women for nine months of the year and had \$1,500 invested in her business. Her husband, Charles Sinclair, a cabinet-maker, upholsterer, and furniture dealer, also operated a substantial business.<sup>48</sup> Eliza Bourdillaut's situation was somewhat different, for her fur business was the mainstay of her household economy. In the early 1860s her husband, Joseph Bourdillaut, worked as a French teacher, a respectable but not highly paid occupation. By the late 1860s his status had fallen and he worked as a stonecutter.<sup>49</sup> By 1873 he had disappeared from the household, but Eliza Bourdillaut persisted in her fur business for another 20 years. In 1869 she advertised as a "manufacturer and importer of ladies and gents furs in all the latest styles and qualities" and informed her customers that she had been awarded "a diploma for excellency of workmanship" at the Industrial Exhibition in Halifax in 1868.<sup>50</sup> In 1871 she employed a clerk and a servant as well as at least two dressmakers. She retired from business in the late 1890s.<sup>51</sup>

The economic contribution of women in their roles as daughters, even in households with economically active fathers, was also common. In 1871 Lillie Rouselle lived at home with her father J. K. Rouselle, the Supervisor of Schools for the city of Halifax, her mother, and younger siblings. She, too, was employed as a public school teacher.<sup>52</sup> While her father was alive, Lillie Rouselle's income would have improved the family's standard of living, perhaps permitting younger family members to remain in school longer, improving their economic chances in the future. But when her father died she became the sole support of the family and continued to support her widowed mother for many years.<sup>53</sup> Eliza Frame, the daughter of a prosperous Hants County farmer, taught school for over 30 years. She contributed her meagre wages to help pay for her brother William's theological studies, enabling him to become a professor at Union Theological Seminary.<sup>54</sup>

47 *Census of Canada*, 1871, Halifax, manuscript.

48 *Census of Canada*, 1871, Halifax Schedule 6, Ward 1. Mr. Backman's production was valued at \$6,000 in 1871.

49 *Halifax City Directory*, 1863, 1866, 1869, 1871; *Census of Canada*, 1871, Halifax, manuscript.

50 Advertisement for Mrs. E. Bourdillaut and Company, *Halifax City Directory*, 1869.

51 *Census of Canada*, 1871, Halifax manuscript.

52 *Census of Canada*, 1871, Halifax, Ward 6, Division 2.

53 Lillie Rouselle taught for the Halifax School Board from 1867 to 1881. Karen Balcom, "From Recruitment to Retirement: Female Teachers in the Public Schools of Late Nineteenth Century Halifax" (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1992), p. 233.

54 *Presbyterian Witness*, November 26, 1904.

Women in female-led households often faced severe financial problems.<sup>55</sup> In 1871, 45 per cent of the adult women in Halifax were either unmarried or widowed, although of course not all of these single women lived in households without a male household head.<sup>56</sup> The death of a husband often forced middle-class women to find ways to earn money. When Sarah Howard was widowed in 1860, her husband Henry, a wholesale pork dealer, left Sarah just £588 7s 9p to support herself and her four dependent children.<sup>57</sup> Sarah Howard was, in the words of the local R. G. Dun credit reporter, a woman of “active business habits”. With the help of her oldest son she quickly turned her parlour millinery shop into a thriving department store under the name S. Howard and Son.<sup>58</sup> In 1862, just two years after her husband’s death, she had a separate shop on Granville Street assessed at £1,300, and her home on Grafton Street was valued at £300. Her son Henry joined his mother at work in 1865, and over the next decade he gradually took over control of the business, although the Dun credit agency was less impressed with his business acumen than with that of his mother. By 1871 Henry Howard claimed that the business was worth over \$60,000.<sup>59</sup> S. Howard and Son served the affluent middle-class woman shopper. An 1871 advertisement described her stock, which included Parisian millinery and millinery supplies, a wide variety of rich imported silks, and Paisley and “French wove” shawls. “Experienced European Artistes” were on hand to turn these materials into the latest fashions.<sup>60</sup> In 1876, shortly before the Howard family sold the business (the building alone sold for \$75,000), a promotional booklet, *Halifax and its Business*, described the shop in glowing terms, and special praise went to the millinery display on the third floor.

This floor is extensive, airy, and light, — presenting to the unpractised eye a “wilderness” of colours and forms, and to the more imaginative fancy suggesting a beautiful flower garden rich in summer bloom and autumnal tints.<sup>61</sup>

Sarah Howard created her own business to provide for her family’s material comfort and upward mobility. Susannah Culverwell Oland concen-

55 I have chosen the term female-led households to designate a variety of household types, including widows with children and unmarried women living with assorted relatives in households where their economic roles were of critical importance.

56 Twenty-one years of age has been used as the age of adulthood. *Census of Canada 1870-71* (Ottawa, 1873), Table I, pp. 76–77.

57 PANS, MG100, vol. 84, no. 31, Estate Papers of Henry Howard.

58 Public Archives of Canada, MG28, 11, 106, M7756, R. G. Dun and Company manuscript reports, May 1865. My thanks to David Sutherland for this reference. The date of Sarah Howard’s death is not known, and so it impossible to know just when Henry Howard, jr., completely took over the business. Sarah lived at least until the early 1870s.

59 His claim may have been an exaggeration. R. G. Dun and Company manuscript reports, 1871.

60 *Rogers Photographic Album* (Halifax, 1871), pp. 3–5.

61 *Halifax and Its Business*, p. 133.

trated her efforts on developing the family's new brewing business when her husband John died in 1870.<sup>62</sup> Susannah Oland had moved to Halifax with her husband and their five children in the 1850s when John Oland took a job with the Nova Scotia Railway. According to family tradition he set up as a brewer in 1867 to make beer based on Susannah's recipe for "incomparable brown October ale".<sup>63</sup> The Oxford-educated John Oland and his wife had been welcomed into the upper levels of Halifax society, and one of John's partners in the brewery was John DeWinton, the aide-de-camp of Nova Scotian Governor Sir Fenwick Williams. Little evidence of Susannah's involvement in the operation of the brewery during her husband's lifetime survives.<sup>64</sup>

After John's death, Susannah joined her sons Conrad, George, and John and their partner George Fraser in the management of the business, Fraser Oland and Company. In 1877 Susannah inherited enough money from an English relative to buy out Fraser's interest. She published a notice of the dissolution of the partnership in a Halifax newspaper and announced that in the future the business would be called S. Oland and Sons.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps the name change reflected Susannah's annoyance at not being mentioned in *Halifax and its Business* published in 1876; throughout the rest of her life Susannah was publicly associated with the brewery.<sup>66</sup> Her influence continued to be felt after her death in 1885. Her will carefully laid out the future of the business and protected the interests of her youngest children, especially her unmarried daughter Huldah.<sup>67</sup>

The Howard and Oland mother and son partnerships were particularly successful and contributed significantly to the upward mobility of their families. Mother and son partnerships may have been similar in a number of respects to husband and wife partnerships in which the wife's contribution was obscured by legal *couverture* and social convention. The relationship between mothers and sons in business was interesting and complex. At the death of her husband the mother assumed full parental responsibility, including the immediate support and financial future of the family. The situation for sons was fraught with tension as they were required to ac-

62 I am grateful to Brenton Haliburton for sharing his research on the Oland family.

63 Jan Forster, "The Maritime Olands", part 1, *Chatelaine*, May 1974.

64 PANS, Mortgages, 958, p. 118, 1867; 1123, 1867. Susannah Oland was a co-signer, along with her husband John and George Cockburn Harvey, another of the partners in the brewery, of the mortgage on the Dartmouth property where the brewery was established.

65 *Morning Herald*, February 10, 1877.

66 The 1881-1882 *City Directory*, for example, lists Mrs. Susan (*sic*) Oland of Oland and Sons Co. Conrad and John Oland were the sons in the business. She and her sons and daughter all lived in the family compound at Turtle Grove in Dartmouth where the works of the brewery were also located. The offices and vaults were on Tobin's South Wharf on the Halifax side of the harbour.

67 PANS, Micro Wills, Reel 19361, p. 629. Proved April 11, 1885. Susannah Oland's interest in the brewery was valued at \$5,000, her house, land, and personal effects at \$2,265.

knowledge both the duty and submission sons owed to their mothers while trying to assume the manly responsibility of providing for the women in their families.

Middle-class women who did not marry also created family partnerships and women-led households. The four Grove sisters, Anne, Elizabeth, Helen, and Penelope, operated a boarding school for middle-class girls for 40 years.<sup>68</sup> When their father died in 1840 Anne Grove took the initiative to open the school, and she served as the head teacher. Elizabeth taught drawing and painting, Helen music, and Penelope became a general assistant and house-mother. Occasionally the Groves employed others to teach French or German, but for 35 years the sisters were the mainstay of the school. With their school they were able to support themselves and to support their mother until her death in 1863. They also raised and educated their brother William's orphaned children, Lily and Frederick.<sup>69</sup> In 1880, their responsibility to older and younger generations fulfilled, the sisters moved their school 20 miles out of Halifax to Beaverbank in the Sackville River Valley. They relocated to land owned by their brothers and created a home for their unmarried brother James.<sup>70</sup>

Conducting a school for middle-class girls was certainly ideological work, and in 1846 one of the Grove sisters wrote a history text book for her students which presented a clear articulation of the school's ideals. In *Little Grace or Scenes in Nova Scotia*, the young Grace is given history lessons by her patronizing father and older brother.<sup>71</sup> Little Grace was presented with a history in which her place in the world, as a young white girl in a comfortable middle-class home with father, mother, brother, and servants, was superior to that of the Acadian, Micmac, and African Nova Scotian people she saw around her. After a picnic trip to an "Indian camp" in Dartmouth, for example, her father carefully explained to Grace that the term "savage" did not mean fierce, but was used "in opposition to civilized". He also explained that the "negroes" she saw on her outing were more civilized because "they drive carts, and carry boxes, and live as servants in our houses".<sup>72</sup> Grace's father and brother taught her quite explicitly what it would mean to be a white, middle-class woman, and *Little Grace* illustrates the role women played in creating the gendered middle-class ideology and identity emerging in Halifax at mid-century.

The Hodgers sisters, though less successful than the Groves, were able to cling to the lower levels of the middle class through a variety of economic

68 Robert P. Harvey, "Searching for 'Miss Grove'", *Journal of Education* (Nova Scotia), vol. 7, no. 1 (January 1981), pp. 34-37.

69 Harvey, "Searching for 'Miss Grove'". Lily was born in 1860, Frederick in 1865.

70 *Ibid.*

71 Miss Grove, *Little Grace or Scenes in Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1846). The author's first name is not known.

72 *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

strategies and family cooperation. Ellen Hodgers initiated what became a family millinery business in the late 1850s, and in 1871 she and her sisters Isabella, Kate, and Mary, all in their forties, worked together in the business. Their youngest sister, Jane, was a schoolteacher, likely enabled to remain in school as a result of the financial security her sisters could provide. Their brother Robert, employed as a junior clerk in the civil service, lived with them and no doubt contributed to the family economy as well.<sup>73</sup> In the late 1850s and early 1860s the reporter for the R. G. Dun commercial intelligence agency was impressed with Ellen Hodgers's competence and respectability. However, her career was not without its ups and downs. In 1866 she had lost ground, and was referred to curtly as "unsafe".<sup>74</sup> Despite their difficulties the sisters persevered in the millinery business for several decades. The family remained together and appears to have prospered. In 1891 the household consisted only of Jane, Ellen, and Robert, but they had moved to a new home in the suburban south end of the city.<sup>75</sup>

Boardinghouse keeper Abbie Tupper's economic relationship with her brother was more complex. In 1871 Abbie ran a large and respectable boardinghouse in downtown Halifax. Leading the list of her boarders were her brother Samuel and his wife Jerusha. As the Collector of Internal Revenue for Nova Scotia, Samuel earned a comfortable living. Our expectations of nineteenth-century gender roles would lead us to anticipate that Samuel Tupper would be the head of the household and that his wife Jerusha would be its mistress. In this model of household management Abbie Tupper would be the redundant and dependent spinster, a stock figure of pathos and humour in Victorian fiction. Instead she was the owner and operator of a boardinghouse where, with the help of her young servant, she provided domestic services for her younger brother and his wife, half a dozen senior civil servants and clerks, and one woman schoolteacher.<sup>76</sup>

These profiles provide substantial evidence that middle-class women in Halifax, as elsewhere, played active economic roles, with varying degrees of success. While debates continue about how to establish accurate measures of the value of women's domestic labour, Annie Hamilton's moves to the country and Annie Thompson's saving of a cook's salary obviously had hard cash value. Susan Ann Howe and Mary Hutton both contributed their unpaid labour to their husbands' businesses and professional careers in addition to the domestic management of their households, and their contribution is impossible to evaluate. When Susannah Oland became directly involved in the management of the family brewery, she, like Sarah Howard, was protecting and developing a business enterprise that would assure her

73 *Halifax City Directory*, 1871.

74 Dun Reports.

75 *Halifax City Directory*, 1891.

76 *Halifax City Directory*, 1871; *Census of Canada*, 1871, manuscript.

family a place in the middle class. The history of nearly every middle-class Halifax family, when examined in detail, with caution about accepting too readily the boundaries between the domestic sphere and the public world of market activity, would reveal, as do the family groups surveyed here, important economic contributions from women. Although middle-class gender ideology limited and shaped women's economic contribution, often obscuring it from public view, that work was both important and taken for granted in mid-nineteenth-century Halifax.

The examination and re-evaluation of middle-class women's activities in the mid-nineteenth century contributes to our understanding of women's historical experience and is valuable for that reason alone. However, it also enables us to understand better the complexity of the broad social and economic changes that swept Canada in the nineteenth century. Men and women lived together, and, despite the patriarchal inequalities that characterized their relationship, they worked together to develop the material and ideological bases of middle-class power and wealth.