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**Beyond Domesticity:  
The Use and Value of Women's Leisure Time  
in Halifax, 1880-1930**

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## **Abstract**

The principle aim of this research is to examine how women in Halifax, between 1880 and 1930, used their leisure time and how this time was valued. This period marked an increase in industrial capitalism and saw an ever growing urban population, which in turn, affect how people used their time - as work and leisure hours became regulated and commodified. New times for leisure became available, such as the typically modern concepts of free-evenings, the week-end and paid summer vacations as well as a lengthy childhood and retirement, while, at the same time, new forms of commercialized leisure emerged. Nevertheless, these changes did not develop in the same way for both sexes, or for people from different class and ethnic backgrounds. The sexual division that structured work, access to resources, and participation in public life resulted in the use of women's leisure time being spent differently than that of their male counter-parts. While most women remained in the home, men participated in the public sphere. Women who remained in the home certainly worked, but since this work was unpaid work it was not valued to the same extent as that of mens paid work. A woman's world was a domestic one, she spent her time maintaining the family, keeping house and bringing up the children. Very little time was left for women during the day for leisure pursuits, especially working class women.

All the same, women did manage to find some limited leisure time and this frequently allowed them to move beyond the domestic realm. Many used their leisure hours to participate in sports and recreation, while others found the new forms of

commercialized entertainment attractive, such as amusement parks, movie houses and shopping. Other women, mostly from the upper middle class, used their leisure time to pursue changes in society brought on by industrial capitalism - increased crime and poverty rates, intemperance and disease. This thesis evaluates the ways in which women from different backgrounds used their time, how this time was valued and by whom, and how women were able, despite prevailing norms, to negotiate a space for themselves in the public sphere.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my soon to be born child, whose estimated arrival falls on the same day as my graduation from this program. Her or His arrival has acted as my final push to complete this process and to begin an other life challenge.



## **List of Abbreviations**

HLCW - Halifax Local Council of Women

NASCAD - Nova Scotia School of Art and Design

NCWC - National Council of Women of Canada

PANS - Public Archives of Nova Scotia

VSAD - Victorian School of Art and Design

VON - Victorian Order of Nurses

WCA - Women's Christian Association

WCTU - Women's Christian Temperance Union

WNBA - Women's National Basketball Association

YMCA - Young Men's Christian Association

YWCA - Young Women's Christian Association

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Writing on Time and Leisure: An Historiographical Review**

Before embarking upon an analysis of how Halifax women used their time and how this time was valued, it is necessary to review the literature on time and leisure. While this chapter will review and evaluate of the prominent writings on this topic, it will also provided an historiographical context for the evidence contained in this thesis. This literature review will examine the broad issues that appear throughout this thesis, including masculine and feminine perceptions of leisure and time, domesticity, separate spheres, respectability, and the commercialization of leisure. Also, this chapter will argue that it is necessary to recognize how women's time use was greatly influenced by notions of gender, class, age and ethnicity, and furthermore, that to fully understand the impact of these influences the lives of these women must be examined within the context of Halifax society.

Although a significant body of work exists on time use<sup>1</sup>, especially in the social sciences, until recently few volumes speak about the specifics of women's use of time. As Margaret Conrad has noted in "Sunday's Always Make Me Think of Home": Time and Place in Canadian Women's History," women have created a distinct culture

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<sup>1</sup> See E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," Past and Present, Vol 1, No 38, 56-97; Hugh Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Sabastian de Grazia, Of Time, Work and Leisure, (New York: Vantage Books, 1994); Thomas Goodale and Geoffrey Godbey, The Evolution of Leisure: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives. (State College: Venture Publishing, Inc., 1988).

derived from their unique experiences and values. Consequently, women's culture must be examined within its proper context in order to understand fully its complexities. The traditional approach of analysing public documents to piece together history has not afforded a complete view of women's past. Conrad calls for the investigation of the more personal and private chronicles of women's lives such as diaries and letters. In addition, the annals of women's writing or the records of their organizations provides us with a unique perspective of how women lived their lives and how they valued the time they spent involved in various activities. Through these documents a better understanding of how society in general, and women specifically, perceived and valued their time may be ascertained.

Those historians who have written about time use in general have recorded an evolution of time as we in the twentieth century have come to perceive it. Tracing the roots of our modern understanding of time takes us back to before the birth of Christ. Sebastian de Grazia's work, Of Time, Work and Leisure, traces the evolution of time from the days of the Greeks up to the modern industrial period, exploring various philosophies and perceptions of time. The Greeks, who according to de Grazia invented leisure, took their leisure time very seriously. They prepared for leisure and placed a tremendous value on leisure time. de Grazia uses the work of Aristotle, whom he identifies as a philosopher of leisure, to explain what the concept meant to the Greeks. Aristotle divided life into different parts - action and leisure, war and peace. While Greeks prepared for war, they also prepared for leisure. "Citizens must be capable of a life of action and war, but even more able to lead a life of leisure and

peace."<sup>2</sup> The Greeks fought wars so they could have peace, and therefore leisure. de Grazia interprets Aristotle's definition of leisure, "freedom from the necessity of labour," to mean more than just free time. Aristotle meant that leisure is the freedom from the necessity of being occupied - or, in his understanding of the them, meant pursuing an activity for a purpose. Therefore, leisure was the freedom from being occupied from not only labour, but also any activity a person found necessary to perform. This perception of Greek leisure was hardly universal for not everyone enjoyed this distinction between work and leisure. The men and women who farmed the land with his or her bare hands, those who lived as slaves, or toiled as artisans did not experience regular leisure time, nor did they expect it. These members of society experienced work and leisure much differently than the privileged people of Aristotle's world.

Sociologist Hugh Cunningham has observed that societies, except perhaps the most primitive societies, have always been aware of the separation between work and leisure.<sup>3</sup> Agricultural communities had a cyclical perception of time resulting from the fact that the seasons determined peoples' whole existence. People lived according to the rhythm of nature; when it was time to plant, time for breeding, or time for the harvest. The time in between these periods was filled with other obligations and activities, including religious holidays and festivals which would have been considered times of leisure. For E. P. Thompson in "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial

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<sup>2</sup> de Grazia, Of Time, Work and Leisure, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, 57.

Capitalism," pre-industrial society was 'task oriented', people measured out their time according to how long it took to complete a task. Time was not experienced as an external constraint and there was no sharp differentiation between labour and "passing the time of day."<sup>4</sup> People also saw time as something that was limited and moving in a straight line as a result of their own life time - birth, life, death. Humans did not control time for "most measures of time came from nature and even those guidelines concerning time which came from society, such as annual festivals or celebrations, had tradition and cultural necessity...and were, therefore largely beyond individual control."<sup>5</sup> During the seventeenth century the perception of time changed with the mechanization of time and the rise of capitalism.

While the ancients may have seen time as cyclical, the perception of time gradually became more linear. Although all the ways in which this occurred are not represented or fully conceptualized here; time became finite, capable of being measured in terms other than those provided by nature. Time became standardized, and has come to dictate our lives. Linear time, something agricultural communities did not have, appeared with the urbanization and progress in productive techniques - industrialization. This measurement of time was mechanical, made possible with the use of clocks. Thompson regards the invention of the clock as monumental to our modern understanding of leisure, since with the mechanical time-piece, time became

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<sup>4</sup> Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," 60.

<sup>5</sup> Goodale and Goodbey, The Evolution of Leisure: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives, 128.

something regulated and controlled by humans; essentially the modern notion of time as quantifiable begins to evolve.

Mechanical clocks, combined with industrial capitalism, brought many changes to the perception and value of time. The factory system imposed a system of labour discipline based on the regimentation of time. "Time-sheets, time-keepers, clocking-in and -out times, piece-work, overtime, bonus systems for beating the clock - these are some of the institutional expressions of this process."<sup>6</sup> Workers began to formulate a distinction between an employer's time and individual time. Thus, time became a commodity - something that was spent or consumed. As Thompson observed, the standard of valuing one's time is economic - time is money, a very capitalist notion which over time has affected the everyday lives of almost everyone.

Industrial capitalism altered perceptions of time, and occasioned a great shift in the organization of peoples lives. Chris Rojek, who explores the relationship between capitalism, leisure and work, argues that nineteenth-century thinkers, including Karl Marx, regarded capitalism not only as an economic system, but also a social system since relations between people stemmed from a specific economic organization of society. The emergence of industrial capitalism saw the unequal distribution of wealth and consequently the development of a class system, while changing ideas about the role of men and women in the workplace. Men came to viewed as the breadwinners, with women firmly planted in the household, and thus entirely dependent on her

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<sup>6</sup> Chris Rojek, Capitalism, Leisure and Theory. London: Tavistock Publications, 1985, 25.

husband for her social position. More specifically, industrial capitalism had three notable effects on concepts of time and leisure, for both men and women. Firstly, it changed concepts of time by the separation of home and work. Consequently, as the workplace became increasingly separate from the home, women became isolated in the domestic sphere. Although traditionally women have been the caregivers in society, the separation of the home and work resulted in a very different perception of leisure time for women. Secondly, leisure became what people did when they were not working. The commodification of time meant that what time was not consumed with work became leisure time. And thirdly, capitalism created new social classes, and one's class situation or position greatly influenced a person's use of time. For example, the social elite of the late nineteenth century, in their effort to control the behaviour of the working class, understood their role very much in terms of limiting and controlling lower class leisure. Therefore, as classes generated by industrial capitalism took shape, the relationship between class, gender and leisure was also refashioned.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a detailed Canadian analysis of the relationship between class, gender and the workplace see Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Man and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950. Parr's investigation of the factory workers of Paris and Hanover, Ontario demonstrates how gender remained a defining issue in the respect workers received. In Hanover, the "men's town", the male workers established themselves as respected breadwinners, "through the authenticity they had asserted as craftsmen, the self-sufficiency they sustained through rural connections and handyman skills and the confidence they could claim through gender, they had established themselves as persons of account in their town" (230). Meanwhile in Paris, the "women's town", the predominately female workers were unable to gain the same positions or respect, even though they provided the economic mainstay for the town's commerce. Parr concludes that the female workforce did not gain the respect of the community since their employment was "read by their fellow citizens as signs of improvidence and imprudence rather than ingenuity, practicality, and thrift"(230). Women were not accepted as breadwinners, but rather as substitutes for the males of



Despite the widespread acceptance of the importance of industrial capitalism, scholars still debate the origin and definition of leisure. Although some regard it as the 'child of industrialization', others recognize a clear distinction between labour and 'idle time' prior to industrialization. Certainly pre-industrial labour populations had some non-work time, while the upper class, or 'leisure class' had very little 'work' time. As sociologists Thomas Goodale and Geoffrey Godbey have explained, some events were emphatically celebrated as non-work time, such as the Medieval carnivals or religious festivals.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, most agree that it was the mechanization of time that created a clear distinction between work-time and leisure time. The idea of a working day, with a specific start and finish time, and punctuated by breaks and days off become the accepted norm with the rise of industrial capitalism. Leisure time became time slotted between periods of work.

Sociologists, who are concerned with the analysis of time allocation, have long argued over a precise definition of leisure time. A definition that equates leisure time with the consumption of time that is "devoted to activities that are, at the margin, primarily carried on for their own sake (consumption activities), rather than for the control over financial or other resources..." is too broad for their purposes.<sup>9</sup> Yet this definition is acceptable for an historical analysis for it excludes both market

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the town until a better wage situation could be established.

<sup>8</sup> Goodale and Godbey, The Evolution of Leisure, 128.

<sup>9</sup> Steven L. Nock and Paul William Kingston, "The Division of Leisure and Work," Social Science Quarterly, Vol 70, No 1, March 1989, 26.

employment and domestic responsibilities and includes activities that are primarily pleasurable, relaxing, entertaining, and enriching. A substantial body of work exists on the sociological aspects of leisure, yet it has been criticised due to its quantitative approach. As Chris Rojek argues, "the main defects in social formalism, the dominant research tradition in the sociology of leisure, arise from the failure to situate leisure relations in the context of the history and general power structure of capitalist society."<sup>10</sup> The traditional time analysis Rojek criticises is quantitative – how it was used, how much of it was used, and when it was used. This type of analysis does not allow for an assessment of how time was perceived and the value of time used. The assessment of how women used their leisure time during turn of the century Halifax allows for the historical context necessary to determine both the social and personal value of the time used.

It is the modern concept of leisure, the separation of work and leisure, that must be considered here, for just as work time became more regulated so too did leisure time. In their research on the evolution of leisure, Goodale and Godbey argue that while it was the great hope that industrialization would create more leisure time, what actually happened was that leisure time became increasingly limited. In theory industrialization meant an increase in production, which in turn resulted in a more efficient work day, and therefore more leisure time. In reality this was not the case; instead of more leisure time, people had less. Goodale and Godbey concluded that people do not actually want more leisure time, or that the desire for more leisure time is

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<sup>10</sup> Rojek, Capitalism, Leisure and Theory, 3.

distinctly separate from a desire for material goods. Consequently, leisure time has come to be time used for the consumption of goods and services brought on by the materialism of industrialization and capitalism. "Leisure was now not a halt from action but rather pleasurable action undertaken within the constraints of the ultimate scarce resource - time."<sup>11</sup> It appears that the more possessions people have the less leisure time they have. People work longer hours so they may purchase more goods, better quality material possessions, or goods that make up for the leisure time they lose while working to afford their consumption of more merchandise. Commodities have become a replacement for time. The result of this emphasis on material acquisition, argue Goodale and Godbey, is that "as more and more goods are owned, the time spent in consumption per item will decrease since goods are becoming cheaper in relation to time."<sup>12</sup> People will then attempt to accelerate their consumption by maximizing the time spent using more expensive versions of the same commodity, or by consuming more than one thing at a time, or by consuming it more rapidly. A modern example of people attempting to maximize their leisure time may be observed in the fitness craze of the 1980s and 1990s. Men and women go to the gym and ride stationary bikes or use stair-masters to improve their fitness level in the least amount of time possible. While working out on these machines people frequently read or listen to music, activities which once were a leisure pursuits unto themselves. However, there are some activities that are not possible to speed up, such as eating or sleeping, or the

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<sup>11</sup> Goodale and Godbey, The Evolution of Leisure, 133.

<sup>12</sup> Goodale and Godbey, The Evolution of Leisure, 132.

cultivation of the mind. Yet, with the maximization of consumption the time devoted to these activities becomes less and less. For these reasons, states sociologist Susan M. Shaw, it has been suggested that true leisure is not possible within a capitalist society, "since passive consumerism and the mass production of consumption leads to alienated free time rather than leisure."<sup>13</sup> In the evolution of leisure we have gone from one extreme to another. Where once many people did not have an opportunity for leisure separate from labour, now people forgo their leisure time to work to purchase material possessions. The pursuits which the ancient Greeks saw as ultimate leisure activities, such as reading and writing have been minimized in order to maximize consumption.

This maximization of consumption may also be seen in how people choose to use what leisure time they do have. The turn of the century marks the beginning of mass consumption, not just in material goods but also in leisure activities, or the combination of both. Susan Porter Benson's book Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores explores a transformed women's culture that developed in American department stores between 1890-1940. The department store allowed women to combine their time use. She was able to merge the time she had to buy necessary items with a leisure activity that provided her with a distinct culture of her own. Benson contends the culture of consumption shaped

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<sup>13</sup> Susan M. Shaw, "The Sexual Division of Leisure: The Development of a Model," CSAA Meetings, Draft Copy, May 1981, 2. Shaw sights the works of Erich Fromm (1955), C. Wright Mills (1963) and Martin Marcuse (1977) as those who suggest true leisure is not possible within a capitalist society.

the saleswomen, managers, and customers to buy goods and services not only as a means of fulfilling a basic need, but also as a way of "enhancing psychic well-being and social standing."<sup>14</sup> The shopping phenomenon that began at the turn of the century exemplifies the use of leisure time as a maximum consumption activity. Shoppers, primarily women, were encouraged to spend their time shopping not only as a means of purchasing necessities, but as part of a larger means of maximizing one's leisure and consumption time. These palaces of consumption offered more than just a place to purchase goods. Benson states that these department complexes modelled their stores along two complementary lines: as a home and as a club. Department stores tried to create an atmosphere of home so the shoppers surroundings were void of the idea of trade and commerce and thus leaving the consumer vulnerable and willing to buy. The downtown department store also acted as a club for women. "The department store provided both accommodations and service to ease the rigours of consumption for females much as men's clubs eased the burdens of paid employment for men."<sup>15</sup> Women were drawn to department stores for reasons that were completely separate from buying. Women spent hours in department stores, whether she bought something or not, socializing with her friends. Thus the department store provided women with a socially acceptable way to spend their time enjoying the excitement of downtown while in the comforts of a woman centred environment of comfort and civility.

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<sup>14</sup> Susan Porter Benson, Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986) 3.

<sup>15</sup> Benson, Counter Culture, 83.

Kathy Peiss in her ground breaking work Cheap Amusements: Working Class Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York, recognizes a similar pattern of consumption in mass culture amusements. Peiss demonstrates that the youth culture of New York City preferred to use their leisure time consuming the cheap amusements offered in the city. Movies houses, dance halls and amusement parks all offered young working class people the chance to spend their hard earned money to be entertained. This environment also served a dual purpose, especially for young women. Not only were women able to escape the drudgery of the factory or shop floor, but they also created their own autonomous heterosocial culture.<sup>16</sup>

One of the primary ways in which women's time use differs from that of men's is that they frequently used their time for more than one purpose, often completing necessary tasks during leisure activities. Until recently this dual use of time has not been recognized by sociologists or historians.<sup>17</sup> Much of the work done on leisure has focussed on men and therefore does not recognize that women experienced leisure time differently, but in order to understand the female perception of leisure it is first necessary to recognize how men experience leisure. As discussed earlier, industrialization saw the separation of home and work time, while relegating women to

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<sup>16</sup> Kathy Piess explains heterosocial culture as one where both sexes participated in the same activities.

<sup>17</sup> For an examination of women's multiple time use see: Beryl Madoc-Jones and Jennifer Coates, ed., An Introduction to Women's Studies, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996); Erica Winbush and Margart Talbot, eds., Relative Freedoms: Women and Leisure, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1988); Karla A. Henderson, et al., A Leisure of One's Own: A Feminist Perspective on Women's Leisure, State College: Venture Publishing, Inc., 1989).

the home and men to the work place. The consequence was the dichotomy between work and leisure: leisure become what work was not. Another distinction is that work is paid and other activities are not. In addition to this, work for men is also regarded as 'full-time'.<sup>18</sup> Yet another idea is the notion of leisure as a commodity available after working hours. For men leisure came to be thought of as something one may possess or use once away from work. For those in paid work, the return home at the end of the day marked the transition from a work to non-work environment. The home came to symbolize the place where much non-work time was spent, and consequently most leisure activities took place. Thus the concept of home became central to the distinguishing between work and leisure. The final distinction between male work and leisure was the recognition of obligation and freedom. According to sociologist Stanley Parker, time outside of work is divided into existence-time and leisure time. Existence time is the hours allocated for personal hygiene, eating and sleeping, while leisure time is the period when a person is free from such obligations and may choose how to spend their time.<sup>19</sup> For women, on the other hand, leisure as distinct from work was not usually a relevant concept.

For women time was measured differently than that of men. While men's time was measured according to the clock or political events women's time was measured more on the basis of family events or major turning points in the life cycle. As Margaret

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<sup>18</sup> Madoc-Jones and Coates, An Introduction to Women's Studies, 117.

<sup>19</sup> Madoc-Jones and Coates, An Introduction of Women's Studies, 117.

Conrad has noted in her analysis of Maritime women's personal and private documents, women marked time according to things that happened to them or to their family. Conrad notes that while women who worked for wages did reckon time by the hand of the clock, "even if the work hours reflected domestic rather than industrial rhythms...Women who worked in the home, in contrast, rarely mentioned a specific time of day."<sup>20</sup> Most women used family time as opposed to industrial time as a way of measuring the passage of time. Tamara Hareven's book Family Time & Industrial Time describes family time as that designated to "the timing of such life-course events as marriage, the birth of a child, a young adult's departure from the home, and the transition of individuals into different family roles, as the family moves through life." In contrast industrial time is based upon production schedules and

changes in work organization and relations in the overall context of industrial capitalism...[and] more broadly defined, industrial time encompasses the industrial culture governing behaviour and relations in the workplace and industrial communities.<sup>21</sup>

The difference between these assumptions about time measurement must be acknowledged if we are to understand the value of women's time and to dispel the myth and break the stereotypes of women's time use. For example, Hareven disagrees with the prevailing notion that industrialization broke down the family, arguing that the family survived by adapting and becoming an active force in the factory system. Her insight

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<sup>20</sup> Margaret Conrad, "'Sunday's Always Make Me Think of Home': Time and Place in Canadian Women's History," Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., 1991) 104.

<sup>21</sup> Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time & Industrial Time, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 7.



comes from examining the lives of women within their appropriate context - the specific experience within the family. Acknowledging the changes within the family and recognizing that the way the family adapted to industrialization more frequently strengthened and not weakened the family. As Conrad notes, women have distinct experiences and values and consequently have made unique contributions to culture. Also, there are many women's cultures that must be studied in order to fully grasp the complexities of women's lives. A uniform study of women results in misconceptions and stereotypes, when in reality the lives of women are affected by their age, ethnicity and class. To group all women together and assume they all experienced, used and valued time in the same ways invalidates the uniqueness of their lives. Therefore, the different cultures of women placed within a domestic and community context, and measured according to family time, provides a more complete view of women's values and perceptions of time.

For women who spent their time in a domestic setting, their work does not fit the conventional concepts of work. In fact, sociologists Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw and Frysinger observe, homemakers were often perceived as not earning the right to leisure because they were not making a valued financial contribution to the family. Therefore, "leisure was an experience seen as existing outside the realm of many women's rights or needs."<sup>22</sup> Consequently, for those who believed this true, women often felt guilty about any time they took for themselves. Another misperception about women's time was, and is, that all her time was leisure. Many saw the homemaker's

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<sup>22</sup> Henderson, et al., A Leisure of One's Own, 28.

time as free time to be filled with childcare and domestic chores. "This work was to be done "at her leisure" or perhaps more accurately "as her leisure"."<sup>23</sup> This inaccurate perception resulted in the devaluing of women's time. Women from all classes, but especially from the lower classes, had very little time they could call their own. These misconceptions about women's use of time came from measuring and valuing women's time in the same way that men's time is measured and valued.

Traditionally women's work takes place in the home, is not paid work and usually stretches throughout the day, and does not allow for a clear distinction between work and non-work time. Women at home frequently do more than one thing at a time, remain isolated throughout the day, and have no clear end to their day. In the nineteenth century, when men returned home from work they were able to escape the drudgery and harshness of work, and could indulge in pursuits of their choice. Women rarely left the home, so there was no clear recognition of when work was over and leisure time began. Certainly women might have the choice to decide the content and pattern of their day, but they did not have the freedom to choose the activity. Women were rarely free from obligation - there was always housework to be done, children to take care of, and a host of other domestic duties. Even during down time, there was always a sense that something more useful could be done. One strategy women used to cope with the constraints on their leisure time was to engage in work and leisure at the same time. The turn-of-the-century quilting-bee functioned as a time when women joined together to form a necessary task, but it was also a time for women to socialize

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<sup>23</sup> Henderson, et al., A Leisure of One's Own, 29.

with each other<sup>24</sup>. Similarly, the modern woman might iron and watch television at the same time, completing her domestic chores while relaxing. Married women with children found themselves in the position of using their leisure time for a dual purpose. Marriage and children further constrained women's individual leisure, yet she did find leisure in the company of her husband and children for this was often the only way she could experience social time.

The amount of time women were able to make available for leisure activities depended upon their financial position. At the heart of capitalism was the accumulation of wealth, a process that led to the emergence of a class marked by its ownership of capital and capacity for consumption. A woman from the working class had little time available to complete all her domestic responsibilities. The middle class 'lady' emerged as a model for the wives and mothers of the wealthier classes. Although the lady had the resources to hire domestic help and to buy mechanisms to speed up the time spent in household labour, she too had tremendous responsibilities that kept her from many leisure activities. Although she differed from her working-class sister in that she was not bound to a life of toil inside and outside of the home, she did have constraints on her time. Increasingly the middle class woman's time was allocated to the management of non-work activities and maintaining a certain respectable lifestyle. Most of her time was spent meeting the demands of her family, so her opportunities for leisure were carefully protected. When women did participate in leisure activities, it was dominated

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<sup>24</sup> Scott Robson and Sharon MacDonald, *Old Nova Scotian Quits*, (Halifax: Nimbus Press, 1995). Thanks to Sharon, who is currently working on her thesis (untitled) at Saint Mary's University, for suggesting this example.

by the consciousness that they might be doing something else more useful, or that they are constantly on display as potential life mates or as the representative of their family. Nevertheless, as more and more women earned a role in public life they were often able to escape this position. Society became accustomed to seeing women in roles outside the home and therefore were not as scornful of their time use.<sup>25</sup>

Women's leisure time was constrained even further by the ideology of separate spheres and concepts of respectability. Both of these dictated how women used their time and how this time was valued. According to separate spheres ideology women occupied a domestic sphere, with a focus on raising children and creating an ideal home. Men on the other hand lived a more public life, dominating the public sphere outside the home. Separate spheres ideology has been used to connote a middle class world in which women, excluded from the public arena, protected the values associated with piety, purity and domesticity against a competitive, aggressive and individualistic world. Victorian women were held in high esteem for their piety and morality, an attitude that perpetuated what has become known as the 'cult of domesticity'.<sup>26</sup> The cult of domesticity required women to use their time to maintain a

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<sup>25</sup> Bonnie Huskins, "The Ceremonial Space of Women: Public Processions in Victorian Saint John and Halifax," in Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, eds., Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Maritimes (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994) 145-159 argues that the more frequently women participated in public processions during the late Victorian period the more accepted they became in these ceremonies. The same conclusion may be made about women's increased role outside the home; the more women were active in the public sphere the more people became accustomed to this behaviour.

<sup>26</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, A New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988) uses this term to

perfect home, raise moral children and live a respectable life style.

Women were both constrained and provided with opportunities within the context of separate spheres ideology. Alice Kessler-Harris writes that although historians first perceived

separate spheres as an ideology adapted by women to justify their exclusion from public life and to rationalize the effects of an economy that increasingly removed production from the household, [historians] have, more recently found in the idea the capacity for women to create networks of female power and access to political influence.<sup>27</sup>

Thus emerges the notion that separate spheres ideology, once used to explain and justify women's limited world of domesticity, may now be applied to analyse how women used their social place as a means of power. Time and again women challenged the notion of separate spheres, negotiating a space for themselves in the public sphere.<sup>28</sup> As Kessler-Harris points out, this changing perception of the notion of separate spheres ideology allows historians to evaluate women on the basis of their experience, rather than upon a prescriptive ideology.

Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton's collection of essays on women and the public and private spheres identifies how Maritime women challenged the separate

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identify societies conviction that a woman's place was in the private sphere.

<sup>27</sup> Alice Kessler-Harris, "Gender Ideology in Historical Reconstruction: A Case Study from the 1930s," Gender and History, Vol 1, No 1, Spring 1989, 32; see also Guildford and Morton, ed., Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th Century Maritimes, 9-21.

<sup>28</sup> Penny Russell, 'A Wish of Distinction': Colonial Gentility and Femininity (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994) provides an example of this type of separate spheres ideology at work among the female elite of colonial Melbourne in nineteenth-century Australia.

spheres ideology and used it as a tool for their own advancement. They note that Maritime "women moved freely between the so-called public sphere of the market, religion and politics and the private sphere of home, despite expectations that women in their society would fulfil domestic roles."<sup>29</sup> Women used the separate spheres ideology as a way of shaping their lives within the conditions they found themselves. Victorian conventions placed women in a morally superior position, relegating their role to the home and family, and women were able to use this position to extend their role beyond the home and into the public sphere.

It is important to note here that separate spheres was a class based ideology. As Guildford and Morton have noted, "Separate spheres has been a powerful cultural tool of middle-class hegemony, and the contribution of middle-class women to the acceptance and elaboration of the ideology has been an important part of garnering middle-class power and credibility."<sup>30</sup> The availability of leisure time was also affected by class differences. Middle-class women had more leisure time than their lower or working class sisters; middle class women did not have as many household tasks since they often had the finances to hire domestic help.

Separate spheres ideology also extended to how women used their time and how that time was valued. Although conceptually women were not part of the public sphere, they did become quite involved in this world. The advances women took into

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<sup>29</sup> Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, eds., Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes, (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994) 9.

<sup>30</sup> Guildford and Morton, Separate Spheres, 11.

the world of politics and sports demonstrates how they negotiated the separate spheres ideology, crossing over into the public domain. Women used the power they had as maternal creatures to establish themselves in the public sphere, proving they could maintain their femininity.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, as more women entered the labour force, women began to demand similar leisure time activities as men. Women negotiated their social space to include the public sphere of sports and politics. In doing so women were also able alter the value and perceptions society placed on the time they spent physically active from an inappropriate use of time to time well spent.

Historians have acknowledged that ideas of respectability also played a vital part in limiting the actions of women, yet the doctrine of separate spheres allowed women to use the image of respectability to their advantage.<sup>32</sup> Joy Parr examines the effect of respectability on working women in her book, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women.

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<sup>31</sup> For a comprehensive examination of maternal feminism in Halifax at the turn of the century see Michael J. Smith, "Female Reformers in Victorian Nova Scotia: Architects of a New Womanhood," MA Thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1986.

<sup>32</sup> For further reading on regional accounts of respectability: Judith Fingard, "Race and Respectability in Victorian Halifax," The Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History, Vol 20, No 2, 169-195; Colin Howell, Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) and Susan Morton, Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). Other international work includes: Simon Cordery, "Friendly Societies and the Discourse of Respectability in Britain, 1825-1875," Journal of British Studies, Vol 34, No 1, January 1995, 35-58; Judy Whitehead, "Bodies Clean and Unclean: Prostitution, Sanitation Legislation, and Respectable Femininity in Colonial North India," Gender and History, Vol7, No 1, April 1995, 41-63; Ava Baron, ed., Work Endangered: Towards a New History of American Labour, (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1991); F. M. L. Thompson, The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900, (London: Fontana Press, 1988).

Men and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1890, in which she demonstrates how the concept of respectability changed from an understanding of how men and women were to behave, to something that became part of the very fibre of what it meant to be male or female. Respectability permeated all realms of society and dictated suitable behaviour, dress, and codes of conduct between men and women, and between classes.

...women embodied respectability or the lack of it, in their dress, public habits, and of course, sexual behaviour. Respectability might once have been genteel, part of the regalia of a particular class, but it has become womanliness, woven into the whole cloth of gender.<sup>33</sup>

Respectability became the virtue that existed in the self-image of women as mothers and homemakers, but also formed their sense of rights and responsibilities beyond the domestic sphere. Respectability was a way for women of the working class to put themselves on the same levels as women in other classes. It was also a sign of resistance, women used their sense of respectability to distinguish themselves from those whom they regarded as inferior. Respectability also affected how women used their leisure time, since women were less inclined to participate in a leisure activity if it jeopardised their respectability.<sup>34</sup>

Suzanne Morton's detailed analysis of the Halifax community of Richmond heights during the 1920s explores the implications of respectability for working class women. She writes that the "...notion of respectability was not forced upon these

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<sup>33</sup> Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners, 104.

<sup>34</sup> Suzanne Morton, Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) 38.



women, since it offered many women status in their community and pride in its attainment."<sup>35</sup> Attaining respectability was a skill that took years to perfect and could be destroyed with a single disreputable action. Respectability included not only the standards of femininity, appropriate dress, public and private behaviour (including sexuality), spending habits, but also the actions of the family. Morton notes that the ability of the woman to control her children was considered an important characteristic of respectability. The maintenance of respectability influenced how women spent their time. Not only were women judged on how they spent their time - idleness was not acceptable - but respectability also limited the amount of time women had for their own leisure.

Women spent their time making sure their family and home reflected the appropriate image to the neighbourhood. Children and women had to be properly dressed before they were to appear in public. The Halifax Relief Commission records, as investigated by Morton, indicates that women were particularly concerned with how the appearance of their children reflected the family. Many working class women found it financially difficult to maintain these standards of dress, given their limited family income. In order to escape this predicament, many women often had to use their time to take on additional work - taking on boarders, piece work, or domestic service. Although women's leisure time was already limited by her own domestic responsibilities, additional work resulted in even less leisure time.

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<sup>35</sup> Morton, Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s, 38.

Respectability was also reflected in the home - its level of cleanliness, decoration and maintenance. It was important that the home space reflect the appropriate values and standards of the family. Kathy Peiss notes that families went into debt to buy nice furniture so they could exhibit the necessary image, since for many "respectability was denoted by one's furnishings, even when purchased on an instalment plan."<sup>36</sup> Perfecting appearances took up a great deal of women's time. The home was cleaned, decorated and manicured, while women also spent significant portions of time beautifying themselves. Consequently, women had very little time left for leisure. It is difficult to judge if women resented this time spent, for it was something they were socialized to accept as their role. In fact, it is likely that many women enjoyed the process of maintaining their respectable household.

This in turn calls into question the definition of leisure, for if a chore is pleasurable should the time it takes be considered leisure time? Sociologist Steven Nock contends that this situation complicates our understanding of leisure.

Cooking meals...is a central task in household production, but what if the cook enjoys the activity and goes beyond providing sustenance, perhaps even with some creative flourish? Preparing a good meal may be the most pleasurable part of the individual's day - in effect, may be that person's leisure.<sup>37</sup>

Nock points out that there is a great difference between cooking for pleasure and cooking to fulfil daily requirements, complicating the quantitative assessment of time

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<sup>36</sup> Peiss, Cheap Amusements, 24.

<sup>37</sup> Steven L. Nock, "The Division of Leisure and Work," Social Science Quarterly, Vol 70, No 1, March 1989, 27; see also the study of women's time use by Juanita Firestone and Beth Anne Shelton, "An Estimation of the Effects of Women's Work on Available Leisure Time," Journal of Family Issues, Vol 9, No 4, December 1988, 482.

use. Many women find some household tasks enjoyable, especially if they offer an escape from the daily routine, and relish the time they spent performing the activity. Using a sociological method of measurement it is difficult, if not impossible to assess the value women placed on this kind of time use.

The evaluation of women's leisure time has not been assessed adequately by using traditional quantitative methods. For scholars taking this approach time use is assessed on the basis of how much time is used, when it is used and how much of it is used according to specific divisions such as: work time, leisure time, existence time (eating, sleeping). Social scientists analyse time diaries in which people have recorded their use of time according to specific categories. Steven Noch's model for time assessment is a typical example of quantitative time use analysis employed by many sociologists. He measures the dependent variables using three broad categories of leisure; which are: active leisure consisting of all forms of physical exercise and social interaction; passive leisure, those activities presumed pleasurable and require little physical effort such as reading, going for a drive and conversations; and TV-radio-phone leisure activities. These categories were then assessed on the basis of six independent variables - paid work, housework, marital status, life cycle factors, socioeconomic status and gender. Using this quantitative methodology Noch concluded that the more work a person has (domestic or paid), the less leisure time they have.<sup>38</sup>

Although leisure time measured quantitatively does reveal what people used

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<sup>38</sup> Noch, "The Division of Leisure and Work," 27-37.

their time for, such detailed studies do not account for the value of that time. In addition, quantitative methods often provide an inadequate measurement of the use of time by women. Firstly, women's time use is not neatly packaged into convenient categories of analysis because, as noted earlier women often used their time for multiple purposes. Secondly, women's time use must be put into its proper context. An analysis of what she used her time for must also include an examination of why she used her time as she did. A proper appreciation of historical circumstance places women firmly within a patriarchal society, recognizes her inferior social status and her relegation to traditional functions based on sexuality, reproduction and child-care. And thirdly, women's time and choices of time use are circumscribed by her age, ethnic origin, and class.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the study of women's time must be more than an assessment of the quantity of leisure, although this is significant, but also the measurement of the quality of time and the freedom associated with leisure choices.

The women of all classes, ages and ethnicities in Halifax between 1880-1930 found their use of time both constrained and strengthened by the role they were

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<sup>39</sup> For further reading on patriarchy, sexuality, ethnicity, age and social position see: Ruth A. Frager, "Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Eaton Strikes of 1912 and 1934," & Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First Wave Feminism," in Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, eds., Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Suzanne Morton, "Elder Men and Women in a Halifax Working-Class Suburb During the 1920s," in Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld, eds., Gender and History in Canada, (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1996); Ramsi Haddad and Carmen Schifellite, "Evaluative Studies of Science: The Case of Patriarchal Bias in Modern Virology," & Bert Young "Feminism and Masculinism: A Backlash Response," in Tony Haddad, ed., Men and Masculinities: A Critical Anthology, (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 1993).

expected to play in society. According to the prevailing Victorian ideal, women should act as wife, mother and care-giver to all. She was socialized to put her family first and everything else was to be put aside to fulfil this role.<sup>40</sup> Leisure time was usually, therefore, given very low priority. Women, however, did defy this traditional role, often using their maternal status to negotiate a space in a sphere where they were not traditionally accepted. While some Halifax women used their time to fight for social reforms, such as women's suffrage and the temperance movement, other women carved a place for themselves in the worlds of sports and amusements. Such activities were carried out within the context of their family responsibilities, yet in activities beyond the home women challenged the tradition of women's sole commitment to the family. In fact, by the turn of the century, some women came to question the nature of their domestic and familial responsibilities and used their time to pursue other activities, while still having time to fulfil their familiar duties.

This thesis will support this analysis by examining how the women of Halifax used their time between 1880 - 1930 and how that time was perceived and valued not only by society, but by the women themselves. The period 1880-1930 is significant for several reasons. The 1880s are frequently regarded as a turning point in North American history, since it was a period of rapid industrial development, social reform

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<sup>40</sup> Deborah Gorham, The Victorian Girl and the Feminist Ideal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) 3-12.

movements, and economic optimism. The period beginning in 1880 marked Nova Scotia's largest period of industrial expansion, bringing with it a whole host of new social and economic developments. With industrialization came the progressive reform impulse which swept across North America and in Nova Scotia this impulse resulted, according to Colin Howell, in the call for peaceful resolution of labour disputes, a scientific approach to problems of social and moral degeneracy, the establishment of an effective public-health system, a more positive or interventionist state, the transcendence of political partisanship and religious sectarianism, and a commitment to various forms of social regeneration, from temperance to child savings to physical culture, recreation, and sport.<sup>41</sup>

Part of this progressive reform initiative encompassed the Canadian women's movement. Many women, like many men, were disturbed by the industrial transformation of Canadian Society between the early 1880s and the end of the Great War. The abuses of the factory system, the influx of urban dwellers which brought overcrowding and disorder to the cities, and the erosion of women and children's general welfare caused many middle class women to become involved in the social reform movement. Women actively campaigned for regulations, tighter controls and laws for a wide range of social maladies. Most women began their social activism by championing more genteel causes like access to higher education, female dress reform and bicycle-riding for women. These early campaigns branched out into more public

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<sup>41</sup> Colin Howell, "The 1900s: Industry, Urbanization, and Reform," in E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muise, ed., The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 156 - 157.

activities which included campaigns for child welfare, public health, and stricter factory regulations. As women found success beyond the domestic realm they also campaigned for more political opportunities for women such as the right to hold public office, temperance and suffrage.<sup>42</sup>

The Great War had a tremendous impact on the Maritimes in general and specifically on women. Prior to the war it was becoming apparent that the region's industrial success was in decline. The war helped to avert this impending crisis as it stimulated industrial progress while maintaining the progressive initiatives of the previous decades. World War One not only helped the Maritime population by temporarily averting an economic crisis, it also provided new opportunities for women. The war stimulated strategies to regulate public morals, including campaigns against venereal disease and for rational recreation, the belief that physical activity would prepare a person to better carry out their occupational pursuits. The greatest amount of energy went into the regulation of drinking, a crusade in which women were very much the catalysts. Women's efforts during the war also included the co-ordination of relief for Canadian soldiers and their families, replacing the male work force in the factories, volunteering in hospitals and medical clinics, and even "ran a factory for the production of hospital clothing and surgical dressings for the wounded."<sup>43</sup> The War afforded women the opportunity to prove themselves as able to operate beyond

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<sup>42</sup> Not all women supported this move into the public sphere. For more information on how women responded to this move see chapter 3 of this thesis.

<sup>43</sup> Howell, "The 1900s: Industry, Urbanization, and Reform," *Forbes and Muise, The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, 211.

domesticity, consequently earning a position in the public sphere.

The period of study for the present thesis could easily have ended here, for it was during the concluding years of the 1910s that the first wave of women's activism reached fruition. By the end of World War I women had been successful in many campaigns for women and children's welfare, proven themselves capable in public office and had been granted the right to vote. This study, however, extends to 1930 in order to assess the impact of reform movements on women's lives during the 1920s. In Nova Scotia, as in the rest of North America, the end of World War I marks a turning point. After the war Nova Scotia suffered from a prolonged economic crisis, continued out migration to the United States, industrial welfare in the coal and steel industries, the rise and fall of Farmer and Labour parties, the Maritime Rights Movement, and the introduction of stringent welfare programs.<sup>44</sup> Janne Cleveland and Margaret Conrad contrast the pre-war years with the inter-war years when they explain that during the pre-war years the emphasis was on control, "self-denial, self-discipline, duty, religiosity, and sensibilities." By the 1920s they noted that "self-discipline began to give way to self-fulfilment, self-denial to self-gratification, duties to rights, religion to therapy, and sensibility to sexuality."<sup>45</sup> These contrasts emerged as a result of the rise of corporate capitalism, the beginnings of a welfare state, and the mass consumer culture that

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<sup>44</sup> David Frank, "The 1920s: Class and Region, Resistance and Accommodation," in Forbes and Muise, The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation, 233 - 305.

<sup>45</sup> Janne Cleveland and Margaret Conrad, " "But Such is Life in a Large City": Mary Dulhanty's Mount Saint Vincent Diary, 1926-1927."



emerged throughout North America after the Great War.

For women, especially young women, this meant greater freedoms in the 1920s than in the previous decades. As more young women entered the work force the image of ideal womanhood changed from that of “self-sacrificing mother” to that of a working girl. Although working women were confined often by repetitive and unfulfilling jobs which offered low wages and long hours, they did have a freedom and mobility their mothers had not had. Young women were also able to take advantage of the space their mothers had carved for them in the public sphere throughout the previous decades.<sup>46</sup> The extension of the period of study for this thesis up to 1930 provides some insight into how Halifax women were able to take advantage of some of their mother’s efforts. Some of the gains included greater access to sports and recreation, a space within the public political sphere and the increased participation in mass consumer entertainment.

The next chapter of this thesis, “Women and Physical Activity: Perceptions and Values of Time Spent Involved in Sport and Recreation,” highlights the changing patterns of women’s involvement in sport and recreational activities. This chapter confirms what Michael Smith has suggested, that participation in sports, especially

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<sup>46</sup> Veronica Strong -Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919 - 1939, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988) notes that in the 1920s and 1930s women did not necessarily take advantage of the changes brought on by the first wave feminists. She writes that the years following World War I, women had the opportunity to take advantage of the new direction for women in areas of child care, education, employment, domestic technology, and even politics. Although few women lived as their mothers had, “equally few found themselves able or willing to experiment with the sexual autonomy and material abundance embodied in the contemporary image of the flapper (2).

competitive ones, were not considered a respectable use of women's time.<sup>47</sup> Victorian conventions placed women in a morally superior position, relegating their role to the home and family. Here it is also evident that British historian Patricia Vertinsky's conviction that time was to be used maintaining this role and was considered far too valuable to waste on physical pursuits, also applied to Halifax women. Women were also regarded as frail creatures - participation in sports was regarded as harmful to women's health.<sup>48</sup> An unhealthy woman would not be able to fulfil her ultimate duty - motherhood. However, despite these obstacles women's involvement in sports and recreation increases between the years 1880 and 1930, and this chapter investigates how this was achieved. It also explores how the value placed on the time women used to pursue sports and recreation was transformed and argues that while women's involvement was not welcomed in all areas of sports, over the course of this fifty year period the perceptions of their involvement were altered fundamentally.

Chapter three, "Leisure as Politics: Women's Time and Social Reform," examines how women became active in the political sphere. Halifax, as much of the western world, was suffering from the consequences of industrial capitalism - poverty, crime, intemperance, and disease. Since all of these consequences affected the home but also directly affected women, many upper middle class women entered into the

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<sup>47</sup> Michael Smith, "Sports and Society: Towards a Synthetic History?," Acadiensis, Vol 18, Spring 1989, 152.

<sup>48</sup> Patricia Vertinsky, The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) 75.

realm of politics in pursuit of social reform. Nevertheless, as sociologists Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw and Frysinger, as well as historian Madoc-Jones noted in their separate works, homemakers were often perceived as not having earned the right to leisure time since they did not contribute financially to the house hold. The value placed on women's time in the public sphere suffered from the same perception. The social reform work women did was not as highly valued because it was not paid work, despite the fact that they often did similar work as paid male political figures. Consequently women had to find a different way to have their worked valued. Women were able to enter into the public sphere not only by maintaining their femininity and respectability, but also by doing work that became invaluable to society. They did this by taking on the role of government by focussing on the welfare of women and children - thus entering into the political sphere. Despite the separate spheres theory many women rejected this ideology when they became social reformers. This chapter examines how women used their leisure time to pursue reforms both within the private and public spheres, how this time use was valued by different social groups and how these women were able to successfully negotiate a space for themselves in the male-dominated world of political live.

Chapter four, "Entertainment Time: Social and Cheap Amusements," explores how women used their time for pleasure. There were many constraints placed upon women's time which consequently limited their ability to seek entertainment. The separate spheres ideology that kept women in the home taking care of their domestic responsibilities severely limited women's access to traditional and popular forms of

entertainment. Few women had enough time to complete all their obligations let alone find time for recreation. Leisure time use for women was not only constrained by gender norms, but also social position, age, marital status and ethnicity. All the same, most married women, regardless of class, usually spent their amusement time with their family, but married women of the upper and middle classes frequently used their leisure time fulfilling their social roles - attending or organizing endless luncheons, social teas or balls. A young single working women, who had more flexibility in their time use, were constrained by what society believed to be an appropriate use of leisure time. Many of these young women preferred to spend their time on the streets, dance halls, movie theatres and amusement parks. Despite attempts by reformers to curtail these activities, many women continued to use their time pursuing these new commercialized forms of leisure. By doing so these young women moved from the private to the public sphere notwithstanding societal expectations. Their behaviours were influenced by what was considered respectable for their social group, however their insistence on spending their time pursuing these activities helped to transform what was considered a respectable use of time for young women. In keeping with Morton's analysis this chapter demonstrates that women worked hard at maintaining their social status in the community, yet each group had its own standards by which to measure their respectability.<sup>49</sup> Many women were able to change what was acceptable behaviour as long as they did so gradually while maintaining their femininity and this was also the case for women who perused commercial forms of entertainment. The new popular

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<sup>49</sup> Morton, Ideal Surroundings, 38.

mass culture could be participated in so long as women did not reject their womanly qualities. Yet, as women became increasingly attracted to these new forms of entertainment they set new standards of acceptable behaviour according to their own values and notions of respectability. Goodale and Godbey have argued that leisure time came to be time used for the consumption of goods and services and this development can also be seen in Halifax with the increase in the amount of time young women spent going to the movies, shopping, and in other forms of commercial entertainment such as amusement parks, the circus and dancing.

In addition to examining how women used their leisure time, how their choices were valued by society, and how many of these choices challenged the boundaries of domesticity often creating an autonomous space for women, chapter four also raises the issue of control. Many historians, including Carol Lee Bacchi have suggested that the middle class reformers sought to control the time use of working class women, reflecting their beliefs about how people should appropriately spend their time. Although their intent was to reform working class women, it is questionable whether middle class females had the power to control the women they wished to protect and elevate. This is evident by the fact that the working class women rejected any actions by the middle class activists that they felt were too regimented or confining. Young working women used their time as they pleased and were not directly influenced by what the reformers advocated as a proper use of time. What we see throughout the period of this study is the increased consumption of commercial forms of leisure by young women.

Throughout these chapters the focus is on not only how women used their leisure time, but also on the values and perceptions placed on that time use. Despite the problems associated with quantitative assessments, it will still be necessary for this investigation to examine how much time women used to pursue certain activities, before progressing to a qualitative assessment. Nevertheless, since this thesis attempts to reveal the value placed on women's time and how and why these values changed, the bulk of this discussion will be in the form of a qualitative assessment - the most useful method of uncovering changing perceptions.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Women and Physical Activity: Perceptions and Values of Time Spent Involved in Sports and Recreation**

The sporting culture in turn of the century Halifax reflects many of the fundamental issues in of Victorian Society.<sup>50</sup> Health and sexuality, class conflict, dress reform, gender and respectability were all involved in the debates surrounding the struggle by women to have sport and recreation become recognized as legitimate means of spending one's leisure time.<sup>51</sup> The value placed on time by all classes and both sexes had a profound impact on how women's entry into the world of sports and recreation was accepted or rejected in Victorian Halifax between 1880-1930. The emergence of a capitalist economy fashioned time as a commodity, an entity a person could control. "In a mature capitalist society all time must be consumed, marketed, put to use; it is offensive...to merely 'pass the time'"<sup>52</sup> Leisure time became radically segmented from work time and was packaged into predictable intervals. Increasingly a

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<sup>50</sup> Michael Smith, "Female Reformers in Victorian Nova Scotia: Architects of a New Womanhood" MA Thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1986; Colin Howell, Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball ( Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Beverley Williams, "Leisure as Contested Terrain in Late Nineteenth Century Halifax," MA Thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1991.

<sup>51</sup> Throughout this thesis the word sport is used to connote "an athletic activity requiring skill or physical prowess and often of a competitive nature" (The Random House College Dictionary, 1988), while recreation incorporates non-competitive exercise requiring little skill and athletic ability.

<sup>52</sup> E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," Past and Present, Vol 38, 1967, 60; also see Gary Cross, A Social History of Leisure Since 1600 (State College: Venture Publishing, 1990).

day's work meant the selling of time rather than a "way of life".

Employers placed monetary value on the hour and sought to increase its economic output; labourers responded in kind: they demanded overtime pay and a cap on the length of the "normal" work day... Workers became aware that time was a scarcity to be protected and increased in value.<sup>53</sup>

Industrial capitalism separated work time from leisure time while also making possible new forms of leisure, including the typical modern concept of free evenings, the weekend, paid summer vacations as well as a lengthy childhood and retirement. Workers attempted to recapture leisure hours lost during industrialization and reconceptualise it to suit their new lifestyle. Leisure time was also a way for workers to express their freedom and personal liberty from capitalist industrialization. "Workers who sold their time and labour and submitted to the bosses' control could daily assert a sense of independence..." in their non-work activities.<sup>54</sup>

This reconceptualization of time that accompanied capitalist development was not without conflict. The middle- and upper-classes used their leisure time differently from the working-class. The working classes were unable to go on lengthy holidays, as was becoming the custom of the middle-and upper-classes during the nineteenth century, since they were not able to relinquish an income for an extended period. Among the most popular ways of spending these short periods was sports and

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<sup>53</sup> Cross, A Social History of Leisure Since 1600, 74.

<sup>54</sup> Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986) 4; also see Roy Rosenzweig, Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,"; Cross, A Social History of Leisure Since 1600.



recreation. Class also dictated what form of recreation or sport a person participated in, since access to certain facilities and the respectability of an activity differed from class to class. Beverly Williams has shown that members of different classes, although participating in the same sport, adapted that sport to suit their circumstances, needs and values.<sup>55</sup> Sport and recreation were also segregated along gender lines. Men and women rarely participated in sport together and the level and intensity in which men and women participated in sport and recreation differed dramatically. When women wanted to participate in an activity, but were barred from doing so, they adapted the sport or renegotiated the boundaries which prevented their participation. Many women who chose to use their leisure time to pursue sport and recreation were deviating from the "respectable" use of time; their time was to be used wisely and for the family, not for physical activity. The entry of women into sport and recreation involved the renegotiation of social standards and changes in the value of time women spent involved in physical activities.

The changing pattern of women's involvement in sport and recreation was directly influenced, and frequently frustrated by Victorian images of womanhood. Analysis of women's involvement in sport and recreation reveals a direct correlation between these images of womanhood and notions of time. Women of any class were expected to spend their time involved in pursuits acceptable for women: domestic tasks, charitable works and even in the workplace. In Halifax, as in other parts of North

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<sup>55</sup> Williams, "Leisure as Contested Terrain in Late Nineteenth Century Halifax," 37-84.

America and Europe, women's energy was considered far too valuable to the home, family and society to be wasted on recreational pursuits. She should instead preserve her energy for household chores, social activism, employment, and most importantly childbirth. It was not until the benefits of sports and recreation on the health of women was acknowledged that women's sports become valued. Sports came to be recognized as a way for once weak and frail mothers to become strong and healthy women.

Sport was an important catalyst in transforming sexually precocious but physically fragile maidens into respectable yet robust Victorian mothers upon whom the preservation of the Anglo-Saxon race depended.<sup>56</sup>

An examination of the sporting culture of Victorian Halifax reveals how profoundly sports were used as a means of social control in which gender and class were important variables. As Kathleen McCrone has noted, sports were a useful means of reinforcing class distinctions, social standing, and gender. "In all classes the patterns of Victorian sport reflected clearly the different roles and privileges historically ascribed to the sexes."<sup>57</sup> The constraint of the physical body by the social body applied to both class and gender. At the root of both of these categories of analysis lies the value one group placed on the others use of time. While women remained in the home,

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<sup>56</sup> Smith, "Female Reformers in Victorian Nova Scotia," 74.

<sup>57</sup> Kathleen McCrone, "Class, Gender, and English Women's Sport, c. 1890-1914," Journal of Sport History, Vol. 18, No. 1., Spring 1991, 159. See also McCrone, Playing the Game: Sport and the Physical Education of English Women, 1870-1914 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988) 11-14; Helen Lenskyj, Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1986); Peter Bailey, Leisure and Class in Victorian England (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); Hugh Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c. 1780-1880 (London: Croom Helm, 1980).

men had to provide for their family as the breadwinner of the household. Women, who were to reserve their energy and time to fulfil their maternal role, must not waste their valuable time on athletic pursuits. This maternal role was symbolic of women's femininity, while the male role as breadwinner was decidedly masculine.

In his study of Maritime baseball, Colin Howell looks briefly at the cultural definition of masculinity, identifying changes in what was considered manful in the past. Over the centuries concepts of masculinity have become defined as the opposite of what was considered feminine. Biology was central to this argument since it was used to define what was appropriately masculine - physical stamina, mental acuity, and moral uprightness. On the sporting ground middle class reformers "sought to instill in young men the values of courage, individual initiative, teamwork, and social responsibility."<sup>58</sup> These were not qualities desired in females and consequently women were not urged to participate in sports and certain recreations. Females in the early 1800s were discouraged from participating in any form of physical activity, and women, especially urban women, were typically pale, physically unfit, and often ill. By the 1830s and 40s reformers, noting the particular weakness and frailty of women, began promoting some activities for women, such as walking, swimming and horseback riding, yet participation in strenuous activities were still discouraged for they were regarded as unhealthy and unladylike.

Indeed the Victorian preoccupation with female bodies, the range and effects of

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<sup>58</sup> Colin Howell, "A Manly Sport: Baseball and the Social Construct of Masculinity," in Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld, Gender and History in Canada, Toronto: Copps Clark Ltd., 1996, 188.

somatic determinism in nineteenth-century society, especially the fluidity of thought between science and medicine in matters of health, exercise and sport has become a seductive focus of enquiry for those seeking to understand the nature, meaning and determinants of the social and cultural restrictions which were constructed around the female body...<sup>59</sup>

Victorian social conventions, rather than biological potential, constrained women's participation in sport and healthy exercise. Howell and Wendy Mitchenson argue that gender differences were defined biologically to justify the social, physical and mental inequalities between men and women. Howell also points to the medical profession, where biological rationale was used to restrict women from sporting activities since "women's bodies were fundamentally unhealthy."<sup>60</sup> Mitchenson contends that doctors saw men's bodies "as the biological norm; in those areas where women's bodies deviated from men's they were considered problematic."<sup>61</sup> The "inherent biological weaknesses" of the female body were not to be exposed to the same rigorous activities, mental or physical, as those of men. Again the value placed on time is apparent here. While men were encouraged to spend their valuable time developing their masculinity through sports women were advised by their doctors and through Victorian ideals of womanhood that time spent involved in sports was actually harmful to their health, not to mention their social status. If women were to participate

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<sup>59</sup> Patricia A. Vertinsky, "Gender Relations, Women's History and Sport History: A Decade of Changing Enquiry, 1983-1993." Journal of Sport History, Vol. 21., No. 1., Spring 1994, 13-14..

<sup>60</sup> Howell, Northern Sandlots, 81; also see Helen Lenskyj, "Common Sense and Physiology: North American Medical Views on Women and Sport, 1890-1930," Canadian Journal of History of Sport, Vol 21, No 1, (May 1990), 49-64.

<sup>61</sup> Howell, Northern Sandlots, 81.

in sports and recreation it was to develop feminine beauty and grace, and not the physical and mental endurance that was encouraged for boy's sports.<sup>62</sup> What this meant was that the sports women were permitted to participate in were confined to things that would develop their feminine qualities, such as dance, figure skating or tennis. The use of time to participate in sports that would build strength or fitness were initially regarded as an inappropriate use of a woman's time. The value of time was manipulated to maintain the differences between the sexes.

As women challenged the traditional restrictions on education, work and leisure during the latter part of the nineteenth-century the medical community, including male and female doctors, reacted with efforts to establish women's physical and intellectual inferiority. Since women had smaller brains and lighter bones, it was advisable for them not to participate in any excessive intellectual or physical pursuits. Women were the morally superior gender and must not jeopardize this by involving themselves in anything which might cause them to fall from grace. Of course not all doctors adhered to these beliefs; some doctors strove to have women's health regarded as a priority over these socially constructed gender ideals.<sup>63</sup> Helen Lenskyj identifies two themes used by doctors in consideration of women's sporting participation: their unique anatomy and physiology, and their moral obligations, both of which disqualified women

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<sup>62</sup> Helen Lenskyj, "Femininity First: Sport and Physical Education for Ontario Girls, 1890-1930," in Morris Mott, Sports in Canada: Historical Readings, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1989)

<sup>63</sup> For a detailed analysis of Victorian women and their doctors see Wendy Mitchinson. The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

from rigorous physical activity.<sup>64</sup> Women were to preserve their time and energy for childbearing and to cultivate their role as wife and mother. Sports and recreation wasted this energy and created traits unbecoming of ideal womanhood.

Smith's work supports the conviction that doctors and sports experts regarded truly feminine women as naturally uncompetitive.

Appropriate physical exercise should improve women's suitability to their future maternal role; inappropriate, strenuous, competitive, or 'masculine' sports would degrade their femininity, ruin their appearance, and in short their chance at the ideal, marriage and motherhood.<sup>65</sup>

These nineteenth century attitudes did recognize the need for women to be involved in gentle and easy physical activities - unless the activity happened to be a rigorous domestic chore. Outdoor walking and other 'natural' forms of exercise were acceptable, however, "mature women needed to be assisted by their doctors in monitoring the required balance of rest and exercise for a life dedicated to healthy reproduction."<sup>66</sup>

By the turn of the century members of the medical community were questioning these longstanding restrictions on women's physical activity, although it was a slow process. Many physicians had read reports from Germany and Britain which suggested

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<sup>64</sup> Helen Lenskyj, Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality, (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1986), 18.

<sup>65</sup> Michael Smith, "Sport and Society: Towards a Synthetic History?," Acadiensis, Vol 18, Spring 1989, 152.

<sup>66</sup> Patricia Vertinsky, The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) 75.

that women who participated in sports were not actually harming their capacity for childbearing.<sup>67</sup> It is here that the belief that physical activities were unimportant for women and thus pursuing fitness an inappropriate use of time begins its transformation. From this realization programs were set up by schools and community organizations that allowed physical education to become a suitable way of spending part of ones day. Physical education programs in the schools systems throughout Europe and North America during the late Victorian period had noticeable class and gender distinctions. Each class had its own education and physical requirements, as did each sex.<sup>68</sup>

English private schools for boys developed an obsessive "cult of athleticism ... based on highly organized and competitive team games intended to build the character necessary in leaders and derogated physical training in the form of exercise systems."<sup>69</sup> Private schools for girls also developed a comprehensive and progressive physical education program that combined Swedish exercises<sup>70</sup> with competitive games. Prior to 1870, state run institutions, like the London School Board, gave little thought to the physical needs of the poor children. However, after 1876 the physical training of

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<sup>67</sup> Cross, A Social History of Leisure Since 1600, 83.

<sup>68</sup> Lenskyj, Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality, 20.

<sup>69</sup> McCrone, "Class, Gender, and English Women's Sport," 160.

<sup>70</sup> The Swedish system of exercise, developed in Stockholm in the late eighteenth century, was an elaborate system of free-standing movements without apparatus designed to cultivate all parts of the body harmoniously by gradually progressing from simple and gentle movements to more difficult and complicated ones. This system emphasised discipline, group work, and the repetition of identical movements, providing little room for individuality or creativity. Kathleen McCrone, "Class, Gender, and English Women's Sports," 161-162.

elementary school girls' was started based in the Swedish system. Ironically it was not until later in the decade that state run institutions adopted a physical training program for boys, although this training was quite different from that of girls. The girls training was based on physiological needs while boys training took the form of redundant, unimaginative military drill whose main purpose was to improve physiques and maintain discipline.<sup>71</sup>

A similar pattern is evident in the development of physical education for children in Halifax in both the public and private systems. At the turn of the century many Canadians professed the need for strong healthy girls and boys due to the influx of immigrants who entered the country, speaking a host of different languages with their own customs and traditions. With this, many Anglo-Saxon Canadians began to worry about the purity of their race. There was "always the possibility that they would dilute the British stock that had founded the country."<sup>72</sup> This fear stimulated an imperative need for Canadian women of childbearing age, from all classes of British decent, to be sturdy enough to populate the county with healthy babies. In Halifax, where the immigrants first arrived before being shipped farther west, this need was particularly intense. Strong healthy babies were needed in the factories and in the merchant and

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<sup>71</sup> Smith, "Female Reformers in Victorian Nova Scotia," 80.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Smith, "'There's no Penalty When You Hit the Fence': Sporting Activities in Central and Eastern Nova Scotia, 1880s to 1920s," Sport History Review, Vol 27, 1996, 193, also see Angus McLaren, Our Mother Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1990; Carol Lee Bacchi, "Race Regeneration and Social Purity: A Study of the Social Attitudes of Canada's English Speaking Suffragists," Histoire Sociale/Social History, Vol 11, No 22., November 1978, 460-474.



business classes. The call for strong healthy babies also meant that the mothers must become more sturdy and hearty. A comparison between European and North American women showed that the European women were far more active and thus far more healthy. The reason attributed to this healthiness was the fitness level of the European women. Canadian physicians took note of this and began to promote, however cautiously, fitness for the population.<sup>73</sup>

In the 1880s and 1890s two female doctors in Halifax contributed a great deal of their time to bettering the health and welfare of women and children. Drs. Maria Angwin and Annie Hamilton were active in improving the status of women. While the position these doctors held with regard to women and sports is not exactly clear, it is obvious that they did not adhere to the mainstream beliefs of the majority of doctors. Both of these women were involved in the promotion of health education, women's rights and social reform. Hamilton and Angwin, as the Superintendents for the Hygiene and Heredity Department, regularly gave presentations on physical hygiene to groups such as the WCTU.<sup>74</sup> Angwin devoted much of her time to educating mothers and young women on family and personal hygiene. It is more than likely that both of these doctors, educated in the United States, participated in enlightening women on the benefits of regular exercise. The role Angwin and Hamilton played in informing the public about female health issues is particularly important since their primary clients

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<sup>73</sup> Lenskyj, Out of Bounds, 63.

<sup>74</sup> Lois Kernaghan, "'Someone Wants the Doctor': Maria L. Angwin, M.D., 1849-1898," Collections of the Royal Nova Scotian Historical Society, Vol 43, 1991, 41.

were poor and working-class women. This frequently overlooked part of the population had access to guidance in the area of health education. Through their educative roles, Angwin and Hamilton added credibility to the time women and children put into their physical activities. However, Angwin and Hamilton were the exception to the norm, since most doctors maintained that women must limit their physical activity.

By the turn of the century, however, the focus on physical education by the media and individual fitness enthusiasts began to convince many members of Halifax society that physical activity was a valuable way of spending one's time. By the 1890s journalists deemed the fitness of children newsworthy, thus bringing issues on children's health to the attention of the public. The Maritime Medical News reported on the poor physical condition of children, especially female children, stating that although the training of the mind is necessary, it is ineffectual if physical activity did not complement it. The call for a symmetrical education - a balance between intellectual and physical education - was strongly advocated by James McKay of the Hall of Health in Halifax. In the March 29, 1887 edition of the Acadian Recorder McKay, who appears to have been the leading expert in this area in the city, comments on Halifax's lack of enthusiasm for the benefits of exercise. School children "should be...developed in physique, and light and graceful in their every movement..."<sup>75</sup> This, he contends is what every girl and boy in Halifax should have included in their education. In June of the same year McKay is quoted as saying that gymnastics lay "the foundation of health and vigour more enduringly than wealth, and in its way more educative in a most

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<sup>75</sup> Acadian Recorder, March 29, 1887.

ennobling sense of developing into perfect physical manhood."<sup>76</sup> As in other parts of the world, military drill for boys and calisthenics for girls was the norm, not gymnastics.

In December 1903 the Maritime Medical News called for compulsory physical training, particularly military drill, in the school system. This type of drill was to improve the conditions found in the modern school classroom. "...the products of our modern school-room are rounded and stooping shoulders, narrow and concave chests, shortened and catchy breathing, and a general listless and wobbly gait..."<sup>77</sup> As Smith's research indicates, this training began at an early age with singing songs, simple swinging motions, and marching to music. When a boy child reached ten or eleven years of age he participated in stretching and squad drills, followed by training with a dummy rifle, fieldwork, and attack and defence drills by the age of fifteen. McKay condemned the military drill being taught in public and private schools throughout the country, since it did not focus on the whole body leaving the chest and upper body underdeveloped. "Military drill fails to bring into varied and vigorous play the chest and shoulders"<sup>78</sup> Instead, he calls for schools to hire a teacher who knows how to properly train the body. Teachers did receive lectures emphasizing the necessity to teach their students skills to improve their overall health, and by 1896 teachers in training learned

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<sup>76</sup> Acadian Recorder, June 7, 1887.

<sup>77</sup> "Physical Training in Our Schools," Maritime Medical News, Volume XV, Number 12, December 1903, 570-572, as quoted in Smith, "Female reformers in Victorian Nova Scotia," 81.

<sup>78</sup> Acadian Recorder, January 20, 1887.

calisthenics and were expected to pass this knowledge on to their students.<sup>79</sup>

However, the teaching of these skills depended more upon the teacher's interest than on a mandate from the government. This indicates that the government did not take the health issues of school children as seriously as they should, and thus did not require teachers to take the time to teach their children the values of physical activity. In the absence of trained physical education teacher specialists, such as McKay, were often hired to teach school children the benefits and proper methods of physical activity. It was the few people like McKay who helped to instill a value on the time used for physical education of children and young adults.

For three months McKay taught calisthenics to the girls at the Brunswick Street School. An essay in the Acadian Recorder on July 5, 1880, reveals that many of the girls in this school came to value the benefits provided by exercise. The author, Miss Hettie Wright asked why so much attention, which may be interpreted as time and money, was paid to training the minds of children and the building of big beautiful schools when so little attention was paid to training their bodies.

Why oh why, when all this trouble and expense for the education of our minds are going on from year to year is there no attention paid to the education of our bodies? Isen't [sic] it of far greater importance that we be healthy, than that we should be wise?<sup>80</sup>

Miss Wright's essay indicates a desire by school children for a physical training program. It was this attitude that helped transform the world of women and sport. The

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<sup>79</sup> Smith, " 'There's No Penalty When You Hit the Fence' ", 192.

<sup>80</sup> Acadian Recorded, July 5, 1880.

earlier female children were introduced to the benefits of physical activity, the earlier they came to value the time spent involved in sport and recreation.

Although private schools were the first to take up physical training for both boys and girls, the public system began to introduce exercise programs into their curricula around the 1890s.<sup>81</sup> In both public and private schools the physical education girls received was calisthenics. While the training of boys was to allow them to develop proper manly characteristics and physique the physical education for girls had to enhance their feminine traits. The introduction of calisthenics into the school system was one way in which school time could be used to develop appropriate womanly qualities. The private schools were more advanced in this area than the public schools.

The Halifax Presbyterian Ladies College, directed by Miss Gardner, employed a type of Swedish exercise program which focussed on flexibility, control, and grace designed to suit the different needs of females. Girls could not be expect to do the same kinds of exercises as their brothers since their bodies were built differently, thus requiring different exercises which focussed on flexibility, grace, and balance. For many calisthenics were absolutely necessary in the contemporary world of horse cars, elevators and telephones, especially since the modern world had limited the exercise once received from day-to-day activities. Since most industrial jobs required very little physical exertion, the once 'natural exercise' had been removed from the majority of

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<sup>81</sup> Smith, " 'There's no Penalty When You Hit the Fence': Sporting Activities in Central and Eastern Nova Scotia, 1880s to 1920s," 190.

people's lives and they needed to find the time to put it back into their everyday schedule. According to McKay,

Now-a-days there is no such muscular exercise for the maidens, and something must of necessity be substituted to give muscles a change, when the brain has so much to do. Calisthenics or athletics - if properly followed up by the pupils - will educate, develop and strengthen the body and give the brains some sustaining power.<sup>82</sup>

With the introduction of physical education to the schools the ideology that women were too weak and fragile to participate in physical activity begins to transform with the recognition that recreation was a means for women to maintain their health and roles as mothers. Society came to deem physical education in schools as time well spent.

The increasing value placed on physical activity in the schools had a long lasting effect; it enlightened future generations on the positive effects of exercise. As E.P. Thompson has shown, schools, even before the industrial period were important for providing students with an organized and regimented understanding of time. "Once within the school gates, the child entered the new universe of discipline time."<sup>83</sup> Being a student required getting to school on time, knowing when it was time to pay attention to the teacher, when it was time to do your work, when it was time for a break, and when it was time to go home. School time revolved around the clock. In addition, schools had a socializing effect, teaching children how to behave, how to get along with others, and the value of what was being taught. These aspects of socialization and

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<sup>82</sup> Acadian Recorder, June 9, 1888.

<sup>83</sup> Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," 85. Also see: Sebastian de Grazia, Of Time, Work and Leisure. New York: Vintage Books, 1994, 67.

regimentation also applied to the introduction of physical education into the school system. Students came to regard exercise as worthwhile and as something they should value, even after leaving school. It then follows that the value placed on the time spent on physical activities in schools would, however slowly, be carried into a person's adult life. The introduction of physical education into the schools allowed women to gradually move towards an increasing role in the world of sports.

Collegiate sports also gave women the opportunity to become involved in various forms of sport and recreation, which in turn allowed women to contest the conventional perceptions of Victorian femininity and the negative value placed on time spent pursuing these activities. Women's attendance in institutions for higher learning was controversial in itself, and was the focus of much debate.<sup>84</sup> Prior to the turn of the century, women were not meant to attend universities for they were the domain of men. Women not only had no need for additional education, but their bodies and brains were not designed for advanced studies. The female role, to look after spouses and children, required no additional formal education than provided in the elementary school system. Additionally, women's minds and bodies were not suited to long hours of study and were regarded as harmful to their overall well being. One argument stated that "the human organism was not constituted to do two things at the same time" such as study and prepare herself for motherhood, and she must focus her energy on the

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<sup>84</sup> For details on women's entry into higher education see John Reid, "The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1914," Acadiensis, Vol 12, No 2, Spring/Summer 1983.

latter, since further study was not time well spent in preparation for motherhood.<sup>85</sup>

By the middle of the nineteenth century reformers in the United States were confronting this conviction with the argument that since women nurtured and educated the nations children then they too must be well educated. American activists such as Abigail Adams, Catharine Beecher and Mary Lyon as well as Canadian activist Nellie McClung and Flora Dennison advocated the necessity of higher education for women, since education would create better wives, mothers and teachers of their children. By the turn of the century educational reformers had succeeded in establishing hundreds of secondary and normal schools and colleges for women.<sup>86</sup> The Maritime universities, having faced similar arguments for and against higher education for women, began admitting females into their programs. As early as 1854 Mount Allison opened its doors to women, followed by Acadia and Dalhousie Universities.<sup>87</sup>

Once women were accepted into these institutions of higher learning they proved they were more than capable of handling the workload. However, a new

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<sup>85</sup> Roberta Park, "Physiology and Anatomy are Destiny!?: Brains, Bodies and Exercise in the Nineteenth Century American Thought," Journal of Sport History, Vol 18, No 1, Spring 1991, 37.

<sup>86</sup> Debra A. Shattuck, "Bats, Balls and Books: Baseball and Higher Education for Women at Three Eastern Women's Colleges, 1866-1891," Journal of Sport History, Vol 19, No. 2, Summer 1992, 95-96; also see Park, "Physiology and Anatomy are Destiny!?" 43-44.

<sup>87</sup> John G. Reid, "The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1914," Acadiensis, Vol 12, No 2, Spring/Summer 1983, 3; also see Deborah Shattuck, "Bats, Balls and Books: Baseball and Higher Education for Women at Three Eastern Women's Colleges, 1866-1891," Journal of Sport History, Vol 19, No 2 (Summer 1992), 91- 109.



concern arose when it appeared women were spending too much time studying. It was important to have a well balanced body, both mental and physical, and with all this studying women were overdeveloping their mind at the expense of their bodies.<sup>88</sup>

Cindy Himes argues that the collegiate fitness programs protected women's access to higher education by assuring the public that women were healthy enough to stand up to the academic rigours.<sup>89</sup> In the 1860s Vassar College lead the way in physical education for college women when they introduced a formal physical component to their curriculum. The idea was to provide women with "sufficient exercise to strengthen them for brain work,"but not so strenuous as to interfere with other physiological systems, notably the reproductive."<sup>90</sup> In the 1860s the Vassar program included horseback riding, boating, swimming, skating, and gardening, all activities "suitable for young ladies". Baseball was also a popular sport, much to the chagrin of many parents. Vassar did not advertise the fact that their fine young women were spending time playing this manly sport, but it continued just the same.<sup>91</sup> Canadian universities saw a similar pattern. At first sports deemed feminine enough for female participation

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<sup>88</sup> Steven Riess makes a similar argument was applied to male students. A physical balance was required; too much brain work subtracted from the man's muscular and vital force and thus must be countered with a balance of physical work, Riess, Sport in Industrial America, 1850-1920, (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson Inc., 1995) 131.

<sup>89</sup> Cindy Himes, "The Female Athlete in American Society, 1860-1940," Ph. D dissertation, 1986 in Steven A. Riess, Sport in Industrial America, 1850-1920, (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson Inc., 1995) 131.

<sup>90</sup> Park, "Physiology and Anatomy are Destiny!?", 44.

<sup>91</sup> Shattuck, "Bats, Ball and Books," 98.

were introduced and then, due to demand, team sports began to appear. By 1895 Acadia and Dalhousie both had female basketball teams (Appendix One).<sup>92</sup> However, the competitive nature of sports was often cited as reasons to keep women out of such events, since competition was not a feminine characteristic and certainly not a desirable quality in a women. Additionally, women were said to be naturally uncompetitive, thus any competitive nature demonstrated by women was regarded as unwomanly.<sup>93</sup>

Physical educators, along with doctors, encouraged a sporting atmosphere designed to preserve "gender differences, protect women's delicate sexual sensibilities, ensure the health of future mothers, and guard female athletes against male sports promoters."<sup>94</sup> Educators, concerned that physical culture could 'unsex' women through its competitive and aggressive nature, modified women's sports, making it less like men's sports. Educators hoped to reduce the stress on winning, individual achievement and professionalism identified intercollegiate competition by promoting mass participation, fair-play, and health improving activities. In the American colleges the traditional male competitive sport matches were replaced, for women, with the more feminine athletic festival and Play Days. Women from various colleges would meet and participate in organized sporting events. Teams were frequently mixed, with girls from different schools playing as one team, so that individual schools would not compete

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<sup>92</sup> Picture from the Nova Scotia Sports Heritage Centre, 1895.

<sup>93</sup> Riess, Sport in Industrial America, 1850-1920, 135.

<sup>94</sup> Riess, Sport in Industrial America, 1850-1920, 1995, 132.

against each other.<sup>95</sup>

However, female students preferred contests and demanded they be allowed to use their leisure time to play sports which involved competition. By the 1890s organized women's collegiate sports began to take on a competitive nature. At the American college Bryn Mawr, basketball, track and field, and field hockey were introduced between 1892-1901, although the women competed mostly between themselves since intramural matches were the usual forum for these activities.

Canadian women encountered similar advocates against the competitive nature of sports, yet their American sisters had done a lot to pave the way for their participation in a number of competitive sports. Despite the raised eyebrows about such unladylike behaviour Acadia's new rink provided the female hockey team with ice time in 1915.<sup>96</sup>

However, women played by modified rules which eliminated such masculine actions as body checking. Sheldon Gillis' research indicates that women's hockey became more aggressive in the Maritimes, and throughout Canada, after the turn of the century.

Gillis describes a match in March 1908 between Windsor and Halifax ladies in which Halifax was defeated by a large margin. The game was described by an Acadian Recorder reporter as being "Interesting and at times 'scrappy'..."<sup>97</sup> Despite modified rules women found ways to emulate masculine traits in sports, proving that women

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<sup>95</sup> Riess, Sport in Industrial America, 1850-1920, 133.

<sup>96</sup> Give Us an "A": An Acadia Album, 1838-1988, 60.

<sup>97</sup> Acadian Recorder, March 12, 1908 in Sheldon Gillis, "Putting It On Ice: A Social History of Hockey in the Maritimes, 1880-1914," MA thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1994, 105.

would not be deterred by rules if they were not compatible with the way they wanted to play. Similarly, although women's sport was modified to suit society's criteria for women to maintain their female characteristics, women continued to use their time to participate in all kinds of sports. Even if society did not, at first, take women athletes seriously, the women who participated in these sports certainly did. By their very participation women were defining the social norm, proving that women could handle the physical activity required, and negotiating their own space on the sporting fields.<sup>98</sup> Women slowly forced society to realize that the time they spent involved in physical activity was something which must be valued. They were not wasting their time, nor harming their health and could balance the domestic and physical spheres, and thus should be allowed to participate in sports if they chose to.

Other programs such as the playground supervision the YWCA's programs help to change the perception of sports as a worthwhile way for women to spent their time. Middle-class reformers had strong views as to how young girls and women should spend their leisure time outside of school. Each day the children, particularly children of the working-class, would show up on the city's numerous playgrounds. Initially there were no organized activities planned for these children, nor was there any formal supervision. In 1905 the Halifax Local Council of Women (HLCW) initiated a campaign to have these playgrounds supervised and to develop programs for these children so

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<sup>98</sup> Sheldon Gillis concluded in his chapter on women and hockey that although the "dominate notions of female inferiority and passivity refused to go away...women refused to accept such assumptions and continued to play and play seriously." Gillis, "Putting It On Ice," 111.

they would have a productive way of spending their time. Their purpose was to offset the negative consequences of the idle time these children spent by having them engaged in structured activities while hoping to improve their physical and moral character. The Council's program for girls, apart from offering arts and crafts activities, as well as sewing and crocheting lessons, also focussed on physical pursuits such as folk dancing and Swedish exercises.<sup>99</sup> In 1910 the Local Council hired Mr. McKinnion, a trained YMCA teacher to instruct older boys in gymnastics and other games. The aim of the program for boys was to offset the problem of juvenile delinquency by harnessing their idle time through physical activity.<sup>100</sup> The women of the HLCW recognized the health benefits of exercise and through their playground program they hoped to instill these beliefs in some working class children. Of course the motivation for this program was two-fold; not only was the HLCW involved in improving the health and welfare of these working-class children, but they were also controlling the time these children spent out of the home. Idle time was thought to breed contempt and therefore must be filled up with productive and meaningful activities. That sports happened to be one of these useful activities indicates that the middle-class reformers recognized the value of time spent involved in physical pursuits.

The children of the working and underprivileged classes were also exposed to physical activities by the Young Men's/Women's Christian Associations (YMCA & YWCA). The YMCA was established for Christian gentlemen to enhance their

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<sup>99</sup> Halifax Echo, 30 May 1908.

<sup>100</sup> PANS, The minutes of The Halifax Local Council of Women, July 1910.

masculinity through fitness rather than through less Christian means. "The Christian gentleman was honourable, exercised self-control, avoided sentimentality or yielding to pain, abstained from sex outside of marriage, and...used his strength to protect others."<sup>101</sup> In the late nineteenth century the YMCA's work was supplemented by the churched who wished to bring the social gospel of Christ to alienate and impoverished inner-city parishioners by providing them with a variety of social services, including gymnastics and athletic programs. By 1880 the focus shifted from gymnastics to teams sports, such as basketball and volleyball, reflecting a growing interest in athletic competition.

The YWCA, set up by evangelical Protestant women as a separate entity from the YMCA, was founded on a similar platform. They hoped to provide young women who were living apart from their families with maternal supervision in a respectable, Christian home setting as a substitute for their family. The YWCA wanted to expose the young respectable working women residing in their boarding houses to the moral and religious influences of the Protestant church. The YWCA not only wanted to supervise its members in this environment, but also attempted to protect and mould

young women as "God's Own Cornerstones," the mothers of the future generations, and the linchpin of the campaign for the moral and spiritual transformation of urban and national life.<sup>102</sup>

The attempt to protect young women consisted of "rescue work" among prostitutes,

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<sup>101</sup> Riess, Sport in Industrial America, 19.

<sup>102</sup> Diana Pedersen, "Providing a Woman's Conscience: The YWCA, Female Evangelicalism, and the Girls in the City, 1870-1930," Canadian Women: A Reader (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996)196.

recreation reform, and the regulation of prostitution and working women's sexuality. The mandate of the Halifax YWCA, set up in the 1870s, was to "protect middle-class young women from the contaminating effects of city life."<sup>103</sup> The Halifax YWCA extended its reach to girls and women of all classes, providing education in various homemaking and health issues.

The YWCA was greatly concerned about the young rural women who, coming to the city for work, were vulnerable to prostitution. The YWCA organized anti-prostitution campaigns, viewing "prostitutes as the helpless victims of male lust and the double standard of sexual morality."<sup>104</sup> The YWCA hoped to convert these women adrift to a more virtuous lifestyle, but also to assure that the next generation would also be removed from the dangers of the street. The YWCA faced many difficulties in having their work with prostitutes accepted by their financial supporters and found they were alienating working class women who did not want to be associated with an institution for 'fallen women'.<sup>105</sup>

In the 1890s the YWCA redefined its mandate, and clearly defined their goals to lookout for the welfare of young women living away from their families, closely associating itself with local governments, churches and other reform organizations. At the same time they targeted new groups of women - the traveller, recent immigrant and the factory working girl. They not only wanted to influence these women spiritually, but

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<sup>103</sup> Peiss, Sports in Industrial America, 20.

<sup>104</sup> Pedersen, "Providing a Woman's Conscience," 197.

<sup>105</sup> Pedersen, "Providing a Woman's Conscience," 198

intellectually, physically, and socially. As stated in the Y Stimulant, the Halifax YWCA planned "through its varied Educational Classes, its Clubs Groups, its Residences and its Physical Activities, to serve the needs of all girls, those at school, in business and professional positions, and in the home."<sup>106</sup> By the turn of the century the YWCA had expanded its public influence through such programs as reading rooms, working women's clubs, Bible study classes, and summer camps. All of these programs were designed to reach the working women of the city during their leisure time by competing directly with commercial recreation. These programs provided women with wholesome recreation, suitable friends, in a Christian setting.<sup>107</sup> It was also hoped that these programs would be attended by women from all classes, providing an opportunity for women to unite on the basis of their gender and not class.

Despite the attempts by the YWCA to attract young working class women, it was more successful at attracting middle class women. Many working class women found the rules and regulations too restrictive, some did not want to associate with the goody-goodies it attracted, while others were allured by the world of commercial recreations. The failure of the YWCA to attract the working class women indicates that these women were not willing led into the hands of the reformers. While other options remained, such as the amusements of moving pictures and dance halls, reformers had a difficult time convincing working class women they should spend their time pursuing morally uplifting activities.

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<sup>106</sup> The Y Stimulant, October 1929.

<sup>107</sup> The Y Stimulant, October 1929.



Those women who did not reject the YWCA found themselves able to participate in the many physical activities offered. The Halifax YWCA did not shy away from competition, holding regular tournaments for a variety of different sports.<sup>108</sup> Its Tennis Club held a yearly tournament with a social tea concluding the event. The summer activities included a very popular camping program for young girls. During the summer of 1929, Camp Joycliff, in which 65 juniors and 38 seniors were in attendance, prizes were awarded for best camper, good-sportsmanship, land sports, water sports.<sup>109</sup> The YWCA had a tremendous effect on the value placed on time spent involved in sporting and recreational activities.<sup>110</sup> Their emphasis on girls and women's sports programs helped influence the public by proving women not only wanted to participate but also were more than capable of doing so.

The YWCA, segregated by sex and set up by respectable middle-class reformers, provided a positive socially acceptable place for women to spend their leisure time. One of the most positive consequences of the YWCA's sex segregated programs was that it allowed women to become confident in their own right and to appreciate sports for sport's sake. Women did not have to compete with men for the programs offered, nor did they have to compete with men in sports. Ironically, the YWCA, an institution which was used as a form of social control by the Christian

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<sup>108</sup> The majority of the records on the Halifax YWCA were destroyed in a fire. What information is available comes from the records of other organizations, such as the HLCW, who had some involvement with the YWCA.

<sup>109</sup> The Y Stimulant, October 1929.

<sup>110</sup> Pederson, "Providing a Woman's Conscience," 200.

middle-class reformers over women and girls of various backgrounds spent their leisure time, allowed women the freedom to choose how they spent their leisure time.

The middle-class reformers also struggled with the contradiction between women's involvement in sports and the image of the ideal woman. While physical training lessened the amount of time girls could spend being tantalised by such evil forces as sexual temptations and disrespectable activities such as loitering on the streets, involvement in sports contradicted Victorian ideals of femininity. Girls should embody the ideals of good health, moral character, neat and attractive appearance, strength without aggression, charity, and kindness. Intense physical activity, or physical training which would develop the physique too much, were not deemed acceptable.

The introduction of the bicycle in the 1890s offers some insight into how society tried to cope with the diverging images of women, the values of time, exercise and Victorian femininity. The bicycle craze also demonstrated how women renegotiated the boundaries of their prescribed social role and pressed to use their leisure time pursuing an activity which was not acceptable for women. To do this women had to forge against Victorian gender ideals which limited women's use of leisure time.<sup>111</sup> For women to use their time for strenuous physical exercise was regarded as unbecoming for a proper lady - a red faced, sweaty muscular woman did not connote the appearance of gentility idealized in women. The limiting of women's use of leisure time

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<sup>111</sup> Heather Watts: Silent Steeds: Cycling in Nova Scotia to 1900, (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1985).

for physical activities was not reserved for women from the upper classes; working women were also expected to maintain their gentility. Women's physical leisure choices, such as bicycling, were constrained by the perceived abilities and uses of the female body.

The medical community, social reformers and women themselves held many conflicting views on the exertion of the female body. Since women's bodies were built for reproduction it was important it was treated accordingly. The female body was seen as weak and susceptible to failure if over-exerted. Many sports were regarded as too distressing to the female body and thus time spent involved in them was not promoted. The Bicycle craze is a good example of reactions to women who wished to pursue a sports and recreation. Bicycling was initially socially unacceptable for women, since for many it "was a challenge to the preconceived image of women in society."<sup>112</sup> Yet, bicycling was eagerly accepted by women of all classes and, as a consequence, a huge debate broke out over the pros and cons of bicycle riding upon female health and respectability. With the emergence of enthusiasm for bicycling, doctors were compelled to comment upon the risks and benefits involved for women who chose to participate in this sport. Mitchenson remarks that "What is important about the medical discussion was not whether doctors approved or disapproved, but the fact that they felt the need to speak out on a topic that on the surface appears to have little to do with

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<sup>112</sup> Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 65.

medicine."<sup>113</sup> Physicians argued over the potential for the bicycle to improve the health and general well being of women, and therefore the amount of time they should spend riding. Initially doctors saw the bicycle as a more useful activity in strengthening and exercising female bodies than other sports and recreations.

At first bicycling was said to be quite beneficial for women and a practical way for women to spend their leisure time for it not only calmed nerves, strengthened leg muscles and worked the respiratory system but it also helped women in childbirth.

More specifically, some believed that bicycling would strengthen the muscle bundles of the uterus so that childbirth might be easier [and]...it was further argued that strengthened muscles would stimulate pelvic tone, strengthening the pelvis and restoring normalcy."<sup>114</sup>

It did not take long, however, for the medical profession to use these same arguments against women who wished to bicycle. Some doctors feared that women used their leisure time excessively in pursuit of the sport, and began citing the many negative consequences of over exertion proclaiming once again possible damage to the reproductive system. One Halifax newspaper reported in March of 1896 that

...it appears to be generally agreed upon that over-indulgence in bicycling will induce one of the most malignant forms of insanity, owing to the long continued pressures of the spine. The disease of wheel insanity has not gained much foothold yet, doctors say, because it has not had time yet."<sup>115</sup>

Too much time spent on a bicycle was blamed for other diseases too: bicycle hump, foot, face, arm and other eccentricities.

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<sup>113</sup> Mitchinson, The Nature of their Bodies, 65.

<sup>114</sup> Vertinsky, The Eternally Wounded Woman, 78.

<sup>115</sup> Acadian Recorder, March 4, 1896.

Health concerns were not the only issue. Vertinsky argues that many physicians were nervous not only about the effects of physical exertion on women's health and strength, but also about the freedom, physical liberty and new female ambitions that bicycling appeared to represent."<sup>116</sup> Bicycling allowed women to become more independent since they could easily become mobile, travelling about town without supervision. Some claimed that women were behaving 'mannishly' while disregarding their responsibilities at home. In other words, the time women spent bicycling would have been better spent at home caring for the family.

What emerges here is not so much a debate about the pros and cons of bicycling on women's health, but rather an issue of control over how women spent their time. There was an obvious fear that such innovations as the bicycle were allowing women to use their time more freely. In a society that was battling the rapid changes brought on by industrialization and urbanization, there was a tremendous desire to maintain the status quo. The battle against the ills of society depended upon women maintaining their roles as care-givers and home-keepers. How could women do this if they spent their time flitting about on a bicycle? But the very use of the bicycle by so many women demonstrates that women were willing to push the boundaries created by Victorian images of ideal womanhood. In doing so they were attempting to gain the freedom to choose how they could spend their time, despite the attempts by physicians and reformers to limit this time.

There was a fear that innovations, such as the bicycle, were allowing women to

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<sup>116</sup> Vertinsky, The Eternally Wounded Woman, 80.

use their time too freely and for a society that was battling the rapid changes brought on by industrialization and urbanization, there was a tremendous desire to maintain the status quo. The battle against the ills of society depended upon women maintaining their role as care-giver and home-keeper, but the very use of the bicycle by so many women confirms that women were willing to push the domestic boundaries in order to gain the freedom to choose how they could spend their time. There was nothing radical about this action; rather women protested quietly through the simple action of riding a bicycle. In doing so, bicycling became an acceptable form of exercise, as did other sports such as swimming, golf, canoeing and tennis. Important to this increased involvement was women's ability to maintain standards of femininity and maternal behaviour while participating in sports. This is evident by the fact that women continued to bicycle for pleasure and health, while they did not become competitive, viewed as a masculine trait, during this period.

Bicycling was not the only influence for women's increased involvement in sports. While schools and post-secondary institutions provided a respectable place for girls and young women to participate in a variety of sports, women outside of these havens were also making in-roads into the sporting realm. The sporting world was largely a masculine one, one which men had shaped to define and cultivate their masculinity.<sup>117</sup> The girls and women who were introduced to athletics in schools and

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<sup>117</sup> For further scholarship on masculinity see: Janet Guildford, "Creating the Ideal Man: Middle-Class Women's Constructions of Masculinity in Nova Scotia, 1840-1880," *Acadiensis*, XXIV, 2 (Spring 1995), 5-23; Colin Howell, *Northern Sandlots*, Chapter 6, 97- 119; Harry Brod, ed., *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987); Tony Haddad, ed., *Men and Masculinities: A*

universities had pursued sports as a part of university life. Yet outside of these institutions women were battling to enter into the sporting world of men too. The life cycle of women, after her education was completed, consisted of either entering the workforce or getting married, leaving very little time to dedicate to sports and recreation. Working women entered into a man's world, and were introduced to the notion that leisure was separate from work, and that they had the same rights to this leisure time than men. However, whereas many men chose to use their leisure time to pursue such sports as baseball, few working class women took this path. "[Y]oung women's pursuit of pleasure did not lead them to the traditional domain of working men, but to emergent forms of commercialized recreation, such as dance halls, amusement parks, and movie theatres."<sup>118</sup>

On the other hand, many women of the privileged classes chose to spend leisure hours involved in physical activities. Clubs were organized around sailing, golf, snowshoeing, tobogganing, badminton, swimming, cycling, and curling, all sports which involved little or no competition. Women were members of these clubs and frequently participate in the sport with the men. A picture of the members of the Halifax Rod and Gun Club taken in 1900 shows both women and men holding their rifles ( Appendix

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Critical Anthology (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press Inc., 1993); Michael Roper and John Tosh, Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800 (London: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>118</sup> Peiss, Cheap Amusements, 5. The pursuit of cheap amusements is explored further in chapter four of this thesis.

Two).<sup>119</sup> It is likely, however, that the women had their own events and did not go on hunting excursions with the men. Although Suzanne Morton writes that "hunting and fishing excluded women,"<sup>120</sup> their visibility in this picture indicates that some women were participants.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century women were involved in athletic pursuits, not only as an adjunct to their leisured social life, but also because they valued the activity itself. In these clubs women were taking up the same sports as men, and when they were denied access to the facilities they petitioned the club administrators. Up until 1914 the Amateur Athletic Association of Canada would not allow women to register in sports or competitions they controlled. In response to their exclusion, women began the Women's Athletic Federation of Canada helping to organize tournaments and competitions nationally and internationally for women. Frequently the only way women could get to participate in certain sports was to establish their own organizations, as Ada MacKenzie did in 1924 when she set up the Toronto Ladies Golf Club.<sup>121</sup> Meanwhile, Maritime women were holding their own golf tournaments by the 1920s (Appendix Three).<sup>122</sup> A 1925 Amateur Athletic Union of

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<sup>119</sup> Picture from Nova Scotia Sports Heritage Centre, 1900; also see Judith Jenkins George, "Women's Rifley Teams: A Collegiate Anomaly of the Post World War I Period," Canadian Journal of History of Sport, Vol 23, No 1, (May 1992) 32-45.

<sup>120</sup> Morton, Ideal Surroundings, 127.

<sup>121</sup> Jean Cochrane, Abby Hoffman, & Pat Kincaid, Women in Canadian Life: Sports, Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, Ltd., 1977, 26.

<sup>122</sup> Picture from Nova Scotia Sports Heritage Centre, 1926.



Canada resolution formed a standing committee for women's athletics and strongly recommended that branches, such as those in the Maritimes, appoint like committees on which women could be represented "until such time when women are prepared to take over management of their own affairs."<sup>123</sup> Women with the ability to administer and organize sport channelled their energies into organizing and holding their own competitions in golf, tennis, badminton and curling.

There were some recreations women were encouraged to join. Skating, for example, was a sport in which women's involvement was quite extensive throughout this period. It was hoped that women's involvement in this sport, and in some others, would have a positive influence on the male participants. "Reformers hoped that women's involvement in sports would have a refining influence on men, would ease the competitive spirit, and in general add decorum to games."<sup>124</sup> Although women long participated in such non-competitive activities as skating, canoeing, croquet, and dancing, it was their non-participatory involvement in sports which was initially welcomed. Women's attendance at sporting events was hoped to have a civilizing effect on the male spectators. Howell argues that promoters of sports such as baseball actively "encouraged female attendance in order to counteract baseball's reputation for attracting 'drunken rowdies, unwashed loafers and arrant blacklegs'...[and to] repress...outbursts of intemperate language..."<sup>125</sup> Women were regarded as 'agents of

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<sup>123</sup> Halifax Herald, Aug 22, 1925.

<sup>124</sup> Smith, "Female Reformers in Victorian Nova Scotia," 92.

<sup>125</sup> Howell, Northern Sandlots, 76.

control' in an atmosphere which could easily lose control due to the excitement of the game. The time women spent as spectators was regarded as valuable since they were contributing to the respectability of sport and the 'civilizing' of the game.

Although women were encouraged to participate as spectators of commercialized sports, they were not accepted on the other side of the stands. With the increase of leisure time and additional spending money, came the commercialization of leisure time; people of all classes paid money to be entertained during their leisure time. One of the prime ways in which this time and money was spent was as spectators of sporting events. During the late nineteenth century spectator sports boomed as a consequence of urbanization and the commercialization of leisure. In addition the modernization of particular sports, the emergence of sport entrepreneurs who were not affiliated with taverns, the interest of fee paying spectators in watching highly skilled athletes perform and the professionalization of sportsmen, all contributed to the commercialization of sports.<sup>126</sup> This was not a world that welcomed women competitors as serious athletes.

Although women had been pushing the boundaries of what was considered "respectable", they were unable to gain any serious advances as athletes in the commercialized world of sports. Colin Howell's examination of the Blackstockings, a ladies baseball team from Chicago, and the reception they received from their Maritime audiences demonstrates this barrier. Maritimers were curious about these women who dared to cross into traditionally male terrain. These women were not regarded as

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<sup>126</sup> Riess, Sports in Industrial America, 145.

serious baseball players, but as an entertaining show. The fact that these women were involved in a competitive sport was disturbing enough, but that they were being paid placed them outside the realm of respectability. "[P]laying the game for money, which placed women baseballist on the same level as bawdy theatrical performers, or even prostitutes, willing to barter their femininity for filthy lucre" caused these women to be regarded as little more than freaks.<sup>127</sup> These women were ridiculed for their ineptitude at the sport, but also because of their unladylike behaviour. This attitude is also evident in other commercialized sports, such as harness racing and boxing, where women have still not been accepted. The battle continues against the notion that women have no place in commercialized sports.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century women began to turn away from their roles as spectators, moving from the stands to the sports field. By the turn of the century women were taking part in an ever increasing number of competitive sporting and leisure activities: golf, bowling, tennis, rowing, track and field, swimming and diving all became acceptable for women's participation. "For instance, while women were at first only spectators on the golf links, by the turn of the century they were well established in the sport." Most clubs had female members. The Halifax Club had only 4 female members in 1896, which by 1901 had increased to 115. However, much stood between women and full acceptance into competitive sports.<sup>128</sup>

The story of Gertrude Phinney demonstrates the conflict between sports,

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<sup>127</sup> Howell, Northern Sandlots, 78.

<sup>128</sup> Smith, "Female Reformers in Victorian Nova Scotia," 93.

training, competition and the value placed on time spent pursuing athletics for women. In 1900 the Olympic committee decided to allow women to participate. Not all events were open to women, and it was up to each individual country to allow its female athletes to attend. Canada approved tennis for women in 1900, although no women's team was formed, and in 1924 women figure skaters attended the winter Olympics. A great break through for women's competitive sports came in 1928 when Canada sent its first women to the summer Olympics in Amsterdam, which included a female track and field team. Gertrude Phinney, a student at Dalhousie University, was an all round athlete who won regional and national medals in running events, long-jump, hurdles, sprinting, javelin and discus throughout the 1920s. Phinney was not originally a track and field athlete; she played on the X-Dal girls team before realizing her potential as a runner. In 1927 the X-Dal team made the national basketball championships against Edmonton. The team was short on money and decided to organize a Maritime Track meet to earn the funds to take them to Championships.<sup>129</sup> The girls, as hosts, had to play their part and participate in various events. The event included: discus, running broad jump, javelin, running high jump, the 60 and 100 yard dash, baseball through, 440 relay run and an 800 yard walk.<sup>130</sup> Phinney competed in many of these events, and consequently discovered her potential as a track and field star. Phinney earned the most points during the meet and the next two years, thus winning the Chronicle Point Trophy.

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<sup>129</sup> Chronicle Herald, November 9, 1965.

<sup>130</sup> Halifax Herald, June 22, 1929.

Phinney continued to break records as a track and field star, and as an athlete in general. She was awarded the first gold "D" upon completion of her years as Dalhousie, which was engraved with the words: "To Gertrude Phinney from the student body of Dalhousie 1929, for outstanding athletic achievement."<sup>131</sup> In 1927, Phinney's first year of competition, she held the indoor track and field 50 and 220 yard record. In 1928 Phinney qualified for the Olympics, when she won the Canadian 220 yard championship, beating all the world's top female track and field athletes. She was a shoo-in for a medal, if not for gold, yet Phinney did not go to the Olympics. Phinney's decision not to attend the Olympics demonstrates the conflict between how women were expected to use their time and the time required to train for a sport like track and field. Even in 1928 the time spent in training for women was to remain minimal since fears about harm to women's reproductive health remained strong. Phinney's father convinced Gertrude not to attend the Olympics because he was concerned for her future health. He had been warned by physical educators, physicians, and "the Pope, ...that strenuous exercise such as that demanded of a track athlete would most certainly have adverse effects on child-bearing and cause perhaps 'irreparable harms' to the mysterious inner workings of the female."<sup>132</sup> Even Phinney's coach, Edgar Stirling, did not advocate strenuous training, despite Phinney's obvious ability and desire. A training schedule for Phinney might consist of several laps around the track a

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<sup>131</sup> Chronicle Herald, November 9, 1965.

<sup>132</sup> A.J. "Sandy" Young, Beyond Heros: A Sport History of Nova Scotia, Hansport: Lancelot Press Ltd., 1988, 77.

few times a week.

Phinney's choice not to attend the Olympics demonstrates the challenges women in competitive sports faced. Although women by this time had negotiated a larger place in the sporting world, the time they put into their pursuits was not valued or taken seriously. The Olympics, although certainly not the highly visible event it is today, was still a very prestigious accomplishment. Yet to have someone decline her rightful place at the games shows just how strong the social expectations for women were, even after several decades of fighting to participate in a field dominated by men. Women had made definite in-roads in this area, and were achieving great success in competitions around the world, even in unladylike sports such as track and field. The Canadian women's team that Phinney would have been part of won more medals than any other country at the 1928 Olympics. Phinney did not give up track and field on a national level, for three weeks after the Olympics she "Smashed Canadian and Maritime records" when she won her event by 5 yards during a competition in Toronto, beating those who had won metals in Amsterdam<sup>133</sup>. Although Phinney's choices indicate a reluctance for women to participate in track and field due to its highly competitive nature and rigorous training schedule, many more women did not allow these social expectations to hinder their careers. In fact, women's competitions had become very popular as spectator sports. "Women's sports in Toronto are now [in 1929] a bigger thing than sports for men."<sup>134</sup> The time females dedicated to training

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<sup>133</sup> Halifax Chronicle, July 4, 1929.

<sup>134</sup> Halifax Chronicle, July 4, 1929.

and promoting their sports resulted in the value of women as athletes, and the value of the time spent in training.

While the 1928 summer Olympic games were in progress, Canadian doctors were meeting to discuss the future of Olympic events for women, arguing against the suitability of sports for women and women for sports.<sup>135</sup> The validity of women as athletes still was being questioned. Under these circumstances it was very difficult for women athletes to have the time they spent pursuing athletics taken seriously.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries women who wished to spend their leisure time involved in sports faced many obstacles. Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century there was a recognition that some form of exercise was important for the maintenance of the health of both men and women and thus the value of the time spent pursuing exercise begins to change. With the acknowledgment that fitness would improve children's general well being, governments, schools and community institutions began to implement physical education in their programs for both boys and girls.<sup>136</sup> Although the distribution of sporting and recreational activities was uneven according to class and gender, children and youths were exposed to the mental and physical benefits of exercise. In addition, social reformers came to view sport as healthy recreation that would teach the masses the respectable values of fair play, good sportsmanship and cooperation. What was needed was a civilized

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<sup>135</sup> Cochrane, Women in Canadian Life: Sports, 39.

<sup>136</sup> This may be observed in the increased quality of physical education provided in Halifax school for both girls and boys.

approach to sports and leisure to counteract the depravity and immorality that went hand in hand with the sporting culture.<sup>137</sup> Reformers, however, could not dictate what sports people could play, nor control the time they spent participating.

As Kathy Peiss has clearly shown, the Victorian ideal of how women should behave and act in public was under a great deal of strain. When women moved into the work place, into institutions of higher education, and when they became politically active they expanded the notion of the woman's place. Although most continued to believe in the notion of essential differences between the sexes, the entry of women into the public sphere, challenged the common belief in the doctrine of separateness. Women were entering the arenas of sports proving that they were capable of doing what was required of anyone in the public sphere. This gave women a new sense of self, and a confidence which allowed her to be "independent, athletic, sexual, and modern."<sup>138</sup>

Sports was certainly not the only way in which women entered into the public sphere. A more critical test for women and their ability to maintain their femininity and respectability while participating in the public sphere was their entry into the world of politics.

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<sup>137</sup> Howell, Northern Sandlots, 112.

<sup>138</sup> Peiss, Cheap Amusements, 7.



### **Chapter 3**

#### **Leisure as Politics: Women's Time and Social Reform**

In 1895 Elizabeth Roberts wrote a fictional conversation between two women, Katherine and Eleanor, for the Halifax Herald which reflected differing perceptions on the proper way a woman should spend her leisure time. The first woman, Katherine, is overwhelmed by her social duties; she routinely attends social functions, teas, luncheons, and balls. This woman would not think of spending her time any other way, regardless of how tired she might become, because she regards these activities as part of a woman's role. The second woman, Eleanor, spends her time reading, talking politics and learning Greek with her husband. The socialite finds the politically minded woman's choice of time use inappropriate. The society woman asks her friend how can she justify her time use, since her husband and household duties must obviously be neglected. The politically minded woman responds that her time is best used this way, for she is more aware of what is happening in the country.<sup>139</sup> This tale reflected the quintessential qualities of Victorian domestic ideology while also identifying the differences that existed within the ideology. While Katherine regarded her social activities as her responsibility, Eleanor rejected this by establishing a more suitable role for herself. Eleanor perceived her social responsibility as one in which she was politically aware, yet was cautious not to push this role beyond her domestic realm.

The women of Halifax who moved beyond domesticity and into a more public

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<sup>139</sup> Halifax Herald, October 1895.

and political sphere did so cautiously. Their transition from the private to the public sphere may be traced through a series of activities by middle and upper class reform women that began in the home, moved to domestically oriented endeavors outside the home and then finally into more overt political action. At the same time, the Victorian ideals of womanhood and respectability kept reform women from advancing too quickly into the public sphere. Initially reformers addressed issues specifically related to the home, but as time progressed and the issues and problems in society became increasingly complicated these reformers became more involved in traditional politics. Women formed organizations such as the Ladies Music Club, the Halifax Local Council of Women, the Young Women's Christian Association and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.<sup>140</sup> These organizations provided women with the opportunity to unite on issues such as child welfare and social deviation, all the while allowing them to create their own autonomous culture - one that was woman centered culture and proved to society that women could be active beyond the home. The formation of these organizations eventually led to political action as women realized if they were to have any impact on social reform they needed to have political power. This chapter will follow this path from the private to the public sphere and to demonstrate how many women, mostly from upper and middle class women, used their leisure time to move

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<sup>140</sup> See PANS holdings of The Halifax Ladies Musical Club Minute Book, October 8, 1908 - December 5, 1912 & December 18, 1912 - November 21, 1916; The Women's Christian Association Annual Reports 1875 - 1888; The Halifax Local Council of Women, Minutes 1895 - 1930; The Women's Christian Temperance Union Annual Reports, 1898 - 1918.

Women's Christian Temperance Union Annual Reports, 1898 - 1918.

beyond domesticity and into a more public and political sphere. Furthermore, it will be argued that class was an influential factor in determining women's ability to move along this path.

Most of the British, American and Canadian women who chose to use their time to pursue social reform were from the middle and upper classes and in many cases were professional women. Carol Lee Bacchi's work on the English-Canadian suffragists claims that the leaders were a homogeneous group of well educated, Anglo-Saxon, professional women from the middle and upper class.<sup>141</sup> The Halifax reform leaders, whose causes included suffrage for women, were women of this sort. J.M. Bumsted believes, however, that the composition of the members and leaders of the early suffrage movement shifted over time. He argues that some working class women were involved in the initial stages of the suffrage movement and notes that it was the later movement which was dominated by middle class and professional women. Many working class women when they recognized "how deeply rooted male domination was, and how difficult it would be to eradicate it - chose to get on with their work instead of pursuing the right to vote."<sup>142</sup> Consequently the leadership was taken over by middle and upper class women who were not gainfully employed and who had the time and

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<sup>141</sup> Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred?: The Ideals of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1983) 4.

<sup>142</sup> J.M. Bumsted, The People of Canada: A Post Confederation History (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992) 163.

energy to seek social change.<sup>143</sup>

Although there is no record of Halifax working-class women's involvement in the more political aspects of reform, such as the suffrage movement, this did not necessarily mean they were not present. Certainly some working-class women would have attended meetings or assisted in running some of the programs organized by the leaders. An examination of the names found in the HLCW attendance records reveals over two hundred names of people from different religious background and possible social classes. First names were rarely used so it is impossible to know for sure from what class all of these women came from, although matching names to census records does indicate that some of these people could have lived in working class neighborhoods.<sup>144</sup> One of the most significant factors contributing to the absence of working and lower class women in the mainstream reform movement was their lack of time to contribute to the cause. The majority of lower and working class women spent their time looking after their family; what leisure time they did have was rarely used in pursuit of social reform.

Many of the Halifax reformers, Edith Archibald, Agnes Dennis, Dr. Eliza Ritchie,

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<sup>143</sup> George Dangerfield, Strange Death of Liberal England, (New York: H. Smith & R. Haas, 1935) documents a similar development between the Pankhurst's in England; also see Graham Fraser, "The Image and the Reality: The Separate Spheres Ideology Work and Local Politics in the Victorian and Edwardian Periods," History Honours Paper, Saint Mary's University, 1993.

<sup>144</sup> This analysis is based upon the names from the attendance records, housed in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, for 1905, 1907, 1908 and 1910 were cross-referenced with the names of the 1920 census. This was done to locate where these people might have lived, what their religion was in an attempt to assess what class they were from.

May Sexton, Ella Murray, Dr. Maria Angwin, and Anna Leonowens, for example, were publicly minded upper middle class women who had time to pursue social reform.<sup>145</sup> They preferred to use their time seeking improvements in society, although they attended their share of social engagements. These women were not paid for the time they spent in the pursuit of social reform, yet this time use was invaluable to society. These women undertook projects that addressed the needs of women and children. The work they did often supplemented the government's work, and initiated projects the government overlooked.

Much of the work these women participated in during their leisure time may be categorized as political for in their pursuit of social reform they addressed issues that directly influenced the good of the people and the country. Halifax, like much of the western world, was suffering from the influences of industrialization and capitalism - poverty, crime, intemperance, and disease. All of these directly affected women, yet little was being done by governments to rid society of these ills.<sup>146</sup> Women, usually upper middle class women, frequently took it upon themselves to right these wrongs.

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<sup>145</sup> Both E. R. Forbes, Challenging the Regional Stereotypes: Essays on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Maritimes, (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989) and Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred?: The Ideals of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) recognize the status of these women as being from the upper middle class.

<sup>146</sup> For further details on the impact of industrial capitalism on women see Maria Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991); E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muise, eds, The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Sharon Myers, " "I Can Manage My Own Business Affairs": Female Industrial Workers in Halifax at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," MA Thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1989, 48.

They did this by taking on the role of the government by focusing on the issues of the welfare of women and children, intemperance, women's suffrage and campaigning for office on the Halifax School Board.

While the women of these movements used their leisure time to pursue many social reforms within the public sphere, some of the men in this same sphere were financially compensated for their efforts. This is to say that while men were able to hold political office women were not permitted to do so.<sup>147</sup> The contrast arises when the value of this time use is analyzed. The time women spent in the public sphere was not valued as work time although their efforts may certainly be characterized as work. Yet for men this same time was valued as work time, even though the time these women contributed to the reform movement was invaluable to society.

Why was the use of women's leisure time in the public and eventually political sphere not valued to the same extent as that of male politicians? The answer lies in Victorian gender ideals. Men and women held specific positions in society that dictated how they were to behave both publically and privately. While men dominated the public sphere women were expected to maintain the private sphere; this separate spheres ideology attempted to keep these two worlds from converging.<sup>148</sup> While many

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<sup>147</sup> For example, the Franchise Act of April 7, 1851 disqualified women from holding public office and voting when Nova Scotia law makers included the word 'male' among the qualification of their new franchise measure. Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1851, 59.

<sup>148</sup> Fraser, "The Image and the Reality."

men and women maintained this belief, many others rejected it.

Victorian images of leisure promoted the maintenance of masculinity and femininity by prescribing specific roles and activities for each. Concepts of respectability played a large role in constructing and maintaining the ideal image of the Victorian woman. Sociologists Diana Woodward and Eileen Green address the consequence of gender stereotyping, stating that

contemporary capitalism divide[s women] into, on the one hand, those respectable women who are or will to be daughters, wives and mothers, and on the other hand, women who are beyond the limits of respectability, that is whores and 'fallen women'.<sup>149</sup>

Although this is a recent observation, the same may be concluded about the impact of the Victorian ideal of womanhood. All women were valued as a mother, wife, or daughter. Women who deviated from this norm were often considered unrespectable or were even labeled 'fallen woman'. One of the ways a woman could become so was through an unacceptable or inappropriate use of time. It was the path to becoming a 'fallen woman' that reformers hoped to eradicate.<sup>150</sup> Yet reformers themselves deviated from the ideal when they chose to use their time to pursue reform in the public sphere.

A woman's access to leisure time was constrained by her commitment to everyday activities - child care, domestic labor, loving wife. The ideal of women's

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<sup>149</sup> Diana Woodward and Eileen Green, "'Not tonight, dear!': The Social Control of Women's Leisure," in Erica Wimbush and Margaret Talbot, eds., Relative Freedoms: Women and Leisure, (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1988)132.

<sup>150</sup> Several of the articles in the Halifax Herald, August 10, 1895 refer to women who deviate from the respectable norm as 'fallen women', especially when referring to prostitutes, which seemed to believe was as far as a woman could fall.

goodness and purity imposed tremendous pressure on women's behavior. To defy it was to be unwomanly, unrespectable. The emergence of some women from the domestic sphere provided the opportunity for other women to scold them. Grace Sybrandt Campbell, in an article for the Halifax Herald, scolds women who had moved beyond the sphere of the home and who were trying to become man's equal. A man does not want woman to be his equal, she says, but rather to remain in her role as God intended. God "intended her to fulfil a certain destiny, which was loving and comforting, as well as the softening and refining of the rougher animal man." Some of the women Campbell was singling out were the ones who spent their time in the public sphere and who, in doing so, denied their husbands the qualities they sought in a woman. According to Campbell, a husband

longs for someone who is womanly, and gentle and sweet, who makes him think of angels and madonnas; of heavens and poetry and the old masters; of everything, in fact, which is as far removed as possible from the sordid work-a-day world in which his daily lot is cast.<sup>151</sup>

By maintaining the qualities of ideal womanhood, a woman remained respectable, an important quality for women of all classes to attain and sustain. The ideal Victorian woman devoted her time to her family. In addition to the traits of passiveness, obedience to husband, attractiveness, and prudent behavior, it was most important for women to maintain these qualities in order to defend their social position. Appreciating this situation us to understand why women were cautious about moving too rapidly from their prescribed roles within the home to ones beyond the home. By moving gradually,

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<sup>151</sup> Halifax Herald, August 10, 1895.



women were able to extend the realms of respectability to include areas of more public participation.

Similarly, the Halifax women who chose to use their time to pursue social reform did so by slowly entering the public sphere. The initial move into the public sphere of politics was accomplished through an extension of the private sphere, since many women justified their social reform work as an expansion of their role as mothers into society. In doing so, these women exemplified maternal feminism, the term most frequently applied to Halifax reform women. Maternal feminists did not want to alter the fundamental role of women in society, but rather wished to extend their maternal roles into the political sphere.<sup>152</sup>

Such feminism was not unique to Canada, as women elsewhere in North America and Europe recognized that "their roles as wives and mothers did not necessarily make them unfit for participation in society at large."<sup>153</sup> Rather, it gave them special skills and insights which could be applied to any number of society's troubles.

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<sup>152</sup> Michael Smith makes this argument in her Masters Thesis titled "Female Reformers in Victorian Nova Scotia: Architects of a New Womanhood," Saint Mary's University, 1986. Maternal feminists might be contrasted with equal rights feminists. Deborah Gorham maintains that historians must not put all Canadian suffragists in one category or another. "Canadian feminists of the period cannot be categorized as belonging to one or another clearly delineated group; both equal rights feminists and maternal feminists were realities in Canada." Both groups fought for the vote. Gwen Matheson, ed. Women in the Canadian Mosaic, (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1976) 26.

<sup>153</sup> Rebecca Veinott, "The Call to Mother: The Halifax Local Council of Women, 1910-1921," MA Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1985, 4 -5.

According to nineteenth century precepts women were morally superior to their male counterparts. Therefore, in their roles as wives and mothers, women were seen as the keepers of virtue. This view was a major factor in assigning separate spheres to men and women. Men, who were by nature essentially corrupt, could withstand the daily contact with a corrupt society as long as they could return at night to the redeeming influence of their wife and family. Women, the guardians of purity, could not be exposed to the corrupting influences of society in fear that they would be drawn to the darker side of humanity.<sup>154</sup> Any entry into the political sphere was sure to corrupt women.

Yet women did enter into this world and they did so by justifying their roles in society as mothers of the nation and the protectors of the home. The ills of society brought on by industrial capitalism infiltrated the home and consequently women felt justified in battling against these conditions, even if it meant being active in the public sphere. The middle class reform women of Halifax responded with a vengeance to the attacks on the home and family by the industrial economy. Child labour, poor working conditions, overcrowding, ignorance, poverty and even prostitution and intemperance could, they believed, be overcome if women would extend their influence throughout society.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> For a detailed study of women and the darker side of humanity see: Judith Fingard, The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax, and chapter 5 in Michael Boudreau, Crime and Society in a City of Order. Halifax, 1918-1935, PhD Thesis, Queens University, September 1996.

<sup>155</sup> Valverde recognizes this pattern within the larger context of Canadian history, while I believe this to be true based upon my reading of the minutes of the HLCW.

The rise of the social gospel, the movement which called upon Christians to contribute actively to the task of social improvement, also had a tremendous influence on women entering into the public sphere. Richard Allen notes that the social gospel swept through Canada and enhanced the spirit of reform between 1890 through to the 1930s. The social gospel movement attempted to “forge links between proposed reforms and the religious heritage of the nation”.<sup>156</sup> Adherents of the social gospel held that Christ’s influence extended beyond the individual to society as a whole. It was the duty of every Christian to indoctrinate society with Christian principles. Therefore, Christians and society were no longer to be separate and apart, but were to come together in the formation of a Christian society.<sup>157</sup> The social gospel helped justify women’s enter into the public sphere, since their influence was needed in order to transform society. The superiority of women’s influence, once employed to justify their exclusion from worldly affairs, thus became the justification for the extension of their influence into all areas of society. Women now extended their role beyond their immediate home by joining organizations and groups to correct of the ills of society and spread the social gospel.

When women used their leisure time to pursue such morally driven reforms they negotiated a space for themselves in the public sphere while developing an

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<sup>156</sup> Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) 3; see also E.R. Forbes, “Prohibition and the Social Gospel in Nova Scotia,” Acadiensis, Vol 1, No 1, Autumn 1971 11-36.

<sup>157</sup> Allen, The Social Passion, 16-17.

autonomous female-centered culture. Wendy Mitchenson lists several factors that allowed women to build on early developments and expand their role beyond domesticity. Among other things, "transportation had improved, making it easier for groups of women to meet together; towns and cities were growing in size, thus enlarging the membership of potential women's groups;" and most importantly for this analysis, the increasing affluence of Canadian society meant that middle-class women had the leisure time to devote to women's organizations.<sup>158</sup> The increasing urbanization of the cities meant there was a greater demand for organizations to help the poor and the sick - orphanages and hospitals, areas women had long been involved. Urbanization not only meant an increase in population, it also accentuated the ills of society. Halifax was no exception. Many Halifax women took it upon themselves to form organizations to fight the perceived social evils.

An examination of the lives of several prominent Halifax upper middle class women reveals how they moved from the private to the public sphere through their involvement in child welfare, philanthropic and eventually politically motivated organizations. Edith Archibald, Agnes Dennis, Dr. Eliza Ritchie, May Sexton, E. H. Murray, Dr. Maria Angwin, and Anna Leonowens were women who took it upon themselves to address the needs of women and children in Halifax. An examination of the lives of these women shows that they moved beyond domesticity with caution,

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<sup>158</sup> Wendy Mitchenson, "The WTCU: 'For God, Home and Native Land': A Study in Nineteenth Century Feminism" in R. Douglas Francis, Readings in Canadian History: Post-Confederation, Second Edition (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Ltd., 1986) 322.

participating initially in activities that did not push the boundaries of the private sphere to the point where their respectability and femininity was questioned. Nevertheless, the more active they became the more space they negotiated for themselves in the public sphere. By taking gradual steps these middle class reformers were able to move beyond the realms of domesticity without jeopardizing their respectable status in society.

Much may be learned about the motivation behind the Halifax reform movement, the use of time and the value placed on this time by both men and women, through an examination of these influential women.<sup>159</sup> These women were all deeply involved in many different and inter-related social reform campaigns. They used their time and energy for the advancement of women's rights and the betterment of society as a whole. Many more women contributed to social reform, giving their time willingly and freely. These upper middle class women had a very specific notion about how society should be organized and run. Their beliefs were shaped by their Victorian convictions of ideal womanhood, and their actions reflected the attitudes and values of the day. And yet, despite the conventionality of their motivation, the actions of these politically

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<sup>159</sup> Margaret Conrad, in Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950 (Ottawa: Canadian Research for the Advancement of Women, 1982) 1-2 promotes an examination of the chronicles of these women to challenge the stereotype created by Catharine Cleverdon in The Women's Suffrage Movement in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), who painted these women as conservative. Although a biographical approach to the Halifax reform movement would be limiting, a greater understanding of the individual women should be acknowledged to determine how they spent their time and what motivated them to use their time as they did. This type of analysis also allows us to see individual transitions from the private to the more public spheres.

minded women frequently deviated from the norm and in doing so helped to bring value to the public and political work women did during their leisure time.

Agnes Dennis used her free time for many activities. Agnes Dennis, a Presbyterian from Truro who married William Dennis, the owner of the Halifax Herald, dedicated her time to the causes of women and children. She raised ten children, during which time she "accepted no public office, but devoted herself entirely to her family and the making of their home, with the exception being the occasional work in the Church, Sunday School, Christian Endeavor or Missionary Society...until the oldest two...were beyond the age of childhood."<sup>160</sup> The home and family came first, yet Dennis easily moved beyond domesticity when the cause was right. For thirty seven years she was president of the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON). She was also the president of the Halifax Local Council of Women for 15 years, during which time the Council took on many projects, including organizing supervised playgrounds, educating the public on Tuberculosis and the plight of the 'feeble-minded', to organizing the Children's Aid Society of Halifax and the Woman's Work Division. She was president of many other local organizations, including the Red Cross and the YWCA, and Vice President of several national organizations, such as the National VON and National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC).<sup>161</sup> Dennis's financial circumstances allowed her the free time to campaign for women's rights, suffrage, temperance, and the basic well-being of women and children. Few women from the upper middle class were able

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<sup>160</sup> PANS, MG 1, Vol 2866, No. 2 & 5.

<sup>161</sup> PANS, MG 1, Vol 2866, No. 2 & 5.

to put this amount of time and energy into the reform movement. The positions she held were demanding, requiring the expenditure of many hours. This time was work time, yet within the context of the Victorian era, the time used by Dennis was not valued as such. The advancement of women's and children's interests had to be done during the reformer's leisure time.

Another woman who used her leisure time for the advancement of women and the betterment of society was Dr. Maria Angwin. Angwin, the daughter of a Methodist minister, became Nova Scotia's first licensed female physician in 1884. Unlike Dennis, who had a social position which allowed her considerable leisure time, Angwin's social reform activities were fit into her grueling work schedule. She dedicated her practice to providing health care for the urban poor, especially women and children. When Angwin was not working she participated in a number of social reform activities. She worked diligently for the WCTU, health education and women's rights, frequently giving lectures on proper hygiene for women and girls.<sup>162</sup> In a paper presented to the HLCW in March 1896 titled "How can our Council help the Children of Halifax," she voiced her concern with the time children in Halifax were spending on the streets. "Cigarette smoking appears to be the favorite pastime of these clusters and thrilling tales of personal fights." She went on to say that "Viewed from a hygienic standpoint these late hours are detrimental to the health of these children who indulge in them..." making it

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<sup>162</sup> Lois Kernaghan, "'Someone Wants the Doctor': Maria L. Angwin, M.D. (1849-1898), Collections of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society, Vol 43, 33-41.

hard to concentrate in school the next day.<sup>163</sup> It is clear Angwin, although very busy in her professional life, gave her time for the betterment of society, specifically for the advancement of women and children. In her article, "The Case of the Superfluous Woman," which appeared in the Halifax Herald in 1895, she argued for other roles for women besides that of wife and mother. Angwin herself defied the separate spheres notion that a woman must remain in the home, initially facing strong criticisms from her male colleagues. Once the male doctors had become accustomed to her radical behavior she won much praise for her dedication and commitment for all the time she put into helping the poor and needy of Halifax and Dartmouth.<sup>164</sup> This time spent was valued by all those who received the benefit of her care.

Edith Archibald was another woman who dedicated a great deal of her time to social reform. In 1897 the Halifax Herald described her as "a natural leader of society... She sets a standard of her own and molds the thoughts and ideals of the best society."<sup>165</sup> Archibald was the president of the HLCW and the Superintendent of the VON. She moved easily into the public sphere as she extended her role as President of the provincial Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) into an opportunity to promote the suffrage issue. During her presidency she made the franchise department her main focus, led the WCTU in drills in parliamentary procedure, tirelessly wrote

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<sup>163</sup> PANS, MG 20, Vol 1054, No 4., The Second Annual Report of the Halifax Local Council of Women, March 1896.

<sup>164</sup> Kernaghan, "'Someone Wants a Doctor',"39-40.

<sup>165</sup> Halifax Herald, June 19, 1897.



suffrage pamphlets, founded a suffrage journal called "Equal Suffrage", and organized suffrage petitions to the legislature and actively debated the suffrage issue with an MLA in public.<sup>166</sup>

Several other prominent Halifax women were involved in activities which helped women move from the private to the public sphere. Dr. Eliza Ritchie, who received her PhD. from Cornell University in philosophy, was one of the founders of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) along with Anna Leonowens. NSCAD was organized so women would have access to a serious education in fine art and art history.<sup>167</sup> Access to education was important to the reform women for they wanted to provide women with greater opportunities for advancement in the workforce and self-fulfilment. It was May Sexton who pushed for the opening of a school to provide technical training for women in 1908 - 1909, and thus to equip women for social advancement.<sup>168</sup> The work these women did during their leisure time was important in convincing society that women were perfectly capable of participating in the public sphere, despite the Victorian convictions on ideal womanhood.

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<sup>166</sup> Ernest Forbes, Challenging the Regional Stereotypes: Essays on the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Maritimes, (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989) 70. See also see PANS, MG 20, Vol 356, Annual Reports of the WCTU of Nova Scotia.

<sup>167</sup> Ruth Blake, "Anna of Siam Lived In Canada." Maritime Advocate and Busy East, 1951, 42.

<sup>168</sup> Forbes, Challenging the Regional Stereotypes, 76. May Sexton also wrote an article published in the Halifax Mail on November 19, 1908 titled "Halifax Should Make a Move Towards Providing Industrial Education for Girls." Also see a general call for technical education in the Halifax Mail, March 16, 1909 titled "Technical Training is Needed for our Home Makers as Well as Wage Earners."

The organization and membership of these reformers reflects the fact that early on many Halifax had women recognized that they would have to organize if they were to challenge the status quo and effect social change. Initially their organizations began as a way for women to meet and talk about issues specific to them, often under the guise of another event. The formation of the Halifax Ladies Musical Club in 1905 by Edith Archibald was one such group. The group, whose membership was restricted to women, was organized for the purpose of promoting the knowledge and understanding of vocal and instrumental music and of musical literature. Accordingly, "The meetings were held not for amusement but for study..." with lectures being given on many subjects.<sup>169</sup> But in addition to this purpose, the Halifax Music Club also promoted middle class values and hoped to keep young girls out of trouble. "It will keep our young people from seeking improper amusements and companies, and ... will elevate, morally and socially, the whole community."<sup>170</sup> Thus the values promoted in the Music Club were similar to those the reformers hoped to instill in society at large and as a consequence the club was also concerned with how young people spent their time.

It is important to note that the Music Club, and other "women only" clubs, were important for the advancement of women beyond the private sphere, since they provided an opportunity for study and a much needed forum for discussion. Industrialization of the workplace increasingly separated it from the home, thus

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<sup>169</sup> PANS, MG 3, Vol 183, no 2, The Halifax Ladies Musical Club Minutes.

<sup>170</sup> Halifax Herald, December 31, 1912.

isolating many women in the domestic sphere.<sup>171</sup> This isolation meant that women rarely had the time or opportunity to unite and discuss issues important to their life. As Wendy Mitchenson has argued, this domestic isolation was complemented by the “cult of domesticity”, an ideology which saw women as the ultimate care giver in the home.<sup>172</sup> Women certainly had influence in the home, but beyond the home their influence was limited. The emergence of women from the private sphere was stimulated by the organization of clubs, demonstrating their dissatisfaction with their limited position and the desire to use their influence to reform society. It was through these clubs that women began to become influential in the public sphere, and to earn themselves a valued and respected place in Halifax society. Clubs such as the Halifax Ladies Music Club were essential in uniting women with common purpose, allowing them to meet and to discuss specific issues pertaining to women and children and to plan how they would attempt to effect change.

Since many of these clubs were philanthropic in nature, providing what reformers believed to be much needed help to the working classes, they were seen by many as a respectable avenue for women’s participation in the public sphere. These largely middle class women had a very specific view of how society should be organized and as a consequence sought to encourage people to use their time with

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<sup>171</sup> Women who worked outside the home were of course not isolated in the same way, for they were able to enter into the male dominated sphere of work. Yet they too were isolated in the sense that they were not fully accepted in the world of work.

<sup>172</sup> Mitchenson, "The WTCU: 'For God, Home and Native Land': A Study in Nineteenth Century Feminism," 322-323.

what they believed were constructive activities. For example, many women's organizations tried to instill in young women the values of motherhood and the necessity of having clean, well managed homes. Both the Women's Christian Association (WCA) and the WCTU held 'mother's meetings' where they taught women to cook and sew.<sup>173</sup>

The Mother's meetings organized and run by the WCA and WCTU demonstrate further insight into the motivation behind programs offered to working class women. During these meetings reformers hoped to teach women how to make their dollar stretch farther and to use their domestic time efficiently for the betterment of the household. While glossing over real economic inequalities, the reform women were honestly motivated to assist the working poor by teaching them the skills that would improve their lifestyle, and consequently to improve society as a whole.<sup>174</sup> These meeting also offered a place for young women to spend their leisure time instead of using their time for unrespectable activities. But there were other motivations behind these meetings.

Classes on household tasks was a perfect place to champion the social purity movement which sought to spread the values of the middle-class. Valverde regards the mother's meetings organized by the WCTU "as the equivalent of consciousness

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<sup>173</sup> Women's Christian Association Annual Reports 1875 - 1888 and the Women's Christian Temperance Union Annual Reports, 1898 - 1918.

<sup>174</sup> WCA Annual Reports 1875 - 1888 and the WCTU Annual Reports, 1898 - 1918.

raising."<sup>175</sup> Valverde contends that the organization of purity in institutions such as the WCTU, the NCWC and the YWCA believed in the "filter-down-through-the-classes theory of moral values..."<sup>176</sup> Rather than addressing the economic root of the many working women's problems, these institutions were largely aimed at preserving the respectability and purity of the middle-class or the respectable working class women.

As early as 1875 the Women's Christian Association also organized night school classes for

Girls who would have otherwise have grown up useless, helpless women are taught to read, write and sew - which...is really a very important branch of instruction when we consider how many [sic] homes are made cheerless, and how many men are driven to drink by untidy, slatternly women and half-clothed children.<sup>177</sup>

They also helped women who had been released from prison and established a Woman's Home "to help women who had fallen into sin, to regain their lost character and to give them an opportunity of returning to a better life."<sup>178</sup>

The Council tried to reach women of the working class in other ways as well.

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<sup>175</sup> Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water, 61; Also see Carol Lee Bacchi, "Race Regeneration and Social Purity; A Study of the Social Attitudes of Canada's English-Speaking Suffragists," Histoire Sociale/Social History Vol XI, No 22, November 1978, 460 - 474.

<sup>176</sup> Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water, 65. Valverde has warned historians not to characterize moral reform as purely negative and prohibitory, and to observe the "positive" side of their campaign - the "shaping of morality, in the context of a grand project that was both national and religious." Valverde defines positive in terms of "not necessarily good but to distinguish it from negativity, from mere prohibition".

<sup>177</sup> PANS, Women's Christian Association Annual Reports, 1881.

<sup>178</sup> PANS, Women's Christian Association Annual Reports, November 1875.

During the winter of 1908 at the Provincial Exhibition, the Council "sought to give practice and useful instruction to wives and mothers...by arranging for free demonstrations of scientific cooking by duly qualified teachers..." They also organized cooking classes for adults at nominal fees during the winter months, and set up cooking demonstrations in the Art Gallery Building.<sup>179</sup> Their goal was to educate women about nutrition and healthy cooking, stating that "our mental and physical health is dependent on the foods that we eat, and on the manner in which those foods are cooked."<sup>180</sup> The HLCW felt it was important that women educate themselves on proper nutrition, while at the same time improving the health of their family.

The push for technical education for women demonstrates the conflict between providing women with an education for self-improvement and the reformers' desire to intervene in the working class home. May Sexton and her husband Fred Sexton began a push for the technical education for women in 1908 . They explained that this education would provide women with an opportunity to improve their status since they would become better equipped for better paying jobs. Carol Lee Bacchi and Catherine Cleverdon have interpreted this push for technical training as a way to make women better servants, as the newspapers of the time suggested, and that the motivation stemmed from class interests and the maintenance of social control.<sup>181</sup> E.R. Forbes has argued the women were attempting to appeal to the men in power when they

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<sup>179</sup> Daily Echo, September 5, 1908.

<sup>180</sup> Daily Echo, September 5, 1908.

<sup>181</sup> E.R. Forbes, Challenging Regional Stereotypes.

commented that a technical school would provide Halifax with a better class of servants and that it would be "better than a curfew" by keeping women off the street at night. The minutes of the Local Councils discussions on this issue indicates that technical education was specifically advocated for the advancement of women. For example, on December 17, 1908 the HLCW proposed that there should be a "day school for those who wish to learn a trade and evening classes for those who only want a little knowledge."<sup>182</sup> In addition to this a committee was set up to investigate how many working class women would be interested in attending a technical school, suggesting they had a genuine interest in providing education for those who wished to attend to improve their situation.

One must be careful when analyzing the motivation behind the reform women's use of time. Although it is evident that these women gave significant portions of their time to the reform cause, it is questionable if this time was as selfless as it might first appear. There was a fine line between being motivated by a pure desire to help women and children who were less fortunate than the reformers and being motivated by class interests and social control. It is interesting to note that what the reformers thought they were doing was not necessarily what they appeared to be doing, as was the case with technical education for women. The desire for women to have the opportunity to advance in the workforce was shaped by their own middle class values. The reform women saw nothing inappropriate in suggesting that working class women be trained to be better domestic help, since their middle class values made them

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<sup>182</sup> December 17, 1908, The Halifax Local Council of Women Minutes.

believe that this was the role of the working class female.<sup>183</sup> Therefore, although reform minded women were motivated to help these worse off than they were, few ever suggested that working class women be elevated to their own class.

Nevertheless, attempts at regulating time use were aimed at working women or women from the working class. E.R. Forbes investigation into the motive behind the push for a school for technical education for women by the HLCW demonstrates how the reform women wanted to help the working class women by providing an education that would improve their opportunities for employment. The motivation for this school has often been cited as an attempt by the reformers to control the working class. Forbes, however, disagrees, arguing that the women's goal was clear: they wanted "to open avenues of occupational advancement to women in industry and to reduce the confining drudgery for those who remained in the home."<sup>184</sup> The HLCW went so far as to meet with the factory women to see what the women wanted. They also polled women with school aged daughters to learn what they could do to help their situation.

Yet, while the reformers were helping the poor and unfortunate, they were attempting to get them to conform to the moral standards of the middle-class. Moral and social reform went hand in hand.

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<sup>183</sup> For a detailed investigation into the issue of training working class and immigrant women to remedy the upper middle class domestic servant shortage see Veinott, "A Call to Mother" 19-33.

<sup>184</sup> E.R. Forbes, "The Ideas of Carol Bacchi and the Suffragists of Halifax: A Review Essay on Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918." Challenging Regional Stereotypes. (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989) 94.



As social purity activists sought to give their work scientific respectability, reformers in other areas (public health, urban reform) bridged the gap by putting increasing emphasis on the moral regeneration of the city and its citizens.<sup>185</sup>

Increase in urban population and industrialization was blamed for eroding the moral fabric of Halifax society. Reform women truly believed that their devotion to renewing the moral standards was justifiable. Through their participation in reform organizations women attempted to improve the morality of society, using their own values as the standard. Their efforts came to be valued by many members of society as important and necessary work. While reform women earned the respect of society through their philanthropic work they also extended the role of women into the public sphere while creating an autonomous organization for themselves.

The formation of the Halifax Local Council of Women on August 24, 1894 provided such an opportunity for Halifax women. The HLCW's activities encompassed a broad range of issues concerning such matters as culture, morality<sup>186</sup>, child welfare

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<sup>185</sup> Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water, 46.

<sup>186</sup> The HLCW focus on the moral regeneration of society may be seen in their anti-prostitution campaign. In this campaign they hoped to regulate the standard of behaviour associated with prostitution. Prostitutes, and those who sought their services, were not morally responsible, and must be either educated about, or legislated into appropriate standards of behaviour. Veinott explains that the HLCW's actions were interpreted as an attack on male culture, since it appeared that the areas they wanted to change were all associated with male activities. The double standard for what was an appropriate use of women's time had long prohibited women from participating in the immoral activities that men enjoyed the freedom to pursue. This attitude was exemplified by the approach taken by the HLCW towards prostitution. The HLCW regarded the female as the innocent victim of the male seducer. The HLCW's Miss Ritchie voiced this opinion in a letter to the Daily Echo in which she wrote in 1910 that "White slaves are the "victims of wicked men" and at the same time the "temptresses of these who are still pure"." With this came the recognition that lower class women entered into prostitution not because they were morally void but because,

and women's work, all issues that did not jeopardize women's natural role as mother, wife and care giver. Between 1894 and 1920 the Council was involved in many successful campaigns that maintained women in her maternal role. The accomplishments of the HLCW during this time include: supervised playgrounds, Women's Welcome Hostel, Anti-Tuberculosis League, formation of the Children's Aid Society of Halifax, establishing classes in domestic science for women, and instituted mother's meetings. Under the auspices of the Halifax Local Council of Women the reformers called for municipal action towards the abolition of slums, the appointment of a public health officer, proper care for the 'feeble-minded' and the establishment of a mental health clinic as well as being involved with the establishment of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Although the HLCW's campaigns took place within the public sphere they specifically addresses the needs of women and children, long within the realm of the domestic sphere. As a consequence, all of these activities did not deviate far from the acceptable norm for respectable women's behavior. The changes brought on by industrial capitalism directly affected the home and thus it was not a far stretch for women to extend their role into this part of the public sphere. The Halifax Local Council of Women, formed in 1894, realized that the government lacked the resources and the

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when left with no choices, prostitution was a way to make enough money to survive. The HLCW believed it was the male behaviour that need to be addressed by the government and not the behaviour of the women. Also see Judith Waltcowitz, City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late- Victorian London (Chicago: University Of California Press, 1992) for an examination of prostitution and reformers in England.

initiative to undertake such work and thus established their own programs to deal with these issues.<sup>187</sup> The HLCW's goal was to establish programs to deal with the suffering in society and then to have the government take over after the programs were up and running. For example, when the city refused to set up a social service bureau complete with a salaried social worker and employment agency, the Local Council joined forces with the Greater Halifax Conference in an effort to set up a private bureau.<sup>188</sup> In 1915 their efforts were rewarded when the city finally established the Social Service Bureau, on which three of the twelve executives were Council women.<sup>189</sup>

The HLCW provided the reform-minded women of Halifax the opportunity to discuss and take action against the social ills of society. Eventually the HLCW took on more overtly political projects such as prison reform and the suffrage issue, despite the fact that the HLCW was not primarily a suffrage organization.<sup>190</sup>

Their early mission statement asserted that

The individual, the family, the state; with the moral standards of the first two, lies the responsibility of the safety and the well being of the third. In the building of

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<sup>187</sup> The Halifax Local Council of Women acted as an umbrella organization for various women's groups in the city. These women were united by their desire to address such issues as poverty, immorality, and child welfare. The joining of women's groups under the HLCW provided an awareness of the work undertaken by each group and to assure that energy was not wasted pursuing overlapping causes. This was set out in the minutes from the Inaugural Meeting of the Halifax Local Council of Women, August 24, 1894.

<sup>188</sup> Halifax Local Council of Women Minutes, February 15, 1912.

<sup>189</sup> Halifax Herald, July 15, 1915.

<sup>190</sup> Halifax Local Council of Women, Second Annual Report, 15.

any great nation, the women of the nation have a high and solemn calling...<sup>191</sup>

Although women wanted entry into the public sphere for different reasons, many agreed that if they were to influence changes in the make up of society they had to be granted a place in its politics. As indicated in the quotation above, nation-building was directly linked to the reform movement. As Mariana Valverde has argued, it was important to reformers that the nation be strong. Reformers stressed the need to "conserve, preserve, and shape human life: to conserve its physical health, to preserve its moral purity, and to shape it according to the optimistic vision shared by all political parties of what Canada would be in the twentieth century."<sup>192</sup> It was important for reform women to build a better nation for the children of the future and so that Canada could compete internationally.

As a result, Halifax women organized many campaigns that, although seeking to make a better world for children, were implicitly political. For example, many reform women were concerned with how children, specifically working class children, spent their time. Children must use their time productively; this time should be organized to assure that children were learning or being active during their time. The campaign by

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<sup>191</sup> PANS, MG 20, Vol 1054, No 4, "Second Annual Report of the Local Council of Women," March 1896.

<sup>192</sup> Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1955, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991) 24; Valverde clearly explains that the nation-building efforts of the reformers was not motivated by the government. In fact "many voluntary organizations were far more concerned about nation building and even about strengthening the state than the state itself; they often chastised it for not exercising enough power, particularly in the areas of social welfare, health, and immigration."25-26.

the HLCW for supervised playgrounds for the children of Halifax is an example of one such campaign that attempted to help working class children spent their time more efficiently. This campaign also demonstrates how women moved beyond domesticity while not deviating from their prescribed roles as mothers of the nation.

This campaign not only shows how women demonstrated their abilities in the public sphere but it also how upper and middle class reform women attempted to influence the time use of others. Middle-class reformers had strong views as to how young girls and women should spend their leisure time outside of school. Each day the children, particularly children of the working-class, showed up on the city's numerous playgrounds. Initially there were no organized activities planned for these children, nor was there any formal supervision. In 1905 the HLCW initiated a campaign to have these playgrounds supervised and to develop programs for these children so they would have a productive way of spending their time. This poem printed in the Daily Echo in 1915 recites the necessity of providing a clean and healthy play environment for the children of the city.

Give them a chance for innocent sport  
Give them a chance for fun -  
Better a playground plot than a court  
And a jail when the harm is done.  
Give them a chance - if you stint them now  
Tomorrow you'll have to pay  
A larger bill for a darker ill,  
So give them a place to play.<sup>193</sup>

The HLCW's purpose was to offset the negative consequences of the idle time

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<sup>193</sup> Daily Echo, April 1, 1915.

these children spent by having them engaged in structured activities while improving their physical and moral character. The Council's program offered a variety of activities for girls to spend their time. They included, arts and crafts, sewing and crocheting lessons, and physical pursuits such as folk dancing and Swedish exercises.<sup>194</sup> The HLCW had long recognized the health benefits of exercise and through their playground program they hoped to instill these beliefs in some working class children. Of course the motivation for this program was two-fold; not only was the HLCW involved in improving the health and welfare of these working-class children, but they were also controlling the time these children spent out of the home. Idle time breeds contempt and therefore must be filled with productive and meaningful activities. Although there are not any specific records concerning the success of this playground movement, its continuation suggests that young people took advantage of this service. It is unlikely that this service would have been regarded as an attempt to control time use by its users. The supervised playground campaign is a perfect example of the women of Halifax recognizing a need in society that was not being met by the government.

It is interesting to note that the City of Halifax did not seem to value the time and money spent by the HLCW on their playground program. Since its initiation the HLCW hired and trained the instructors at their own expense, and organized and administered the program on their own. By 1911 the HLCW petitioned the government for assistance, since they "felt that the work was too important to be entirely reliant upon the backing of philanthropic organizations and urged the Government to assume partial

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<sup>194</sup> Halifax Echo, 30 May 1908.

responsibility." The School Board resisted the persistent requests of the HLCW to take over the playground supervision program until 1914, when a new board was arranged comprising of three HLCW, two School Board, and two outside citizens.<sup>195</sup> Clearly, the government was not as concerned with how the children of the city spent their leisure hours as the middle-class reformers were. The playground supervision program filled a need and was used frequently, unlike other programs that attempted to compete with other forms of amusements.

The Young Women's Christian Association, for example, was far less successful in competing with other forms of amusement.<sup>196</sup> All the same, the formation of the YWCA did provide women with an opportunity to establish an autonomous culture in which women proved their ability to manage and administer people, money, and property. Diana Pederson, an historian who has written extensively on the YWCA in Canada, credits philanthropic societies with initiating unprecedented opportunities for women to work autonomously.<sup>197</sup> These philanthropic gestures, as Wendy Mitchenson notes, were primarily carried out by individuals or within the context of denominational church groups.<sup>198</sup> Pederson, adding to Mitchenson's work, observes a transition from

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<sup>195</sup> The minutes of The Halifax Local Council of Women, February 1914, PANS.

<sup>196</sup> See Chapter 4 of this thesis

<sup>197</sup> Diana Pederson, "Providing a Woman's Conscience: The YWCA, Female Evangelicalism, and the Girls in the City, 1870-1930," in Wendy Mitchenson, Paula Bourne, Alison Prentice, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, and Naomi Black, eds., Canadian Women: A Reader, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996)198.

<sup>198</sup> Wendy Mitchenson, "Canadian Women and Church Missionary Societies in the Nineteenth Century: A Step Towards Independence," Atlantis, Vol 2, No 2, Spring

the individual or denominational activity of women to organized and independent action.

By mid-century, their activities [YWCA] began to take on a more structured form and to assume greater independence from church control. Legally incorporated women's societies, capable of contracting debts and holding property, assumed the responsibility for building and managing a range of charitable institutions, including orphanages, maternity hospitals and home for the aged and insane.<sup>199</sup>

Although Pederson is referring specifically to the YWCA, women in other organizations played similar roles. The actions of those involved in the WCTU, HLCW and the YWCA provided Halifax women with an opportunity to create the type of autonomous female-centered culture to which Pederson refers. Although not executed specifically for political reasons, the time women put into these organizations did help to establish women as capable of accomplishing things previously relegated to men only.

A specific Halifax example of the autonomous female-centered culture referred to by Pederson may be observed in the HLCW's war relief activities. These activities were not overtly political since they remained within the realms of the woman's sphere - helping others and the community. During World War I and after the Halifax Explosion the women of the Council raised thousands of dollars through their relief committees. During the war they attended to the needs of the soldiers' families in cooperation with the Patriotic Fund Committee, and aided the Red Cross. In response to food shortages

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1977 as noted by Pederson, "Providing a Woman's Conscience," 198.

<sup>199</sup> Pederson, "Providing a Woman's Conscience," 198.



brought on by the war they encouraged thrift when preparing meals for the family.<sup>200</sup> In an effort to encourage food production they began the Home Garden program which paid for and distributed seeds to children so they could plant them and grow food for their family. The HLCW's war-time Waste Paper Campaign provides us with a clear example of how women were able to organize on a large scale to offer relief to people in need. The Waste Paper Campaign, which was set up to save paper, to keep the streets clean, and to raise money for patriotic purposes, was a highly successful and well organized campaign which raised thousands of dollars for war relief.<sup>201</sup> These, and other high profile campaigns, were all extensions of the role of mother, for none of these campaigns directly infringed upon the political realm reserved for men. And yet this campaign required city wide organization and was business oriented, proving that women were very capable of success beyond that of domesticity. Women's involvement in these campaigns was essential to earning them a place in the public sphere.

Other campaigns, such as women's attempt to win representation on the Halifax School Board, were more overtly political. This campaign, which began in 1885 and lasted until 1917 was Halifax women's first foray into the domain of politics. During their battle to attain representation on the School Board they encountered much

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<sup>200</sup> For information on women and their war time activity in Halifax see the HLCW minutes 1914-1918; "Women and the War" Halifax Mail, January 24, 1917; David Frank's Chapter in Forbes & Muise, The Atlantic Province in Confederation, 233 - 271.

<sup>201</sup> For a more detailed account of the HLCW's Waste Paper Campaign see Veinott, "A Call to Mother," 67 - 68.

hostility.<sup>202</sup> Permitting women on the school board meant the formal recognition of women's right to hold public office, and would set a precedent for women to hold other offices. Recognizing this, the HLCW focused their arguments around the woman's natural role as nurturer. Where else would a woman's motherly qualities be better appreciated than in the schools? As one Council woman stated:

A woman's familiarity with the physical needs of little ones, her perception of the effects upon the home life of the training of the child gets in school, her inside knowledge of the mental and moral changes in the growing girls...these are only a few of the elements that would give value to her opinions in an educational council.<sup>203</sup>

Despite arguing that the role of women on the School Board was a natural extension of woman's role as nurturer and care giver, women still had to campaign for twenty two years before they gained success. The battle to have women appointed to the school board was a long and arduous. Throughout this campaign the reformers spent long hours of their time petitioning the government, writing letters and organizing lectures focusing on the need for having women on the school board.

While women's involvement in campaigns such as that of playground supervision were considered a respectable use of women's time for it was regarded as a natural extension of women's maternal role in society, involvement on the school board was less readily accepted. Margaret Braham, in an article written for the express purpose of rallying women to the cause of school representation, argued that it was the

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<sup>202</sup> Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia, 1886, 504-505.

<sup>203</sup> Halifax Echo, October 26, 1909 in the HLCW scrapbook.

"duty of mothers," and quotes Anna Leonowens as having said: "Of all demoralizing agencies none are more powerful on the life and formation of the character of the young than the immediate environment of the home, school and the playground."<sup>204</sup>

The influence of women on children in the home, and even in the institutionalized setting of the playground was one thing, but the school was quite another. The attempt to have women appointed to the School Board is a good example of the type of opposition the HLCW encountered when they tried moving into the very public political sphere.

From the onset of the campaign reformers met with strong opposition, but the women on the HLCW used the opposition's arguments to their advantage, turning the women's role of mother and home keeper into a quality which needed to be extended into the public domain. The HLCW argued that they were better suited to have a say in the education of a child due to their natural role as mother. In the Morning Chronicle J.C. MacKintosh argues for one-fourth of the board to be made up of women, saying "Women are by nature best adapted to know and to remedy the various needs of children in many matters where men have failed."<sup>205</sup> She went on to say that despite the fact that the women's first duty is in the home, "the time, however, at her disposal could not be better or more charitably spent than in extending her refining influence to the schoolroom, and its management, where many children need her motherly care and

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<sup>204</sup> Halifax Herald, August 1895.

<sup>205</sup> Morning Chronicle, March 20, 1912.

direction for good."<sup>206</sup> MacKintosh believed many women had the time for involvement in the public sphere and should do so. Council women directed their arguments towards the female students of the schools, suggesting young girls would benefit from the influence of women on the school board who would introduce such courses as sewing and cooking. By focusing their campaign around the females in the school system they were trying to "maintain the illusion of a continuation of separate spheres,"<sup>207</sup> even as they set their sights on the public domain. Similarly, while the HLCW argued for women's appointment to the school board they did not assume they would take over the business end of things, yet another male realm. This strategy was useful in taking the focus off the objectionable idea of women holding public office, and it gave respectability to their fight for a place on the school board.

Halifax women were faced with a very difficult task, despite their focus on the maternal role of women on the school board.<sup>208</sup> Their strategies were very time consuming, and slow. The biggest problem facing the reformers was the law which stated it was illegal for women to sit on the school board. After the defeat of a bill in 1910 to make it legal for women to act on the School Board the women stepped up their campaign.<sup>209</sup> Miss Ritchie suggested that "we ought to select the right woman,

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<sup>206</sup> Morning Chronicle, March 20, 1912.

<sup>207</sup> Veinott, "A Call to Mother," 43.

<sup>208</sup> PANS, MG 20, Vol 535, No 4, Minutes of the Halifax Local Council of Women, November 17, 1910.

<sup>209</sup> Morning Chronicle, March 30, 1910.

one qualified to vote, capable and willing to give up her time to the work, and begin the campaign at once."<sup>210</sup> Other tactics used by the HLCW included the use of petitions, a newspaper campaign and getting the leading men of Halifax to support their cause. In April 1912 the Council decided to investigate the legalities regarding women on the school board. Mr. Daniels, the Attorney General, agreed to form a committee to review the law and report back to the HLCW. In May a letter from the Attorney General was read at the Council meeting, which reported that "as the law at present reads, the matter is left doubtful and further legislation is required to clear it."<sup>211</sup> Dr. Ritchie appointed Mrs. Stead, Mrs. Archibald, and Mrs. McNab to a committee to press for the necessary legislation. In April 1913 a bill was introduced to the house to make women eligible for appointment as commissioners of the school board. The Bill passed in the House of Assembly, but was rejected by the Legislative Council. Despite this the HLCW continued to devote their time to battling for the appointment of women to the School Board until the war interrupted their campaign. In the end women were granted a seat on the School Board, but not until the war was over.<sup>212</sup>

The battle for the appointment of women to the School Board, despite its length and its many disappointments, remained a priority for the HLCW. The dedication to this campaign, and many others, provides insight into what the women themselves valued, and what society eventually came to value. Reform women believed that it was

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<sup>210</sup> PANS, MG 20, Vol 535, No 4, Minutes of the HLCW, January 19, 1912.

<sup>211</sup> PANS, MG 20, Vol 535, No 4, Minutes of the HLCW, May 16, 1912.

<sup>212</sup> PANS, MG 20, Vol 535, No 4, Minutes of the HLCW, 1917.

their place to influence the lives of other women and children, regardless of the sphere they had to enter. The HLCW believed that a "woman's truest sphere is where she is doing her best work, either within or outside of the home."<sup>213</sup> For women to spend their time on something that was perceived as an extension of their role as mother, and on something which was for the benefit for society as a whole was regarded as valuable, not only by the women of the HLCW, but by the majority of society. These Halifax women took steps into the public sphere by negotiating a space for themselves in the realm of politics.

Throughout the campaign to have women on the School Board, the HLCW tried to maintain the illusion of separate spheres, while in fact crossing over into the public sphere. In order for women to be granted liberties in the public sphere they had to work to convince both men and women that this was their rightful place.

The temperance movement provides further insight into how women organized themselves to combat a common evil and moved from the private to the public sphere. Temperance crusaders were concerned about the consumption of alcohol and how the time spent imbibing harmed the family, especially children. They were also concerned with the way alcohol abuse was undermining the strength of society. Although the leadership of the movement was primarily middle class, people from other classes recognized the negative influence of alcohol and joined the fight for temperance. Women were the primary temperance movement leaders. They believed that it was their duty as women to protect the victims of alcohol abuse - women and children. Most

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<sup>213</sup> Halifax Herald, August 1895.

men were unwilling to do anything about alcohol abuse, primarily because they were the main consumers of alcohol - many spent some of their leisure time in the pubs and saloons of the city. Also, men were the profiteers from the liquor trade and fighting for temperance would have been counterproductive to their businesses. Therefore, it was up to women to stop the consumption of alcohol. Furthermore, they came to realize that they would not be successful unless they used their organization to gain political influence.

The most prominent temperance organization in Nova Scotia was the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). The first local unions appeared in the province during the 1870s, becoming a provincial union in 1895.<sup>214</sup> Prior to the formation of the WCTU, temperance organizations emphasized the adjustment of society to create an atmosphere of temperance. However, this tactic, which depended upon voluntary temperance, failed. When it became apparent that this approach was not working temperance advocates quickly revised their objective. By the time the WCTU was formed prohibition was the main objective of the temperance movement.

Prohibitionists wanted to eliminate the roots of social unhappiness brought on by industrialization and urbanization. As E.R. Forbes argues in his detailed examination of the prohibition and social gospel movements in Nova Scotia, the prohibitionists

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<sup>214</sup> The local Nova Scotia unions joined with the unions of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island in 1878 to form the Maritime WCTU. However, due to increased enrollment, this organization split into separate provincial unions in 1895, at which time Nova Scotia had forty-four local unions. Tanya Gogan, "A Noble Experiment? The Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Repeal of Prohibition in Nova Scotia," Honours Essay, Dalhousie University, 1992.

"wanted to create a new society in which crime, disease and social injustice would be virtually eliminated."<sup>215</sup> Forbes believes the prohibitionists were motivated by the elimination of human unhappiness, and were not "frustrated puritanical zealots bent on suppressing the pleasures of others."<sup>216</sup> According to this analysis, temperance advocates did not want to stop people from using their leisure time for pleasurable activities, but rather wanted to promote a more moral and family oriented way of spending ones time. The WCTU constitution of 1896 stated that

the object of this union shall be to...promote the cause of temperance by the adoption of every legitimate means to develop a deep moral and religious sentiment in favour of total abstinence for the individual and prohibition for the Dominion.<sup>217</sup>

WTCU leaders realized that prohibition legislation was going to take time.

Consequently their efforts were not solely focussed on political action, and included attempts to moralize society. During the WCTU's 1898 meeting Mrs. Archibald called for the establishment of "father's meetings...in conjunction with mother's meetings, as the world was in need of good fathers as much as good mothers."<sup>218</sup> This request was motivated by the desire to influence fathers to spend their time more wisely by providing other activities for them to participate in.

The WCTU attempted to have their cause spread by trying to get temperance

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<sup>215</sup> E.R. Forbes, "Prohibition and the Social Gospel Movement in Nova Scotia," Acadiensis, Vol 1, No 1, Autumn 1971, 11.

<sup>216</sup> Forbes, "Prohibition and the Social Gospel Movement in Nova Scotia," 11.

<sup>217</sup> PANS Women's Christian Temperance Union of Nova Scotia Reports.

<sup>218</sup> PANS Women's Christian Temperance Union of Nova Scotia Reports.



men on the school board, municipal councils, parliament, and "used their personal influence at home, in society, among labouring classes."<sup>219</sup> Reflecting their many concerns, they established departments in the areas of narcotics, school methods, franchise, mothers meetings, scientific temperance, jail and prison, heredity and hygiene and the Victorian Order of Nurses.<sup>220</sup> The women of the WCTU used any leverage they had to have their message spread throughout the country. All of these efforts sought to instill the message of temperance in society, while encouraging men to use their leisure time to help society, not hinder it.

The WCTU was a highly religious and patriotic organization bringing together maternal feminists who were concerned with protecting the home. Several other reform organizations were set up based on the Christian values espoused by the Church, and many women became involved in the public sphere through their participation in Church groups, many influenced by the social gospel movement which had a profound impact on the entry of women into the public sphere, whether specifically acknowledged or not. Margaret Conrad, in an examination of the diaries of Maritime women, argues that "Religion, as we know, served both as a vehicle for resistance to oppression, encouraged equality, self-respect, and public action, as well as a vehicle for accommodating oppression, counseling submissiveness, deference, and restricted

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<sup>219</sup> PANS Women's Christian Temperance Union of Nova Scotia Reports.

<sup>220</sup> WCTU Annual Reports all contain reports from these departments from 1898 - 1918.

options for women."<sup>221</sup> Conrad suggests the central role of the Church in the lives of women provided them with a strong sense of purpose and allowed them to resist the oppressive structures of a patriarchal society.

Women derived tremendous motivation to spend their time involved in social activism from their religion. The Baptist and Methodist Church women began the prohibition movement in order to transform society according to the teachings of Christ. "In the eyes of the progressive Churchmen, prohibition was one of a number of economic and social reforms necessary to transform society according to the principles of Christ's teachings."<sup>222</sup> Ending prohibition was viewed as a prerequisite for other social reforms. Sober men would be responsible citizens who would be capable of taking part in, or benefitting from, any activism for this social and economic betterment. "[P]rohibitionists were motivated primarily by a desire to eliminate the roots of human unhappiness. They wanted to create a new society in which crime, disease and social injustice would virtually be eliminated."<sup>223</sup> Tanya Gogan has shown there was a close connection between the prohibition movement and other social reform initiatives,

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<sup>221</sup> Margaret Conrad, "Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950," in Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, Volume 2 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985)58.

<sup>222</sup> Margaret Strople, "Prohibition and Movements of Social Reform in Nova Scotia, 1894-1920," MA Thesis, Dalhousie University, 198?, 38.

<sup>223</sup> E.R. Forbes, "Prohibition and the Social Gospel in Nova Scotia," Acadiensis Vol 1, No. 1(Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1971) 12.

including the suffrage movement.<sup>224</sup> The Anglican Church was not as receptive to the new ideas of social reform as were other denominations; this is ironic since the mainstream leaders of the Halifax reform movement were predominately Anglican. Margaret Strople acknowledges this initial hesitation as a result of the Anglican Church's "conservative traditions and its stress on ritual and liturgy rather than salvation as a means of grace..."<sup>225</sup> The Roman Catholic Church was also affected to some degree by the social gospel movement, although it did not come out officially in favor of prohibition until after World War One. Brian P. Clarke identifies two similarities between the Catholic and Protestant women's groups: both had a religious impetus and both profoundly affected the larger cultures of which they were a part of. However, there were significant differences; the Catholic women's associations were primarily organized under the auspices of the church and dedicated to charitable or devotional objectives. Despite the fact that the patriarchal doctrines of the church confined women to subordinate roles within the Catholic community, their role in these associations did allow them to bridge the private and public spheres. These associations were the principal vehicles of social activism among Catholic women, allowing Catholic women to transform their devotionism into an extension of the parish church into the public realm, and the role of mother into the keepers of the Catholic faith. This extension of the role of Catholic women allowed them to use their leisure time pursuing social

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<sup>224</sup> Tanya Gogan, "Surviving as a Widow in Nineteenth Century Halifax", Masters Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1994.

<sup>225</sup> Strople, "Prohibition and Movements of Social Reform," 65.

reform.<sup>226</sup>

While many women participated in social reform movements within the acceptable realms of the church, some women, as it became more acceptable for them to participate in the public sphere, pursued a more secular form of social activism, such as the Halifax suffrage campaign. The women of the WCTU and the HLCW realized the only way for them to have their causes taken seriously was to have access to real political power, for which they required the right to vote. Although no formal suffrage bill was brought forward in Nova Scotia in the 1880s there was considerable discussion of the matter in the Legislature beginning in 1885. The 1890s saw a flurry of suffrage activity in Nova Scotia, marked by a flood of petitions. Catherine Cleverdon's research accounts for 34 separate suffrage petitions between 1892 and 1895 sent to the Legislature, with a total of more than 10 000 signatures.<sup>227</sup> There were six attempts between 1891 and 1897 to enact bills for the provincial enfranchisement of women, all of which produced debate in the Legislature, but none of which passed. Between 1897 and 1916 there is no record of suffrage petitions or bills recorded in the Journals of the House of Assembly.<sup>228</sup> The suffrage activity in Halifax meet with much hostility, although, as Cleverdon points out, the women of Nova Scotia could "derive satisfaction

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<sup>226</sup> Brian P. Clark, Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993) 74.

<sup>227</sup> Catherine Cleverdon, Women Suffrage in Canada, (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1950) 160.

<sup>228</sup> For a detailed account suffrage activity in Nova Scotia see Cleverdon's chapter on "The Maritime Provinces" in Women Suffrage in Canada, 156-213.

from the thought that more speakers had been favorable than opposed during debate, a few having even gone so far as to say they would like to see the ladies in the legislature.<sup>229</sup> This satisfaction helped to justify the time reformers put into their campaigns; however, many women were not willing to face the opposition frequently encountered by reform women.

Opposition to the suffrage campaign came from many sides - the Church, the government, and other women. The granting of the vote to women threatened the male hierarchy because it directly infringed upon the realm of politics, a male dominated sphere. The most cited advocates of the anti-suffrage movement were the Roman Catholic Church and several high ranking government officials. The 1897 defeat in the legislature of the proposed suffrage bill was credited primarily to Attorney-General J.W. Longley who, fearing the power the vote would give to women, rallied his conservative forces against them.<sup>230</sup> He and six of the eight representatives of the provincial constituencies fought the battle against suffrage in the legislature.<sup>231</sup> Longley was the most vocal opposition to granting women the vote, as demonstrated time and again in his speeches in the legislature every time the suffrage issue was broached.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Cleverdon, Women Suffrage in Canada, 160.

<sup>230</sup> It is interesting to note that Longley's wife was an executive of the HLCW, while Longley himself was a member, although rarely in attendance during meetings.

<sup>231</sup> E.R. Forbes, "Battle in Another War: Edith Archibald and the Halifax Feminist Movement," Challenging Regional Stereotypes: (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press Ltd., 1989) 71.

<sup>232</sup> Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, 161.

Cleverdon's extensive work on the Canadian suffrage movements reveals that Longley "knew to perfection every argument in the repertoire"<sup>233</sup> of anti-suffrage agitation. His two hour speech in the House of Assembly on February 1895 against the bill for woman's suffrage, which the Halifax Morning Chronicle reported as "a very excellent speech,"<sup>234</sup> reveals what he believed were the true functions of women.

...first, the bearing and bringing up of children, and this is the highest, Second, the creating of home and the beautifying of home life...Third, to charm men and make the world pleasant, sweet and agreeable to live in. Fourth, to be kindly and loving, to be sweet and to be cherished, to be weak and confiding, to be protected and be the object of man's devotion.<sup>235</sup>

Longley was able to sway the legislature not to grant women the vote. Longley was supported in part by the Roman Catholic Church, an institution that played a significant role in the anti-suffrage campaign. The Roman Catholic Church declared women's suffrage as "incompatible with the strictures of "Christian civilization" and rebuked the "screeching leaders of women's revolt who advocated it."<sup>236</sup>

When the women were temporarily defeated by their opponents they simply changed their strategy. Wanting to avoid confrontation with the anti-suffragists they put overt campaigning on the suffrage issue on the back burner until the time was right, and concentrated on building their support using other avenues. The women of Halifax actively returned to the suffrage campaign in 1910, when they felt that their pursuit of

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<sup>233</sup> Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, 161.

<sup>234</sup> Morning Chronicle, March 14, 1895.

<sup>235</sup> Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, 161.

<sup>236</sup> Forbes, "Battle in Another War," 71.

the vote for women would be time well spent.

Politicians and church officials were not the only ones who felt that the reformers time was being unwisely used. Anti-suffrage arguments often revolved around what was considered the acceptable use of time; anti-suffragists contented that women did not have the time to participate in politics without neglecting her household and families. Mary Ritchie refuted this argument when she said that "surely women have half an hour to vote, at the most once a year..." and asks if it had "occurred to the opponents that there is other work done by women in this world besides housekeeping."<sup>237</sup> The August 1895 "Women's Extra", printed in a special edition of the Halifax Herald, records many arguments put forward by the opposition, all of which received attention by the reformers. Two prominent arguments against the entry of women into the political sphere were that the teaching of the bible was opposed to women moving into the public sphere and that women were too good for politics. Ritchie responded to the former argument by pointing out that "...we cannot shut our eyes to the uses of the Bible which have stopped human progress, did the Church not stop Copernican theory?"<sup>238</sup> And to the argument that women were above politics she fought back stating that:

if a delicate and refined woman can visit prisons, asylums, and the homes of the wretched and degraded without injury to her character, why will giving her the right to vote end in robbing her of all her sweet womanly qualities? If politics are so corrupt, it is high time the cleaning process begin, and it is no part of my creed that the less you meddle in evil, even to remedy it, the better for your own

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<sup>237</sup> Halifax Herald, August 10, 1895.

<sup>238</sup> Halifax Herald, August 10, 1895.

character.<sup>239</sup>

The immediate response to the "Women's Extra" was so great that the Herald had to print a second edition in October of that same year, demonstrating that people were paying attention to the reformers.

There were many differing opinions on the activity of women in the suffrage movement, ranging from outright negativity to full support. In part the opinions of people for or against woman's suffrage were formed based upon how people interpreted the women's motivation. Sarah Healy, in an article written for the Halifax Herald in 1895 titled "The Other Side of the New Woman Question," accounts for what she viewed as two motives for women who sought suffrage.

The clamor of woman's suffrage, which is after all only entertained by a small minority, is the result of several different motives. There are many women to whom this age of increased opportunity has given attainments above those they have hitherto enjoyed, and being "not to the manner born," dazzled by their little greatness, in their pride and vain glory, stand ready to do or in anything which will bring themselves or their remarkable talents into public notice... Others have based their claims on their inherent rights. Have they not equal rights with men? Are they not possessed of equal capabilities? Why should they not be allowed to exercise these rights? Why should men make the laws and governing the state and be at the head of civilization; in fact, why should they do anything all by themselves when it is equally their right to attend to these affairs which they can do just as well as men?<sup>240</sup>

Many women in the suffrage movement were motivated by the idea that voting was an inherent right of all. However, this was also a reason why many women did not join the fight for the vote - they did not see themselves as inherently equal to men, nor did they

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<sup>239</sup> Halifax Herald, August 10, 1895.

<sup>240</sup> Halifax Herald, August 10, 1895.



believe they needed the right to vote, for their husbands already did. Healey's interpretation about the suffrage women's desire for publicity was a distortion to suit her expressed desire to refute the need for women to have the vote. But there is some truth in what she said. Women did want to be publicly noticed. They wanted to have their cause recognized, not themselves. Prominence in the public sphere was a vehicle for their voices and not for individual attention. Publicity provided an opportunity for the public to see what these women spent their time pursuing and to pass judgement on this time spent. While many did not approve of the more radical reforms they could not find fault with women who used their time to reform society through an extension of her maternal role. Even Healy, despite her anti-suffrage comments, notes that for the women who "look upon the extension of the franchise as a powerful aid for the correction of many existing evils" do so because they have "faith in humanity...and thus have a wider scope for the extension of their womanly influence".<sup>241</sup> Many women believed strongly that the only way women would successfully be able to influence government policies was through the granting of the vote to women. "...there are earnest womanly women who look upon the extension of the franchise as a powerful aid for the correction of many existing evils, social and civic."<sup>242</sup> However, more women chose avenues for social reform that were perceived as more respectable, most maintaining their maternal qualities despite entry into the political sphere.

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<sup>241</sup> Halifax Herald, August 10, 1895.

<sup>242</sup> Halifax Herald, August 1895.

Many women justified their pursuit of reform in the political sphere by extending their maternal role into the public sphere. The success of these campaigns discussed throughout this chapter demonstrate that women were very capable of organizing and running programs and could be successful in the business world. While the middle class women, often motivated by religious conviction, used their leisure time to improve society they also advanced the status of women in society. Their initial involvement in women's only clubs, such as the Halifax Ladies Musical Club, allowed women the opportunity to discuss issues they were concerned with while helping to establish their influence beyond the domestic sphere. Their involvement in philanthropic causes had many positive repercussions on how society valued women's time in the public sphere. Through their involvement in, and often their initiation of, philanthropic organizations, the women of Halifax proved they were capable of success in the public sphere. Through the organization of campaigns for women on the Halifax School Board, war relief, temperance, and suffrage women moved beyond the private sphere and into the public sphere. These campaigns proved women could use their time to successfully manage and administer people, money and property on their own. Women's organizations took up where governments left off and filled a much needed role in society. Although not everyone agreed that women should participate in the public realm, many became convinced that their contributions were essential for a morally and virtuous society. Their activities in the political sphere not only created an autonomous female-centered culture they also convinced many elements of society that these activities were a valuable way for women to utilize their time.

Nevertheless, not all of women's use of time beyond the domestic realm was applauded by middle-class female reformers. The following chapter explores the ways in which women chose to use their time for amusement and how concerns over this use of time prompted attempts to control mass leisure activities.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Entertainment Time: Social and Cheap Amusements**

Between the years of 1880 and 1930 more options became available for women to spend their leisure time, although these were conditioned by class and age. A young working woman might use her leisure time pursuing new forms of commercial entertainment such as amusement parks, dancing and attending the movies. An older married woman had less leisure time and consequently had fewer ways in which she could spend her leisure time. Women from the upper and middle class maintained a lot of their traditional forms of entertainment, such as attending formal balls and luncheons, but also participated in some of the newer commercial forms of entertainment. Conflicts arose when one group judged another group's choice of entertainment an inappropriate use of time. Middle class reformers found themselves in conflict with many, especially younger working class women, over the choice of leisure activity. The reformers attempted to sway women away from popular commercial entertainment, for many of the same reasons they had sought to control sporting activities, through the social reform movement. Of course these attempts to regulate working class recreation and commercial leisure did not go unchallenged by the working class.

Regardless of class, women's leisure choices were constrained by their gender. Rarely were women totally free from obligations and able to pursue leisure for leisure's sake. Usually women experienced their leisure time with their families or as part of

other obligations. Among many other things, women were responsible for the leisure of their families. They usually had to initiate the activity, organize and clean up after their family. Also, women's time was frequently spent doing more than one activity at a time. For example, a woman might do some mending, while listening to a member of the family play a musical instrument, thus combining necessary chores with leisure activities.<sup>243</sup> Many women felt there was not enough time in the day to complete all their obligations, and therefore combined activities to fit the time they did have.

Women's leisure time was also influenced by what were considered suitable amusements for women. While men were free to enter taverns and drink with their friends, women who drank and frequented taverns were not regarded as respectable. However, young working women were able to negotiate a space for themselves in areas which had once been denied to women. Young women who worked all day in the factories or shop floors believed that they had earned the same rights their male co-workers had to choose how they used their leisure time.<sup>244</sup> Many of these women spent their leisure time in the streets, dance halls, movie theatres and amusement parks. In doing so, these women challenged the boundaries of domesticity and created an autonomous space for themselves. These uses of time usually changed when the young woman married and had children. Marriage and family further constrained the

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<sup>243</sup> Gary Cross, A Social History of Leisure Since 1600. State College: Venture Publishing, 1990, 105; also see M. Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," The Dominion Illustrated Monthly, September 1892, Vol 1, No 8 for more example of how women combined leisure and work.

<sup>244</sup> Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.

time women had to use for their own amusements. Similarly, the kinds of activities a woman sought for relaxation changed with age. While teenagers often looked for excitement and freedom a married women usually spent her amusement time with her family.

Class also affected the way women pursued amusements. The society woman spent a great deal of her leisure time attending social events such as charity balls, social teas, concerts or the theatre. In an article written in 1892 M. Tremaine reports that many middle and upper class women organized their lives so they would have time to attend to the demands of her role as a society woman.

She [the society lady] says that the reason that she can accomplish so much and still have leisure for outside enjoyment, is because she "has a place for everything and everything in its place," and because there is also a time for everything, and she lets nothing interfere with these two rules.<sup>245</sup>

A society woman then was not just frivolous in her social activity, but had to organize her household responsibilities so she had the time to be social.

Working class women were not only confined by their gender, but also by their economic situation. A working girl spent most of her time caring for her family and community, and had less time to pursue amusements for pleasure. Working class women did attend the theatre and concerts, attended public events, and spent time in the cities parks when seeking amusement. For example, many working class women could be seen strolling in Halifax's Public Gardens on Sunday afternoons. Women from all classes spent time in the Gardens, yet the class lines were rarely if ever broken

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<sup>245</sup> M. Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," 479.

- working class women did not associate with the women from the middle and upper classes.<sup>246</sup> Similarly, this behaviour was evident in the theatres of the city as well. Although evidence suggests reveals that working class women did attend the theatre, they sat separately from people from other classes. This was especially true for black women who had to sit in the segregated seats in the theatres balcony.<sup>247</sup> Clearly the lifestyle of the working class did not allow for the lavishness or grandeur of the women of the middle and upper classes. Working class women were neither invited nor expected to host the social events of the upper classes.<sup>248</sup> The extent of their involvement in these activities was limited to reading the social columns in the Halifax

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<sup>246</sup> Ian McKay, "The Discrete Charm of the Halifax Bourgeoisie", New Maritimes Vol 1, No 1, March 1986.

<sup>247</sup> PANS, Phyllis Blakeley, Vol 3027, #4 - Blakeley, "Some Forgotten Writers of Nova Scotia." The exclusion of women of colour in a study about women's history is apparent here. Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First Wave Feminism," Gender Conflicts: New Essay's in Women's History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) argues that first wave feminists, while seeking political and social rights as a matter of equal justice, excluded Black women in their desire to perpetuate the Anglo-Saxon race. The declining birthrate of the upper and middle classes was countered by a 'prolific' population boom of the lower classes, giving rise to fears amongst the bourgeoisie that they were being outbred by the less fit. This fear stimulated the eugenics movement which sought to regenerate the Anglo-Saxon race and called upon the 'mothers of the race' to reproduce healthy Anglo-Saxon children, consequently excluding women of colour. Also see Carol Lee Bacchi "Race Regeneration and Social Purity. A Study of the Social Attitudes of Canada's English Speaking Suffragists," Histoire Sociale/Social History. Vol. 11, No. 22, November 1978, 460-476 & Bacchi "Evolution, Eugenics and Women: The Impact of Scientific Theories on Attitudes Towards Women, 1870-1920," Elizabeth Windschuttle, eds., Women, Class and History: Feminist Perspectives on Australia, 1788 - 1978 (Fontana Books, 1980,) 133-136.

<sup>248</sup> See Penny Russel, A Wish of Distinction: Colonial Gentility and Femininity (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1994) for a discussion on the importance of women's social ritual for maintaining class distinction.

papers.

The ritual of organizing a formal ball or society dinner is perhaps the grandest spectacle of how society women used their leisure time. The time and effort put into these events was immense. Time was spent organizing the event itself, assembling the appropriate apparel, attending to one's personal appearance, not to mention the time spent dancing and socializing, and then the subsequent conversations that followed the grand night. In the fall of 1890 Mrs. M.H. Kenny was asked to organize a dinner at Government House in honour of Prince George of Wales and the Governor General Lord and Lady Stanley. In response to her invitation, Mrs. Kenny received a personal letter from Prince George dated October 21, 1890. The letter read:

Dear Mrs. Kenny, I shall have great pleasure in accepting your kind invitation to dinner on Tuesday the 28th at 8 o'clock and I will come with Mr. Faussett and Mr. Stanley. I hope it will be a small and cheery party. Believe me, Yours sincerely, George.<sup>249</sup>

Mrs. Kenny was one of the most prominent society women of Halifax, and spent much of her time cultivating her social contacts. She entertained royalty and visiting dignitaries, and even accommodated Oscar Wilde while he was in Halifax in 1882.<sup>250</sup>

A sketch found in Mrs. Kenny's scrapbook illustrates the amount of time and effort required to organize one of these events [Appendix 4]. The sketch shows Mrs. Kenny's vision of the dinner table, and included the flower arrangements, the

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<sup>249</sup> PANS, Kenny Scrapbook. For an examination of the importance of social rituals see Leonore Davidoff, The Best Circles: Women and Society in Victorian England (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973).

<sup>250</sup> PANS, Kenny Scrapbook.



placement of candlesticks and seating plans. Next to the sketch she writes: "Table decorations I designed for Government House for the Dalys - mirrors, hothouse flowers and silver ornaments." Everything had to be flawless, and advanced preparation was essential. Hours were spent preparing the menu, for food was central to the success of such a gathering. At the top of the menu for the Prince and Governor Generals dinner Mrs. Kenny has written: "I wrote the menus which accounts for faults, M.H. Kenny". Mrs. Kenny, known for her own lavish entertaining, spent hours upon hours of her own leisure time preparing this dinner. Although some might consider this work time, it was also leisure time. Organizing an event like this one was part of the role of the society lady. Mrs. Daly, the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia in the 1890s was described as the epitome of a hospitable social lady for she "...almost entirely, in order that she may do, what she thinks to be, and what undoubtably is, her duty in her high position."<sup>251</sup> Mrs. Daly used most of her time playing her role as society lady, instead of pursuing other leisure activities. This delicate interaction between obligation and leisure was characteristic of the grand events prepared by the likes of Mrs. Kenny and Mrs. Daly.

In addition to the time a woman spent organizing a social event of this calibre, was the time she spent preparing her appearance. The Halifax newspapers social columnists provided details on these events. All those not invited could read about who wore what and who danced with whom. Society columnists paid respectful homage to the time women spent readying themselves. The "Ladies [were] gowned in

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<sup>251</sup> Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," 474.

rich and dazzling costumes [that] made the spectacle a brilliant one,<sup>252</sup> wrote one commentator. These remarks were much desired by the ladies. Many of Halifax society, regardless of class, talked about the grand event well after it was over and up coming events were to be compared with the grandeur of past events. In anticipation of the ball in aid of the infants home in 1899, the Morning Chronicle linked an up-coming event to a tradition of great social balls.

Halifax society very excited over the Charity Ball for the Orphans - all Halifax remembers the two large dances given here some years ago in the old exhibition building - one by the Orpheus Club and one by the combined fleet - Halifax society have never seen their like since and a new generation has arisen since which has heard older sisters talking about the balls.<sup>253</sup>

Thus the time spent preparing for a ball or dinner party could be remembered for years to come. Conversation and gossip was time consuming, frequently stimulated by the press. Each ball or social activity for the middle and upper classes was to be compared to those of the past. Consequently the time spent planning, organizing and participating in such an event was regarded as time necessarily spent. Middle and upper class women who did not use their time in this manner were regarded as not fulfilling their social role.<sup>254</sup>

As noted earlier, the line between work and leisure was often blurred. Marketing day is a good example of this. Saturday was marketing day in Halifax, and as

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<sup>252</sup> Morning Chronicle, June 23, 1899.

<sup>253</sup> Morning Chronicle, May 27, 1899.

<sup>254</sup> Russel, A Wish of Distinction, explores the importance of class distinction in a colonial Australian society.

Tremaine pointed out, "It is the ladies, not the men, who attend to the buying of the week's supplies of groceries; who interview the butcher and who make the streets alive and bright by their presence in the market."<sup>255</sup> Marketing day was a time when women of all classes mingled together to supply their home with fresh produce. In Tremaine's words "...society ladies like to bargain as much as their less favoured sisters."<sup>256</sup> Marketing day was not only a time to shop for necessary goods, but was also a time to be seen. Being seen played an important role in the life of a woman, causing her to spend time making sure her appearance reflected her social status and respectability. On marketing day, women arrived in carriages, filled their baskets with the finest quality available, and departed in grand style. Those who did not own a carriage were "not ashamed to walk and to carry a neat little basket in which to put [produce]..., or any dainty that they may find and that is not too heavy or bulky."<sup>257</sup> A woman must not appear to struggle with her marketing; it was important to demonstrate she could provision and run a house smoothly, feed her family well, and all the time maintain her womanly qualities.

In Halifax there was no lack of places where women could go and be seen.<sup>258</sup>

The summer time was filled with parties, social teas, and sporting events. The Public

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<sup>255</sup> Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax, " 478.

<sup>256</sup> Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," 478.

<sup>257</sup> Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," 478.

<sup>258</sup> Russel, A Wish of Distinction, also notes this type of social activity in Australia.

Gardens was the space where society came on hot summer afternoons to listen to music played by what ever regiment was stationed in the city at the time.<sup>259</sup> The horse races provide an interesting study of social life. "The ladies turn[ed] out in fresh new gowns..." and watch the horses, while their husbands bet and cheered on the race.<sup>260</sup> Polo matches, tennis tournaments, football matches and cricket games were also great draws for female society. The role of spectator was a valued way for women to spend their leisure time. Many middle class reformers were concerned with the rowdy and disruptive behaviour exhibited by men who watched sporting events. Consequently women were encouraged to use their time to attend sporting events because their presence was thought to have a civilizing effect on male spectators.<sup>261</sup> Of course women were not encouraged to attend all types of sporting events for some, such as boxing, were regarded as too gruesome for a respectable lady to witness. Tennis, polo and cricket games provided a respectable way for women to spend their time as well as the perfect arena to show off the latest fashions.

As stated earlier there was a great amount of preparation to be done before going out to be seen. M. Tremaine reported that many society women not only dressed well, but also made their own clothes. "There are heaps of ladies here, who do all their

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<sup>259</sup> Acadian Recorder, August 21, 1882.

<sup>260</sup> Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," 475.

<sup>261</sup> For more information on the value of women as spectators and their influence on male audiences see: Colin Howell, Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) 74-96; also see Chapter 2, "Time Under Control", in this thesis.

own sewing..."<sup>262</sup> The sewing of fine dresses, a tremendously time consuming venture, is another example of the blurred line between work time and leisure time. Certainly the time spent sewing was work time, but the result of their time spent sewing was necessary to achieve respectability and status during leisure time. Many Halifax women were able to buy fancy clothes or material during their travels to other cities, yet many could not afford the luxury of travel. Thus many middle and lower class women spent their time creating their own fine wardrobe. Sewing was a skill women were encouraged to pursue and to use for practical and leisure purposes. This fine line between work time and leisure time is also obvious in other extensions of the domestic realm, such as home centred leisure.

With the movement of the workplace out of the domestic space, homes came to be viewed as havens for family members. The middle-class Victorian home became a refuge from the unsettling changes in society and a place for refined leisure. The home was the place for relaxation, recreation and reflection, at least for males and the children of the family. With the increase in wealth brought on by industrial capitalism, the wealthy, and more and more the middle class, had homes which were detached from the city core. While poorer family homes remained close together and infringed upon each others privacy, the homes of the middle and upper classes moved farther apart. This development made the upper and middle class homes a private place where time could be spent leisurely. "The Victorian suburban home, totally bereft of

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<sup>262</sup> Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," 477.

economic purpose, was transformed into a multipurpose leisure centre."<sup>263</sup> The home, even within the smaller working class home, was itself broken up to differentiate between various uses of space and time; a clear separation existed between formal and private, male and female, adult and children.

A typical middle or upper class Victorian home had a formal parlour which was used only to entertain, while the formal hall was necessary for receiving guests. Visitors to the home were only invited to specific rooms, thus allowing households to separate personal space from places of entertainment. Similarly, rooms were decorated to reflect the gender of their space. The library with its dark oak and leather chairs was a masculine environment, while the boudoir filled with chintz and delicate colours was definitely feminine.<sup>264</sup> And the nursery or playroom allowed children to be amused away from adults. This distinction of space was quite relevant to how time was used.<sup>265</sup> The entertainment spaces of the home, such as the parlour and the front hall, reveals how upper and middle class women spent some of their time. Homes were an expression of the character of the family. Since the home was the domain of the female, it was her responsibility to make sure the home was properly decorated to reflect the respectability of the family.

Women of all classes spent a great deal of time decorating and keeping their

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<sup>263</sup> Gary Cross, A Social History of Leisure Since 1600, (State College: Venture Publishing, Inc., 1990) 105.

<sup>264</sup> Cross, A Social History of Leisure, 106.

<sup>265</sup> Cross, A Social History of Leisure, 106.

homes in perfect condition so the appropriate image was portrayed to all those who entered. Visiting was a popular way of spending one's leisure time, and thus the parlour was one of the most important rooms in the house. M. Tremaine writes in 1892 that although "there is no such thing as quietly dropping in unasked [in Halifax] ..." society women spent a great deal of time visiting or preparing for visitors.<sup>266</sup> Each lady had her "At Home" days, which took place once a week, once a fortnight or even once a month. The ritual of paying calls was an elaborate process. When the lady of the house was available for a visit she sent a card to those whom she wished to see. An example of one such card found in Mrs. Kenny's scrapbook read "Lady Sinclare at Home Wednesday, June 26, 4-7".<sup>267</sup> This visiting time often included a central focus, such as a tobogganing party or a sleigh ride. On other occasions visitors filled the parlour to listen to the hostess or a family member perform. "Sometimes ...the afternoon is varied by songs, and instrumental music, duets, part songs, piano, violin, flute..."<sup>268</sup> Food was also an intricate part of the "At Home" day. Visitors received the very best the hostess had to offer. M. Tremaine provides an image of a very luxurious scene of food prepared just for such an event.

...and the tea and coffee, and chocolate, on which is piled the stiffest of whipped cream, disappear like magic, accompanied by delicious little hot rolls, fairy-like

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<sup>266</sup> M. Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," The Dominion Illustrated Monthly, Vol 1, No 8, 1892, 473.

<sup>267</sup> PANS Micro: #15 632

<sup>268</sup> Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," 477.

slices of thin break and butter, and an infinite variety of cakes and confections.<sup>269</sup>

All of this activity took place in the parlour. It was in this room that a woman's talents as a mother, homemaker, and wife were displayed. The parlour was the "best room" in the house, containing the best family furniture and was to have a refining influence on all those who entered, including family members. "Mother's standards of speech and manners were to be strictly observed by all who entered"<sup>270</sup> Those family members who entered the parlour were on display, and reflected the success of the mother and wife at teaching her family proper manners and moral values.

These principles also applied to the respectable working class family, who also devoted space to a parlour, which was often never used except for the formal visits of guests. Kathy Peiss has observed that often working class families would get themselves in debt to buy nice furnishings for the "parlour", and that for some, "the only recreation [was] the display of furniture."<sup>271</sup> The time a woman spent decorating her home and raising her family was judged by those within and beyond her social circle.<sup>272</sup> Therefore, displaying her talents was a very important way for her to spend her time. Although the effort put into raising a family may not be considered pure leisure time, the

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<sup>269</sup> Tremaine, "Social life in Halifax," 477.

<sup>270</sup> Cross, A Social History of Leisure, 106.

<sup>271</sup> Peiss, Cheap Amusements, 24; also see Morton, Ideal Surroundings, 43.

<sup>272</sup> For more on the influence of ones peer group on maintaining respectability see Suzanne Morton, Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-class Suburb in the 1920s, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) 38-45.



results of these efforts were always on display during key periods of leisure.

The women's role as keepers of the hearth also included organizing and facilitating the leisure time of her family. Under the leadership of women, home-centred or domestic leisure, provided not merely entertainment for the family, but also moral training and sustenance for children and men.<sup>273</sup> Middle class women succeeded in shifting some of their household tasks onto servants, thus allowing her to redirect her time and energy to the aesthetics and beautification of her home. This redirection of time also enabled her to organize the leisure time of her family. The parlour again played an important role in the entertainment of the family. It was here that board and card games were played. Popular types of home entertainment were piano playing, reading and singing, either for individual pleasure or for others to enjoy.<sup>274</sup>

The family outing was also a great consumer of a woman's time, regardless of class.<sup>275</sup> The picnic, for example, took much preparation and planning before, during

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<sup>273</sup> Children had the most leisure time of any group, yet very little research has been done on this time. The leisure patterns of children changed during this period. Since the enlightenment the views of philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau established the child as unique and thus should be allowed to experience their time as children fully. Children were encouraged to play and have fun, while the mother attempted to shape the playtime of her children to inculcate skill and moral values. Children's leisure time could be spent playing structured or unstructured games, and listening to stories (often with an educational message), or singing songs. According to Cross, new attitudes towards children's play, which ended around the age of nine, were restricted to the middle class. For a description of the changing perceptions of childhood see Neal Postman, The Disappearance of Childhood, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

<sup>274</sup> Cross, A Social History of Leisure, 125.

<sup>275</sup> M. Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," 476; Sources that document individual working-class picnics are difficult to find, but there is evidence to support their

and after the event. Again we see the distinction between work time and leisure time is ambiguous, as the women worked to organize the leisure time of her family. Before a picnic could be enjoyed food, serving dishes, blankets, and games for the children had to be arranged. Once on the picnic women continued to work by serving her family and keeping the children amused. And when it was all over there were dishes to be done, children to clean and husbands to keep happy. Despite all of this work, this was also leisure time. The change in pace and the informalities of a picnic allowed women to enjoy their family and relax outside of the home. Much of women's leisure time was spent in this way, surrounded by family, while maintaining her supervisory role over the family. Middle and upper class women also participated in this kind of family outing, as may be observed in a picture found in Mrs. Kenny's scrapbook. In this picture, [Appendix 5] we can see several well dressed men and women sitting on a blanket with baskets filled with food in a field of flowers about to begin their picnic. The caption underneath the picture reads "...of the many Sunday Picnics..." indicating that Kenny, her family and friends frequently took these kinds of outings. Although women of Kenny's class would have had servants to prepare and serve the food, the woman of the house was still responsible for the initiation and organization of the event.

Women not only used their leisure time to organize events for their family, but also events for the rest of society. These events were usually organized to raise money for charities or to bring a specific community, such as a church group, together. For example, on August 16, 1882 the Acadian Recorder announced that a picnic would  

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attendance at picnic put on by the city of Halifax.

be held to raise money for the erection of a new Church.

We understand that the Catholic Temperance and other Societies have united and formed a general committee for the purpose of holding a picnic, with the view of bringing the members together in a quite day's enjoyment and of assisting in providing funds for the erection of St. Patrick's Church...<sup>276</sup>

Fund raising was thus a respectable way for women to use her time. Frequently this fund raising consisted of organizing and running leisure activities. While men usually held all administrative positions, women contributed to their Churches by volunteering their time and energy. Women also volunteered their time to raise money for other causes, such as the Victorian School or Art and Design (VSAD).

One of the greatest social events in Halifax in the late nineteenth century was the "Ye World's Fayre", which was organized and run by women in order to raise money for a building to house the VSAD. Booths were set up in which the women of society urged their customers to buy something. For example, Mrs. Charles Tupper and Miss Almond, dressed as milkmaids to induced their audience to purchase butter, eggs and milk.<sup>277</sup> Women also organized musical or theatrical presentations to raise money. On April 24, 1897 the Academy of Music, under the auspices of the Halifax Local Council of Women, presented a Schubert Memorial Concert to raise money for the Indian Famine fund. The women were "determined to do everything themselves

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<sup>276</sup> Acadian Recorder, August 16, 1882.

<sup>277</sup> Phyllis Blakeley, "Some Forgotten Writers of Nova Scotia," presented to the Halifax Library Club on March 8, 1950. This image of the milkmaids was a romanticized notion of the pre-industrial labouring class. See Deborah M. Valenze, First Industrial Woman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) for a more accurate portrayal view and importance of labouring women's work for enabling industrialisation in eighteenth-century England.

without aid from the stronger sex."<sup>278</sup> Volunteer time was not only essential for society, but it also provided many women with a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

Women also helped organize patriotic events, such as the celebration for the soldiers returning from the Northwest Rebellion.<sup>279</sup> During World War One, women were also responsible for organizing many events for soldiers or to raise money for their families. Women frequently organised dances and other social activities for the soldiers who were stationed in the city, making sure that they had a respectable avenue for amusements. Fund raising ventures were also very important. These ventures included tag days and teas to raise money for soldiers families to assure they had adequate financial support. For example, during the month of December 1916 women raised enough money to provide 76 families with 262 dependents in Halifax with an average of \$9.12.<sup>280</sup>

Despite having to organize the time of others, women were able to find time for a more personal use of leisure time, although during many activities it is difficult to distinguish between leisure and work. For example, sewing, knitting, crocheting or lace work was considered a leisure activity for the middle-class, yet was also practical since the results were useful items that were either worn, displayed or given as gifts. Novels and magazines offered an escape to other worlds. Reading was a popular way for

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<sup>278</sup> Phyllis Blakeley, "Music in Halifax in the Olden Days", presented on February 1, 1961 to the Women's Auxiliary of Halifax Symphony.

<sup>279</sup> PANS MG1 3023, #8, Phyllis Blakeley Collection.

<sup>280</sup> Journal and Proceedings of the House of Assembly for the Province of Nova Scotia, 1916.

women of all classes to use their leisure time. Halifax had a lending library, although poorly stocked, while the YWCA also offered a free lending service. These services provided women of the working class with books they might otherwise not have afforded. Working class women did find it difficult to find the time to do read but, since their presence was noted at the lending libraries of the city, many must have taken moments between chores to pick up a book or a magazine.<sup>281</sup> Women were also known to meet to discuss their readings. Anna Leonowen's set up a book club which was "a weekly reading class chiefly for the neighbours in the fashionable south end."<sup>282</sup>

While many women used their leisure time to read so they could improve their knowledge or as a means of escape, diary and letter writing were used to communicate one's thoughts. Mary Dulhanty, a seventeen year old, middle class, Mount Saint Vincent Academy commercial student used her diary to communicate her day to day activities as well as her most personal thoughts. She wrote in her diary "I spend so much of my spare time with you." "I love to write in you diary. It is such a consolation."<sup>283</sup> While diaries were an important form of expression for the Victorian woman they also provide important insight for the historian. These texts are key to our understanding of Victorian women, since diaries can show much about the

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<sup>281</sup> Veinott, "A Call to Mother," 55.

<sup>282</sup> Phyllis Blakeley, "Some Forgotten Writers of Nova Scotia," presented on March 8, 1950 to the Halifax Library Club. South-end Halifax was and is an area with a predominantly upper and middle class population.

<sup>283</sup> Mary Dulhanty's Mount Saint Vincent Dairy, 1926 - 1927. Thank you to Margaret Conrad for suggesting I consult this dairy.

management of time, and the commitments of women (and men) during a certain historical period.<sup>284</sup> Kate Shannon, an eighteen year old, middle class Haligonian , reveals here day-to-day activities in her diary, indicating that diary writing itself was an essential use of time. Kate records much more than mundane events, spending hours reflecting on her emotions, her lifestyle and her hobbies. From these recordings she not only explains how she used her time, but also how this time was valued by herself and her family. Her insights into the life of upper-middle class Halifax society also reveals how the upper middle class spent their time.

Some of Kate's time was used to do chores, yet she seems to have had a lot of personal leisure time. "Morning helped about the housecleaning, just minor things you know, yet I think I worked harder than I have ever before..."<sup>285</sup> Housework was obviously not something a girl of Kate's class used much of her time for. Most of Kate's time was divided between family obligations, long walks, Sunday Church, reading, writing and visits with friends and relatives. Kate also spent time researching botany. On her daily walks she frequently picked specimens, and upon returning home she

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<sup>284</sup> For more information on the value of the personal chronicles of women in Nova Scotia see: Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw, and Donna Smyth, No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938, (Halifax: Formac Publishing Company Ltd., 1988).

<sup>285</sup> Della Stanley, A Victorian Lady's Album: Kate Shannon's Halifax & Boston Diary of 1892, (Halifax: Formac Publishing Company Ltd., 1994) 32. I have chosen to use Kate Winnifred Shannon's diary despite the fact it has been edited by Della Stanley and published in 1994. Diaries from this period in Halifax are very rare. Stanley's publication has maintained the integrity of the original format, thus making it a reliable source to examine the use of time by a teenager and her family during the turn of the century Halifax.

sketched and recorded the scientific information in a journal. Kate took her botany very seriously and even wrote a column for the "Popular Science News", a Boston publication. In one article she explains how she used her time to pursue her hobby:

I have been studying plants more closely, and while before I only copied analysis from my book, I now write out a full description, including my own observations. Then I sketch all the most important parts of the whole plant, and when both sketches and description are completed they are ready to be placed in a book kept for this purpose. I send you a copy of my first completed set of sketches. The plant is Potentilla tridentata, which grows here very abundantly, particularly in rocky places. It has a delicate little white blossom and glossy dark green leaves, which turn red and yellow in the autumn. I kept some specimens in water last spring, and they grew quite well, putting out leaves, roots, and flowers. In the fields it blossomed late in May, and was still in bloom in August.<sup>286</sup>

Kate spent a great deal of her leisure time in the pursuit of knowledge.

Although she had not receive a higher education, Kate compensated by studying botany and reading. In one entry she writes about one of her friends attending college, and expresses deep emotions about the breaking up of her friendship due to a parting of ways. "But with the rink and school, Millie's acquaintances grew and she was asked to parties."<sup>287</sup> Part of this break up was blamed on her friend attending school and meeting new people, while Kate remained isolated in her home. Kate did lead a very lonely life, spending a lot of time alone or in the company of adults. She writes frequently about taking her daily walks alone, in a tone which suggests she longed for company. "Afternoon I took my solitary constitution, Morris, Robie, and South Streets."

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<sup>286</sup> Kate Shannon, "An A. A. Observer in Halifax," The Popular Science News and Boston Journal of Chemistry, 1892 in Stanley, A Victorian Lady's Album, 35.

<sup>287</sup> Stanley, A Victorian lady's Album 38.

Although lonely she took great solace in her journeys, finding peace and tranquillity for her thoughts.

Afternoon took my walk around Summer Street, College Street, Robie Street, Jubilee Road as far as the cemetery gate where I turned and sat me down to meditate. It was just lovely there, the air so sweet and soothing with a pleasant cool little wind, and there were some sweet little birds singing there, linnets I think. I concluded I would come here often...<sup>288</sup>

However, Kate's mother forbade her this pleasure, believing that a cemetery was not a respectable place for a young girl to spend her time. Kate Shannon's diary reveals the intricate details of how a young woman during this period used her time. But Kate's diary reveals much more than her day to day activities because, for Kate her diary was her best friend. She dedicated hours to writing her deepest thoughts and secrets in her diary. Certainly there were many young girls of her social status just like Kate who felt desperation with their lives, and who had no other outlet for expression than in the pages of her diary. Thus, the time spent writing in a diary was essential to the emotional well-being of many a diarist.

Although Kate Shannon's diary reveals a solitary soul, she did venture out to attend a few events available in the city. She writes of going to the Exhibition building to see a horse show, going to the museum, school plays, and attending concerts in the Public Gardens and at Orpheus Hall. There were many things a young woman could spend her time doing in Halifax. The city frequently put on celebrations to commemorate a holiday or monumental event. In June of 1891 the city organized many events to celebrate fifty years since the incorporation of Halifax as a city. The

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<sup>288</sup> Stanley, A Victorian Lady's Album, 24.



Acadian Recorder listed activities that were to take place. There was something for everyone. The events included: a baseball game between the Mutual and the Socials in which 440 spectators were in attendance; Horse racing and Golden Maxim; and a theatrical performance put on by the Academy of Music.<sup>289</sup> A great many spectators turned out for each of these events, many of whom were women. Women of all classes did spend some of their leisure time as spectators of sporting events and theatrical performance. The Carnival of 1889 in Halifax, organized to attract tourists to the city, was designed for people from many backgrounds. Again sporting events like baseball and horse racing attracted great crowds, as did concerts, military and naval displays, a night parade, and harbour excursions.<sup>290</sup> About 20,000 people participated in or watched the events, a great turn out for a town of 38,556 people.<sup>291</sup> These numbers indicate that people from all classes and genders must have participated in the Carnival.

Some typically middle and upper class events were sometimes attended by the

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<sup>289</sup> Acadian Recorder, June 23, 1891.

<sup>290</sup> For more information about women and public celebrations see Bonnie Huskins, "The Ceremonial Space of Women: Public Processions in Victorian Saint John and Halifax," in Guildford & Morton, Separate Spheres, 145-160. In this article Huskins' demonstrates that women negotiated a space for themselves in the public processions despite the warning that women who pursued "performative roles" outside the home would jeopardize their respectability. Huskins explains that the public participation of women was acceptable as long as women maintained their femininity. For more details see also Huskins, "The Ceremonial Space of Women: Public Processions in Victorian Saint John and Halifax," PhD Dissertation, Dalhousie University, 1991.

<sup>291</sup> PANS MG1, Vol 3021, #19, Phyllis Blakeley Collection; Census of Canada, Vol IV, 1890-91.

working classes. For example, the Regatta on the Arm in July 1893 attracted people of all ages, classes and genders to watch the sailboat races.

Not only the youth and beauty and fashion of Halifax, but with many a grey-haired lady and gentleman were there to witness [the regatta]...They came in steamships and tugs, in steam yachts and sailing yachts, in sail boats and row boats, in men of war cutters and launchers, by carriages and on foot. Thousands were there.<sup>292</sup>

Since these types of events were usually held during holidays people from the working class had the time to attend and welcomed the many free and cheap amusements provided for them by the city. Women also attended these events, either with their children, family or friends. On holidays or week-ends people used some of their leisure time taking advantage of the parks in the city. The Public Gardens were a very popular place for the middle and upper classes to stroll, while the working class took advantage of the smaller neighbourhood parks to amuse themselves. Unlike the housing of the middle and upper classes, which had plenty of lawn space ideal for outdoor recreation, the more congested setting of the lower class housing left little space for outdoor games. Consequently, when the lower classes wished to spend their leisure time outside the home they used the public spaces provided by the city.

The spaces of the city streets were also a very popular place for young men and women to spend their leisure time. It is difficult to assess the amount of time young men and women spent on the street of Halifax due to the lack of primary material on this issue. Consequently, the historian must rely on the records of other groups. Articles written in Halifax newspapers concerning the labouring class reveals how some

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<sup>292</sup> Morning Chronicle, July 24, 1893.

people spent their time. At the turn of the century, Halifax middle class reformers were concerned with the time children spent in the streets. Most of these children were from the working class, although some children "belonging to most respectable families are to be found on the streets of the City at a late hour."<sup>293</sup> The welfare of these children, aged 12-17, greatly concerned the reformers of the city. They recognized that very little was provided as a means for children to spend their time, and consequently were lured to the street because it gave "a variety of sensations, and it was in a way a wholesome desire on the part of the young to explore and see."<sup>294</sup> Street life was attractive to youth because it offered a place where they could socialize and express themselves in a free and unsupervised arena. Adults did not understand this attraction, and feared what children might do without supervision. The behaviour exhibited on the streets was also alarming. The Daily Echo made frequent reports on the unruly behaviour of children on the street. "They are heedless, careless, untrained, and ignorant..."<sup>295</sup> Reformers generally agreed that most of these children were not "really bad" yet they worried that this street life would lead them to do bad things. Despite the attempt by parents and reformers there appeared to be little anyone could do about it. Kathy Peiss's ground breaking work on female youth culture in New York City at the turn of the century recognizes that "...children and young people claimed ownership of

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<sup>293</sup> Daily Echo, January 11, 1908.

<sup>294</sup> Daily Echo, March 13, 1914.

<sup>295</sup> PANS MICRO: Miscellaneous Societies, Local Council of Women, Halifax, #14 723.

the street, despite intensified efforts by police and reformers to eradicate unruly revelry and unsanctioned behaviour from the mid-century onward."<sup>296</sup> The time spent on the streets allowed youth to develop an autonomous culture.

Although Halifax was not the large urban centre of New York that Peiss and others have researched extensively there are indications that women did take similar paths. Margaret Conrad and Jannè Cleveland, in their analysis of Mary Dulhanty's diary, write that "Mary's diary reveals just how deeply mass consumer culture had penetrated Nova Scotia society."<sup>297</sup> These two historians conclude that Nova Scotians were deeply effected by the influences of mass culture, despite their isolation and size. The impact of mass culture may also be observed in the repeated concerns addressed in the newspapers and minutes of the HLCW about how women used their time. Articles such as the Daily Echo's "How to Avoid Lure of the Streets" or the Herald's "Young Girls Who Frequent Thoroughfares of Halifax in Evenings, Where They Lose the Essential Qualities of Womanliness That Command Every Man's Respect"<sup>298</sup> were not uncommon sights in the Halifax newspapers. Also, although Halifax did not have the same options as the bigger American cities, it did have some of the same amusements...movie theatres, amusement parks, and dance halls. Halifax middle class

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<sup>296</sup> Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986) 57.

<sup>297</sup> Janne Cleveland and Margaret Conrad, " "But Such is Life in a Large City": Mary Dulhanty's Mount Saint Vincent Diary, 1926-1927," See Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw, and Donna Smyth, No Place Like Home: The Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938 (Halifax: Formac Press, 1988).

<sup>298</sup> Halifax Local Council of Women Scrapbook, 1908 - 1917.

reformers voiced their concern about frequently about the time children spent on the streets.

Although reformers were concerned about all children who found amusements on the streets, they were most concerned about the girls. Their main concern was that these girls would lose the qualities of womanliness and the respect of society, especially potential husbands.

...their conduct is of the kind that leads away from healthy, wholesome self-respect to careless, easy familiarity, from modesty to brazenness. Who had not noted the careless gestures, the pert remark, and the silly giggle of the "pick up?" Then there is the walk, the inviting dark doorway, and the "date"...

This kind of behaviour was unacceptable for girls, since they were required to be refined and delicate. It was claimed that girls must use their time to develop skills required of a proper wife, but on the streets she would be exposed to "conversations unfit for her ears, she must attain worldly knowledge that she never should attain, she must grow careless, flip, and used to the licence of touch.

Reformers attempted to regulate the time children spent on the streets at night, especially young girls. The HLCW, among other reform groups, called for a curfew law to keep young people from being exposed the dangers of the streets. However, the HLCW recognized the difficulties in enforcing such a law, and suggested that other forms of amusements, in conjunction with a curfew law, be arranged to draw young

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<sup>299</sup> PANS MICRO: Miscellaneous Societies, Local Council of Women, Halifax, #14 723.

<sup>300</sup> PANS MICRO: Miscellaneous Societies, Local Council of Women, Halifax, #14 723.

people off the streets.

But more than that, in the case especially of the children who have unattractive and unwholesome homes, there should be public counter-attractions to the lure of the streets, as well as law protection and prevention...And more than this...the children of good homes can be kept, and should be kept at home by their parents, and so have a personal reform ministry where it will do the most good.<sup>301</sup>

A law was not the only solution to regulating the use of children's time use. The HLCW urged mothers and fathers to spend more time with their children teaching them the appropriate values and morals. Night school for girls was also offered as a suggestion since it would help keep some girls off the streets.<sup>302</sup> The fact that the number of young people who continued to use the streets for their own amusements indicates that they actions of the reformers were not taken seriously. Young men and women continued to use their time as they wanted, thus rejecting any attempts by others to control their use of time.

Despite the attempts by reformers to have girls use their time more wisely, girls continued to inhabit public spaces at night.<sup>303</sup> Here young women, usually working girls, were able to behave as they wished, associate with the opposite sex, and enjoy a culture which was otherwise prohibited under the watchful eye of parents. As Christine Stansell argues, the world of work allowed women partial liberation from parental

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<sup>301</sup> PANS MICRO: Misc Societies, Halifax Local Council of Women, Halifax, #14723.

<sup>302</sup> Daily Echo, November 22, 1895.

<sup>303</sup> Judith Waltcowitz, City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London (Chicago: University Of California Press, 1992) confirms similar behaviour in England.

supervision and permitted them to define their relationships with men outside of parental observation.<sup>304</sup>

As Peiss has shown, the streets also offered a space for young women to explore their sexual feelings towards men. Time spent "doing nothing" other than talking, joking and fooling around was significant to the working class girl. Most young women were not involved in any dangerous activity, although some girls did spend their time hanging around in unfriendly places, such as alley ways. Michael Boudreau's research on crime in Halifax reveals that many reformers and citizens were worried about what might happen to a girl who spent too much time hanging around on the streets. Boudreau explains that people feared young women might be lured into a life of crime, such as prostitution or vagrancy. Although these might appear to be extreme reports on girls and women who had met one of these fates help fuel the fire. One such case was reported in the Morning Chronicle on December 26, 1924. Following several complaints to police about a number of women who has been sleeping in the Public Gardens Kathleen Grove and Henrietta Ripley were arrested. Both were sentenced to time in jail, six and three months respectfully. Boudreau argues that Halifax's vagrancy act allowed the police to curb the time spent on the streets so as to limit their further deviation into worse crimes, such as prostitution.<sup>305</sup> Yet for most respectable girls their time on the street was harmless. They used their time to

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<sup>304</sup> This would have made working women more disposed to taking advantage of the freedoms offered on the streets at night.

<sup>305</sup> Michael Boudreau, "Crime and Society in a City of Order: Halifax, 1918-1935." PhD Thesis, Queen's University, September 1996, 349.

"promenade the local commercial streets or parks in a group or with a gentleman friend, enjoying the walk, window shopping, and chatting."<sup>306</sup> This time was very important to young working women for it allowed them to unwind after a long day in the factory or shop floor, associate with friends and generally feel free to say and act as they wished.

This autonomous street culture developed by young people during the turn of the century had some very important consequences for gender relations and the use of time. The emergence of a market economy and the rise of industrialization had heightened the sexual division of labour. What followed was the culture that idealized the ideology of true womanhood, the cult of domesticity<sup>307</sup>, moral uprightness, and sexual purity and made it woman's social duty to uphold these values. This separate spheres ideology has been regarded as a social structure which constrained women. However, as Guildford and Morton have shown, separate spheres was also used to the advantage of women of all classes to "negotiate power within the home and to make claims in public on a respectability rooted in domesticity."<sup>308</sup> This negotiation of power

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<sup>306</sup> Peiss, Cheap Amusements, 59.

<sup>307</sup> Anna Clark, The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, 284-263 explains that the romantic notion of domesticity for the working class people in Britain promised to heal the wounds of sexual antagonism within working class marriage by bring men self-respect and women greater security. In reality, few families could afford to live without the woman's wage, and for those who could the principles of domesticity were difficult to put into practice. In fact, Clark reports, that in the 1790s the "emphasis on separate spheres may have pushed [working class] husbands and wives further apart...Men and women were supposed to complementary opposites - yet men were still to rule gently and women to submit for the sake of love." (249)

<sup>308</sup> Janet Guildford & Suzanne Morton, Separate Spheres: Women's World's in the 19th-Century Maritimes, (Fredericton: Acadiensis, 1994) 20.



included political activism, access to employment and higher education. Women challenged the traditional access to power, and negotiated changes in gender divisions. Young women who spent their leisure time on the street or pursuing commercial amusements also challenged the traditional gender division. Again Peiss's work argues that working women were not bystanders in the process of cultural change, but rather were pioneers in this change. These women "challenged Victorian prescriptions, created new sex roles and influenced popular culture [when they explored] commercial amusements."<sup>309</sup>

Elizabeth Ewen, in her examination of New York immigrant women, concludes that while the "city streets were public conduits of sociability and free expression for all working-class people," for young women the streets gave them independence. This independence was further stimulated by noncommercial forms of heterosexual activities such as social clubs and promenading the streets, but it also further encourage commercial entertainments. Dance halls, theatres and amusement parks helped to legitimized the relationships between the sexes through dating practices, close contact and heterosocial interaction.

The streets were a free venue for youth to spend their time, yet there were other

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<sup>309</sup> Lauren Rabinovitz, "Temptations of Pleasure: Nickelodeons, Amusements Parks, and the Sights of Female Sexuality," *Camera Obscura*, No 23, Spring 1990, 72; for other work on how the activities of working class women redefined gender relations see: Christine Stansell, City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860, (New York: Knoph, 1986); Elizabeth Ewen, Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890-1925, (New York: Month Review Press, 1985)

affordable commercial amusements that were popular with this group. Working women had a disposable income that allowed them to escape their parents and seek out entertainment for their hard earned dollar. The public dance hall, the cheap theatre and Nickelodeons, and the amusement parks offered colour, drama and excitement to the single woman. The commercialization of entertainment shocked and frustrated many middle class reformers and other members of society. Entrepreneurs were motivated only by profit and abandoned all pretensions to uplift and educate. The dance hall, theatre and amusement parks offered an uninhibited culture to all who could pay.<sup>310</sup>

But of greater concern to American reformers was the popularity of the dance halls that appeared in large numbers throughout urban centres in the early 1900s. Belle Linder Israel's study in 1908 on amusements of New York City working girls discovered that nine out of ten preferred dance halls over any other kind of amusement.<sup>311</sup> These dance halls offered young people hours of fun at a low cost. The industry actively tried to attract young single girls by admitting them at half price or for free. The music was up-beat, "consisting mostly of syncopated 'rags' to which couples danced one-step in close embrace..."<sup>312</sup> The dance halls were of considerable

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<sup>310</sup> A class distinction is apparent in the fact that these types of amusements required some money to attend. It was usually the young working-class who had some extra money to spend and who found these attractions captivating.

<sup>311</sup> Elizabeth I. Perry, "Industrial Reform in New York City: Belle Moskowitz and the Protocol of Peace, 1913-1916," Labour History, Vol 23, 1983, ?? (check this)

<sup>312</sup> Elizabeth I. Perry, "The General Motherhood of the Commonwealth": Dance Hall Reform in the Progressive Era," American Quarterly, Vol 37, No 5, 1985, 721; also

concern since they were generally unsupervised allowing little control over behaviour. In addition to fast dancing and unchaperoned youth, alcohol was frequently served. Reformers feared this combination would lead to the seduction of young women and sought regulation for the halls. Dance halls were usually attached to saloons or casinos, both of which young respectable women should not visit, although they did. The dance halls were particularly attractive to young women for it offered her unprecedented freedom in finding amusement and meeting new people. Reformers recognized that dance halls did provide essential recreation for urban youth, and therefore alternative channels for dancing had to be focussed upon.<sup>313</sup> Of course dancing was not a new phenomenon, but the freedom dance halls offered women.

Halifax had its share of dance halls, although the amount of time young people spent in them is difficult to assess. It is questionable whether the dance halls of the city were as popular as those found in the larger urban centres of Canada and the United States. An interview with Halifax police Sargent Ryan indicated that any dance hall in the city was not a safe place to be. Ryan, speaking about the hall on Barrington street, "Bucket of Blood", declared that "no public dance hall in Halifax bears a good reputation."<sup>314</sup> It is doubtful that many young women would have attended these halls,

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see: Perry, "Cleaning Up the Dance Halls," History Today, Vol 39, October 1989, 20-26.

<sup>313</sup> Elizabeth Perry, "Cleaning Up the Dance Halls," History Today, Vol 39, October 1989, 22.

<sup>314</sup> Boudreau, "Crime and Society in a City of Order: Halifax, 1918-1935." 349-350.

especially given the prevalent fear of losing their respectability. As Morton points out the working class women of Richmond were very much aware of their respectable status, worked hard to achieve it, and were very careful of losing it. Respectability could be easily be lost by frequenting disreputable dance halls. A better choice for those who wished to spend their leisure time dancing was to attend dance classes or social dances organized by Churches or respectable societies like the YWCA.

Dancing outside of dance halls was a popular way for youth to spend their leisure time, and was found at many social functions. In the 1920s the Moirs Recreation Hall frequently held activities for the youth of the city, of which dancing was the main attraction. "While one section of the hall was reserved for card games, there was a large portion devoted to dancing."<sup>315</sup> Church associations, like the Trinity Church Young People's Society, also held similar functions to help young people occupy their time. These events were chaperoned by members of the community, and were usually considered a respectable way for youth to spend their leisure time. Some types of dancing were discouraged for they required too much physical contact between men and women. Mary Dulhanty's diary explains that it was not dancing that people, specifically Father Knox, found disturbing but rather how the dancing was done. Father Knox told this Catholic school girl audience that not only were some of the dances inappropriate but so were the fashions girls wore to the dances. He explained that

dancing itself is not a sin but that more than one half of the dances of to-day cannot be executed without the occasion of sin. When a girls goes to a public dance in an damnable one piece dress with practically nothing else on, it is the

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<sup>315</sup> Mail, October 29, 1930.

essences of nudity and a sure occasion of sin.<sup>316</sup>

Regardless of the fears that dancing involved too much physical contact with the opposite sex, or that the fashions worn for dancing were too revealing, dancing remained a popular way for women to spend their leisure time. Young girls and women, as well as men and boys, attended dance classes at one of the several dancing academies that existed in Halifax during this period. The Halifax Dramatic and Musical Club, later Halifax Dance, offered classes in traditional dance such as ballet, as well as other forms of dance such as the Russian Mazurka and Hopak.<sup>317</sup> Many young women from the middle and upper classes used their leisure time attending dance classes and giving dance recitals.

Another common way for Halifax men and women to spend their time was attending theatrical performance, while the introduction of movies offered a cheap amusement for the youth of the city. Phyllis Blakeley reported that Halifax had more plays and concerts than any other city in the Dominion due to the demand from the populations of the garrisons, naval stations, and steamship stopovers.<sup>318</sup> This very busy theatre and music seen keep people from all classes entertained.<sup>319</sup> The

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<sup>316</sup> Mary Dulhanty's Mount Saint Vincent Diary, 1926-1927, Institute for the Study of Women, MSVU.

<sup>317</sup> PANS MG20, Vol 1870, #2.

<sup>318</sup> PANS, Phyllis Blakeley, Vol 3027, No 1-3, Theatre.

<sup>319</sup> For an in depth examination of class and Theatre see: Beverly Williams, "Leisure as Contested Terrain in Late Nineteenth Century Halifax," MA Thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1991. She argues that "While the bourgeois sought to use the theatre as a form of social control and instruction, the working class remained very

Academy of Music attempted to bring respectability back to theatre, which prior to 1870 was too rowdy, by producing Shakespearean plays. At first they produced the famous tragedies of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth, but by the 1880s the public increasingly demanded comedy, variety and realism.<sup>320</sup> During the latter part of the nineteenth century the people of Halifax spent some of their leisure time attending the many kinds of entertainments offered at the Academy of Music - everything from grand opera to vaudeville.

Although the society of Halifax apparently regarded themselves as "without pretension" towards people from other classes when it came to cultural activities, most performances were segregated. The Acadian Recorder reported that cultural events, such as the Opera, "should not be denied to [the] less fortunate...our mechanics and middle-class have an equal, if not superior, appreciation for good and refined amusements..."<sup>321</sup> However, for those working class people who wished to spend their time as a cultural spectator they were provided with seats apart from "society". The poor sat in the "balconies or "nigger" heaven to watch comic opera, ballet, pantomime, minstrels..."<sup>322</sup> Women from the lower classes did attend the theatre, but it is unclear

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active agents in the shaping of this aspect of cultural life."

<sup>320</sup> Mary Elizabeth Smith, "Shakespeare in Atlantic Canada during the Nineteenth Century," Theatre History in Canada, Vol 1, no 2, 1982, 126; For a detailed report on the theatrical and musical performances in Halifax see: Phyllis Blakeley, "The Theatre and Music in Halifax," Dalhousie Review, Vol 29, 1949/50, 8-20.

<sup>321</sup> Acadian Recorder, October 9, 1877.

<sup>322</sup> Blakeley, "Some Forgotten Writers of Nova Scotia." As noted in footnote number 245, the women's social reform movement was racist in its approach to Black

how frequently they used their leisure time attending cultural events. It is evident, from the amount of invitations to opening nights and programmes in Mrs. Kenny's scrapbook, that women of her class spent a great deal of time attending such cultural activities.<sup>323</sup>

The invention of moving pictures, and their introduction to Halifax in 1907, drew some members of the audience away from theatrical performances. The moving pictures capitalized on the consumers desire to escape the realities of everyday life. Youth in particular spent a tremendous amount of their free time at the movies. Mary Dulhanty wrote in her diary that over her Christmas holiday she "Went to the movies every chance almost."<sup>324</sup> Spending time at the movies exposed young men and women to the glamour of Hollywood. They were constantly being dazzled with the material wealth that was far greater than their own. The youth of Halifax saw nothing that would remind them of the drudgery of the factory or the shop floor, where they spent all their working time. The first introduction of movies to the Canadian population came in 1896 in Ottawa during a fair. The moving picture quickly found a home in the vaudeville theatres, places where few respectable women spent their time. Going to the movies, which were cheaper than live entertainment, was a different experience than it became.

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women due to the fear of the degeneration of the Anglo-Saxon race. In addition to this, Halifax itself was, and still is to a great extent, a highly segregated community. It was rare for women of colour to mix with the women of reform in any other capacity than as domestic help. It was not until the 1940s that the Black population was allowed to sit with the white movie goers.

<sup>323</sup> PANS, Kenny Scrapbook.

<sup>324</sup> Mary Dulhanty's Mount Saint Vincent Diary, 1926 - 1927.

The general running time was 1 or 2 minutes, the audience usually stood to watch, mechanization problems were very common, and viewers listened to vaudeville musicians playing as the film played. Movies travelled from location to location, and were usually shown in black tents. Fixed locations did not appear until 1902, when the first movie house was set up in Vancouver.<sup>325</sup> These theatres were little more than a dark room filled with stiff chairs, often brought by the patron.

The first Nickelodeon, a fancy movie house with comfortable chairs and cheap prices, was built in Pittsburgh in 1905. Nickelodeons sprang up quickly across North America, with Toronto building their first in 1905.<sup>326</sup> Halifax quickly followed on May 3, 1907, when the opening of "The Nickel" in the St. Mary's Young Men's Temperance and Benevolent Society hall.<sup>327</sup> The opening of the King Edward and Unique movie theatres followed soon after and, although they were not as fancy as the Nickelodeons, they quickly became a place where people spent their leisure time. Those who chose to use their time to attend the movies received much more entertainment for their money than simply the silent moving pictures. The admission of five or ten cents for just a movie was considered too steep, and thus they were always accompanied by either illustrated songs, live singers, coloured slides or piano music.<sup>328</sup> Moving pictures had

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<sup>325</sup> Peter Morris, Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema, 1895-1939 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978) 19.

<sup>326</sup> Morris, Embattled Shadows, 21.

<sup>327</sup> Mail Star, June 19, 1961; "The Nickel" was also known as "The Imperial" and "The Family".

<sup>328</sup> Mail Star, March 8, 1972.



been seen in Halifax before the opening of these movie houses prior to the turn of the century. Travelling moving pictures were shown by the Academy of Music and in the Public Gardens, both locations frequented by the middle and upper classes.<sup>329</sup> As Peiss and Ewen have pointed out, the movies quickly captured middle and working class clientele of New York, and this was also true of Halifax. The Halifax Herald reported in 1900 that moving pictures "appealed to and fascinated all classes of the people..."<sup>330</sup> By the First World War, movies sponsored by the Canadian government were also widely attended, especially since they were shown free of charge. The government used movies for official propaganda, sponsoring films to advertize war bonds, historical re-enactments, and to show real footage of Canadians abroad. One such film, "Canada's Work for Wounded Soldiers," was developed to increase Canadian's patriotic feelings towards the war.<sup>331</sup> People from all classes attended these types of movies, for it provided them with a visual representation for all the stories they read in the newspapers.

However, as in the theatre, movies did play to class-segregated audiences. Although many people from all classes spent time in movie houses, there were some theatres that did not attract a respectable clientele. According to an article in the Halifax Herald "The live entertainment of the earlier shows had [after World War One] developed into vaudeville, which was a going concern at the Strand and Ackers, both

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<sup>329</sup> Daily Echo, September 11, 1896.

<sup>330</sup> Halifax Herald, September 10, 1900.

<sup>331</sup> Morris, Embattled Shadows, 59.

on Sackville Street."<sup>332</sup> Since these theatres had a poor reputation, no respectable person would choose to spend their time in a theatre of this character, especially middle class females, since it could ruin a woman's social status. Middle class reformers tried to limit the amount of time people spent being exposed to what they considered inappropriate material, whether in film or in literature, vaudeville or film.

Nevertheless, by the turn of the century women's fashions were being influenced more and more by what was portrayed in magazines and films. These fashions were frequently found offensive to many in the Halifax community for they were often deemed too revealing and inappropriate for young women. Mary Dulhanty's diary reveals that even the students at an all girls Catholic school were influenced by the latest fashions and trends. Dulhanty's diary contains a sermon by Father Knox denouncing bobbed hair and short dresses.

He sez it is not the bobbed hair that is the sin it is the cutting and where it is cut that is the sin. If you must have your hair cut have it done [by] one of your own sex. He sez girls are very delicate about people touching their necks or bodies but the[y] let any barber Maul all over their necks. If when you meet a priest you are ashamed of your short skirts why are you not ashamed and embarrassed before other people?<sup>333</sup>

Father Knox clearly views the latest short fashions and bobbed hair cuts as something young respectable women must avoid. The church was not the only organization that feared the influence of new popular forms of entertainment. Although fashion and style were on the minds of middle class reformers, they were more concerned with the

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<sup>332</sup> Mail Star, March 8, 1972.

<sup>333</sup> Mary Dulhanty's Mount Saint Vincent Diary, 1926-1927.

images young women were exposed to in magazines, books and films. The HLCW, for example, attempted to control the time people spent reading inappropriate material, attending vaudeville shows and watching movies. Their primary concern with film attendance was that there was no distinction between adult and children's films.<sup>334</sup> They convinced the municipal government to hire a censor that would not only censor films for inappropriate material, but also regulate the attendance of children.

The members of the Committee on Objectionable Material were responsible for scanning shop windows for objectionable material, and then requesting shopkeepers to remove the offensive material. Rebecca Veinott's research on the HLCW also reveals that this Committee focussed on "pernicious literature" by seeking out bad books in libraries and schools. In one case, when the HLCW had successfully had a book removed from the public library, they found that the publicity given to the book caused a demand for it.<sup>335</sup> The Committee requested the cooperation of teachers in ensuring that inappropriate material did not find its way into the classroom. They published a list of desirable and undesirable reading materials in order to assist the librarians and teachers in this censorship. The HLCW also called upon the federal government to stop importing books and magazines that were objectionable to a respectable population. These attempts to censor viewing and reading materials was also an attempt to influence how people spent their leisure time. If objectionable materials were removed from society, then people would be forced to use their time to pursue

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<sup>334</sup> Veinott, "A Call to Mother," 55.

<sup>335</sup> Veinott, "A Call to Mother," 55.

respectable activities. Yet it was very difficult for reformers to regulate the materials people read or viewed. The very fact that these activities remained prominent shows that the reformers were unsuccessful in limiting peoples access to mass cultural activities.<sup>336</sup>

Suzanne Morton, in her investigation into life in the Richmond Heights area of Halifax after 1920 addresses the relationship between popular culture and class culture, and argues that while the working class did embrace aspects of mass culture, they were also adamant about maintaining their own local customs and traditions. Whereas the Casino Theatre on Gottingen Street was attended by the Richmond residents, the movie house was also used for other activities, such as a meeting of the local Labour party. What allowed both groups to share the theatre was the maintenance of the establishment's respectability.<sup>337</sup> It is highly unlikely that the respectable working class of Halifax would have attended movie theatres with a reputation for unacceptable standards of behaviour. It is equally likely that the middle-classes would feel comfortable spending time in a movie theatre with a reputation for having respectable audiences. While leisure time spent at the movies offered an escape from reality, other amusements provided a more realistic adventure.

Amusement parks also offered a place for people of all classes to spend their time. Both Ewen and Peiss explain that public parks and suburban commercial

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<sup>336</sup> April 8, 1915, HLCW Minutes

<sup>337</sup> Morton, Ideal Surroundings, 34.

amusements served working class family recreational needs at the turn of the century. "The Sunday excursion freed all family members from the dark tenements and crowded streets. Families also frequented outings sponsored by social clubs, political organizations, and labour unions."<sup>338</sup> However, as commercialized amusements grew, these forms of recreations attracted young single people as well as families. Commercial amusements were not frequented only by the labouring class. At the outset amusement parks were deemed suitable family entertainment, thus briefly attracted the middle classes.

In April 22, 1907 the Herald describes the amusement park to be built in Halifax. The land was secured from the government by C.F. Longley who formed a Company known as Melville Park Co. Plans included "a scenic railway, theatre, shooting the chutes, circle swings, steeplechase, shooting galleries, restaurant, ice cream booths, dancing, quoits, swimming and water sports and polo, a band will play every afternoon."<sup>339</sup> The park was designed to attract people from all classes. The minimal entrance fee and the steam and motor ferry services offered from Jubilee road to take people to the park meant that the lower classes could easily spend their leisure time. The park was designed so parents could bring their children to enjoy the rides during a family outing. Yet, the list of amusements suggests the park was designed to attract

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<sup>338</sup> Julia Kirk Blackwelder, "Working Class Women and Urban Culture," Journal of Urban History, Vol 14, No 4, 1988, 508.

<sup>339</sup> Herald, April 22, 1907.

other clientele.<sup>340</sup> The dancing hall and theatre would attract single men and women, while the polo matches and water sports intended to draw a more elite crowd.

The amusement park was particularly attractive to the youth of the city, who found it offered freedom from the constraints of their parents and their working environment. As a consequence, many of the amusements available to young people in the city were extended to the amusement parks. Research on the cultural phenomenon of the Coney Island amusement park in New York shows that young women were attracted to the park because it offered an exciting diversion from life in the city.<sup>341</sup> Alessandra Lorini concludes in her work on young women's attraction to amusement parks that "mass entertainment satisfied the gregarious spirit of young women...", while "mechanized and standardized amusements could counteract the monotony for industrial work," making work more tolerable.<sup>342</sup> It is doubtful that the Halifax amusement park offered the same "surrender of reason to a barbaric entertainment"<sup>343</sup> as Coney Island did, but it certainly offered a way for young people to use their time to escape from their own reality.

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<sup>340</sup> Herald, April 22, 1907.

<sup>341</sup> Peiss, Cheap Amusements, 114-138 and Alessandra Lorini, "The "Structure of Feeling" in a Mass Society: Changing Patterns of Work and Leisure among Young Working Women in New York City, 1890-1920," Storia Nordamericana, Vol 5, No 2, 1988, 71-94.

<sup>342</sup> Lorini, "The "Structure of Feeling" in a Mass Society," 94.

<sup>343</sup> Lorini, "The "Structure of Feeling" in a Mass Society," 93.

Many women were able to find amusements in their traditional roles as mother, wife and keepers of the hearth. As leisure time was limited, women combined their activities to blend her obligations with her pursuit of pleasure. Whether it was in the marketplace or the ball room, at the park or at the theatre, women used their time to be amused. Other women used their new position in the workforce to negotiate a space for themselves in the commercialized entertainment spaces. Young women challenged the constraints of domesticity and created a world of relative autonomy that allowed them to be entertained at the movies, in the dance halls and at the amusement parks.

The time women spent amusing themselves was constrained by several circumstances: time available, family obligations, gender norms, class, age and social expectations. Regardless of these circumstances women did find time to amuse themselves, taking advantage of their time with family and friends.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion: Time Under Control?**

How Halifax women used their leisure time and how this time was valued is a complex issue. Between the years of 1880 and 1930 the way in which women used their time was transformed. As the role of women extended beyond domesticity, women came to use their time in many novel ways. Women, mostly middle and upper class women, employed leisure time to pursue philanthropy, reform, politics, sport and even entered into professional work. Working class women also extended their sphere beyond the home, albeit in a more confined manner due to financial circumstances. Regardless of class, age or ethnicity, many women came to use their time in order to pursue activities which pushed the boundaries of the private domain while negotiating new spaces for themselves in the public realm.

This thesis has examined the many different ways in which women chose to use their time and how this time was valued by other members of society. What is clear is that through their employment of time, whether it was sports and recreation, politics or forms of entertainment, women were able to push the boundaries of what was considered a respectable use of time. Women always met with resistance but were able to expand the notion of women's space, and consequently how they used their time.

In sport and recreation women were able to use their time for more and more athletic pursuits. Prior to the 1880s women were not encouraged to use their time for



athletic activities for both social and biological reasons. Women were expected to spend their life perfecting her womanly qualities. Domesticity was the perfect realm for women, for here she could concentrate on her family, children and obligations as a wife and daughter. A woman's energy was far too valuable to the home to be wasted on sports and recreation and, as a consequence, those who pursued physical activities deviated from what was considered a respectable use of time. Nevertheless, women continued to be attracted to sporting activities and as a consequence were able to negotiate a space for themselves in the sporting culture. In order to avoid criticisms based on prevailing notions, women had to maintain their feminine qualities, always appearing nonthreatening and nurturing. They were discouraged from playing overly competitive or aggressive sports and, as a consequence, focussed on tennis, golf, swimming and figure skating since in these sports women could compete without jeopardizing their femininity. Individualist sports which did not require women to compete directly against another, such as figure skating, which camouflaged competitiveness behind sequence, flowing skirts and the grace of dance. Figuring skating allowed women to compete like champions while maintaining their feminine qualities.

Instead of accepting the idea that women could not, or should not, participate in competitive sports women, mostly college women, persevered until they were given access to sports such as hockey and basketball. However, in these more overtly competitive sports, like basketball or hockey, women played by different rules than the males who played the same game. Women's hockey was a clean sport with no

checking or fighting. Basketball players wore skirts and only used half the court. These adaptations allowed competition and femininity to be compatible. Women who chose to use their time for sport had to be sure to maintain the ideal qualities of the Victorian woman. By not compromising their femininity women were able to find a place for themselves in sport.

It is interesting to note that almost seventy years later women are still battling to establish equality in competitive sport. Although basketball is the most popular sport for high school and college women in both Canada and the United States, it was not until 1997 that the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) was formed, bringing competitive women's basketball into the public eye. Last year more than one million fans attended the inaugural seasons of the WNBA, yet women's figure skating remained the most televised women's sport.<sup>344</sup> Miriah Burton Nelson, author and former professional basketball player, argues that figure skating remains the most popular women's spectator sport because it allows women to maintain their femininity. On the ice the female figure skaters wear heavy make up, frozen smiles, and revealing dresses. Regardless of the fact that behind the scenes these same women pump iron and sweat to give them the competitive edge, in competition they appear feminine and fragile.

Another female skating sport, hockey, provides a useful contrast between the fine balance female athletes must maintain. Not until the 1998 Olympic winter games

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<sup>344</sup> Miriah Burton Nelson, Embracing Victory: Life Lessons in Competition and Compassion (New York: William Morrow, 1998).

did women's hockey become recognized internationally as a serious sport. Still, the Olympic regulations required them to play by slightly different rules than their male counterparts; fighting would not be tolerated in women's hockey. As in the turn of the century the difference in rules attempted to allow hockey to be an acceptably feminine sport, yet these rule changes were not enough to make competition and femininity compatible for all. During the Olympics the language used to describe these athletes frequently questioned their sexuality and their femininity. An IBM advertisement in Maclean's Magazine attempt to assure readers that women who compete are still willing to play the femininity game. One portion of the advertisement is a close up of a woman skater wearing an Olympic medal, while the copy reads "A woman of distinction always wears tasteful jewellery." Another section shows a close up of women's feet skating in hockey skates, and the copy reads "A well bred woman always covers her ankles."<sup>345</sup> [Appendix 6] The intent of the ad was to contrast the stereotype that women who compete in aggressive sports are 'butch' or unfeminine with the reality of female strength and agility. This ad assured its readers that women can play a masculine sport like hockey while remaining feminine. The media were not the only ones attempting to resolve this issue. Many jokes questioned whether these players were 'real' women. These jokes show that many people still regard hockey as a sport played by males, or at least by masculine creatures. In over sixty years women have made tremendous advances into the world of sports, yet they must never appear to have lost their femininity. While the women in this thesis negotiated the road for today's women

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<sup>345</sup> Maclean's Magazine, March 2, 1998,

athletes they did so by maintaining the Victorian qualities of womanliness and femininity, to pursue more athletic endeavours.<sup>346</sup>

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century middle and upper class reformers took hold of these complex Victorian ideals and assumptions when they attempted to modify the amount of time women, especially working women, spent participating in recreation. Reformers became involved in the rational recreation movement which attempted to influence proper morals and values through recreation. Reformers feared the idle time working women had and saw it as a threat to industrial development and social stability. As noted earlier, industrial capitalism and urbanization provided many people with more time for leisure. This new leisure time was distressing for reformers as they recognized how people were spending this new found leisure time. For example, while the working class male enjoyed spending their leisure time in the pubs of the city, the reformers thought this time should be spent with the family. Mrs. Chesley, Provincial leader of the Nova Scotia WCTU, questioned the implications of the man's choice of time use when she asked "What is the role of the

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<sup>346</sup> The world of sports is certainly not the only place in today's society where women must maintain their femininity in a masculine world. In a business situation a woman's behaviour must be in accordance with what is considered appropriate for a female. Aggressive women are frequently called 'bitch' while an aggressive male is considered assertive - the norm. How a woman dresses must also reflect her feminine qualities. Ties and suspenders reflect masculinity, while skirts and blouses are feminine. The media reinforces this image in commercials, advertisements and television programs. However, this image is often unrealistic. The women executives on TV shows such as 'Melrose Place' wear clothing that few women would even consider wearing to the office. And if a woman did wear these types of revealing clothes it is probable she would be known for her fashion choices and not her work. Despite the great strides women have taken in the area of equality in the work place, they must maintain their feminine qualities to be successful.

father?" in an article of the Halifax Herald. "If the father is ...too devoted to the club or the bar-room, to be influential for the good of the home, then "quality and power" of the home is just by so much deteriorated."<sup>347</sup> Reformers, such as Chesley, were concerned about the deterioration of the values and morals of, not just the family, but of society as a whole. One of the outcomes of this moral degeneration was the ways people chose to use their time.

Rational recreation appeared to be a way for reformers to influence the way people chose to use their time. By offering forms of recreation that promoted self-control, family life and respectability it was believed that peoples behaviours and actions would come to reflect these values. It was also believed that these new forms of leisure would enhance the personalities of both middle and lower class people while better equipping them for the "expanding world of competition, urban life and bureaucracy..." brought on with industrial capitalism and urbanization.<sup>348</sup> The early rational recreation movement was aimed at the male urban dweller, although as more and more women entered the work force, reformers began to focus increasingly on ways to influence the choices women made for their leisure time.

The rational recreation movement attempted to restrict and moralize time through legislation, while also attempting to change the way people used their time. As Brian Harrison has noted

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<sup>347</sup> Halifax Herald, August 10, 1895.

<sup>348</sup> Gary Cross, A Social History of Leisure Since 1600, (State College: Venture Publishing, 1990) 88.

Nineteenth-century Christians deplored the recreational complex of behaviour which included gambling, adultery, drinking, cruel sports, and Sabbath breaking and blasphemy - all of which took place together at the race-course, the drinking place, the theatre, the feast and fair.<sup>349</sup>

Consequently, during the early stages of the rational recreation movement, middle class reformers, church leaders and respectable community members, sought to change these ways of spending ones leisure time.<sup>350</sup> The attempts by reformers to restrict how people used their leisure time has been the focus of the chapters of this thesis.

The petitions for legislation such as a curfew law, the temperance movement, campaigns against prostitution, the playground supervision initiative of the HLCW, attempts to "Christianize" leisure through mandatory Sunday School attendance and Sabbatarianism, and in the institutional settings of the YWCA attempts were made to regulate how people spent their time. Although several of these attempts were successful, if only for a short time, others were rejected by the very people for whom these reforms were intended. For example, the YWCA, despite its attempts to attract young working class women, was unsuccessful in doing so. One of the reasons was that working class women found the rules and regulations of the YWCA too restrictive.

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<sup>349</sup> Brian Harrison, "Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth-century England," Papers Presented to the Past and Present Conference on Popular Religion, July 1966, in Cross, A Social History of Leisure, 89.

<sup>350</sup> Cross, A Social History of Leisure, 87, notes that in England and America those concerned with rational recreation included more than just those interested in imposing the values of the elites on the masses. It also included: "craftsmen, miners, and cotton spinners"; "wage earners who were upwardly mobile, aspirants to foreman or self-employment status"; and "militant members of trade unions."

Working class women chose to use their time in other ways, in the amusement parks, movie houses and even on the streets. This was true in Halifax, as few were interested in participating in an organization that restricted their time use. The HLCW minutes and Halifax papers were filled with discussions and articles about how working class women spent their time, proving that the attempts to influence how these women used their time were not usually successful. Instead of conforming to reformers ideals many working class women negotiated a space for themselves in a variety of recreations which were not initially deemed an acceptable way for women to spend their time. Women were successful in doing so due to their determination and their maintenance of their femininity.

Negotiating a space for themselves beyond domesticity, whether it was in sports and recreation, politics or forms of entertainment, was characteristic of many women from all classes. Although most maintained many of the Victorian convictions of earlier generations, how women chose to use their time varied from one group to another. Consequently, young working women frequently found themselves clashing with middle class values as they sought to establish a greater freedom and autonomous culture for themselves.

The culture created by the working class women often deviated from the social behaviour deemed respectable by the middle classes. At the centre of this clash was the issue of time. Social reformers did not accept or appreciate the way many young working women used their leisure time, and thus found themselves in a position of trying to limit and redefine their use of time. On the subject of amusements or

entertainment, reformers were concerned about the time women spent on the streets or in movie houses, dance halls and amusement parks. They believed that here women were being exposed to behaviours that would keep them from becoming the next generation of respectable wives and mothers. A great fear of reformers, especially those motivated by evangelical beliefs, was the loss of the Christian faith and values by these young women. Another growing concern was the entry of young women into the world of prostitution. Reformers, in an attempt to influence the time use of women, advocated a curfew bill, technical training for women, set up a woman's hostel, offered classes in sewing and cooking, and preached about the necessity of maintaining proper morals and manners in an increasingly corrupt society. Institutions and social clubs attempted to direct women towards a purposeful and respectable use of their time. However, the ability for reformers to control the use of time of women was not successful since women continued to participate in activities which were not regarded as suitable by reformers.

The intentions of the social reformers has sparked some debate between historians. Historian Carol Lee Bacchi declares that reformers attempted to control the lower classes through their endeavours to provided them with respectable ways to spend their leisure time. This assumes that reformers had power over the working class they wished to influence. As previously noted, Ernest Forbes, rejects this analysis stating that it is easy to analyse the actions of the middle class reformer as being motivated by class interests and as a means of social control. However, he continues, a closer analysis reveals that the reformers did not wish to, nor did they



have the power to, control how other women used their time. His examination of the language used by the reformers in the HLCW reveals a group of women who seemed to be genuinely motivated by a desire to help the women of the lower classes better organize their lives - and their time. It is important to remember the historical context in which these women operated.

Reform women were influenced by Victorian convictions of ideal womanhood, and many of their actions reflect the attitudes of the time. However, there were also instances where the reformers break from the mould and attempt to instill change. It is here that they come upon their greatest challenge. Certainly the reformers tried to influence the time use of the working women, but it was not an overt attempt to control. The reformers believed they were helping the situation of working class women. And when reformers did try to control the time of other women, they met with great resistance. The ability of the working class women to control their own use of time is evident in the ways they chose to accept and/or reject the influences of the reformers.

A more effective means of time control was found within the classes themselves. What was considered a respectable use of time in one group might not have been regarded as respectable in another. While many middle and upper class women of Halifax might not have spent time hanging out on the streets or in the movie houses of the city, many working class women found these perfectly acceptable leisure activities. Similarly, the working class women would have found the lifestyle of Kathleen Grove and Henrietta Ripley unacceptable.<sup>351</sup> Each class had their own standards for what

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<sup>351</sup> The two women discussed in Chapter 4 who were arrested for vagrancy.

was considered a respectable use of time.

Suzanne Morton's research shows that although respectability was "less tangible" for women of the working class, it was more important. For most working class women respectability was the only status they had in a community, and was thus important to preserve. For this reason, Morton concludes, respectability was not necessarily something that was forced upon these women, since the personification of this ideal provided them with prestige and pride.<sup>352</sup> This examination questions the belief that social control was a manifestation of the upper classes. Although women's leisure time was circumscribed by a patriarchal capitalist system, women themselves helped to perpetuate this image by upholding the ideals of womanhood through their actions and behaviour. Therefore, as social reformers attempted to indoctrinate the lower classes with morals and values of the ideal woman, women themselves used this ideal to maintain their special status in society. This analysis may also be applied to women's use of leisure time. Women's use of time was constrained by Victorian gender ideals, yet they were maintained by many women for they provided them with respectable status in society.

Despite the attempts by reformers to regulate how others, particularly the working class, used their time they were not frequently successful. Although a woman's time was constrained by her gender, class, age and ethnicity she was often able to use some of her leisure time to pursue activities of her choice. Young women

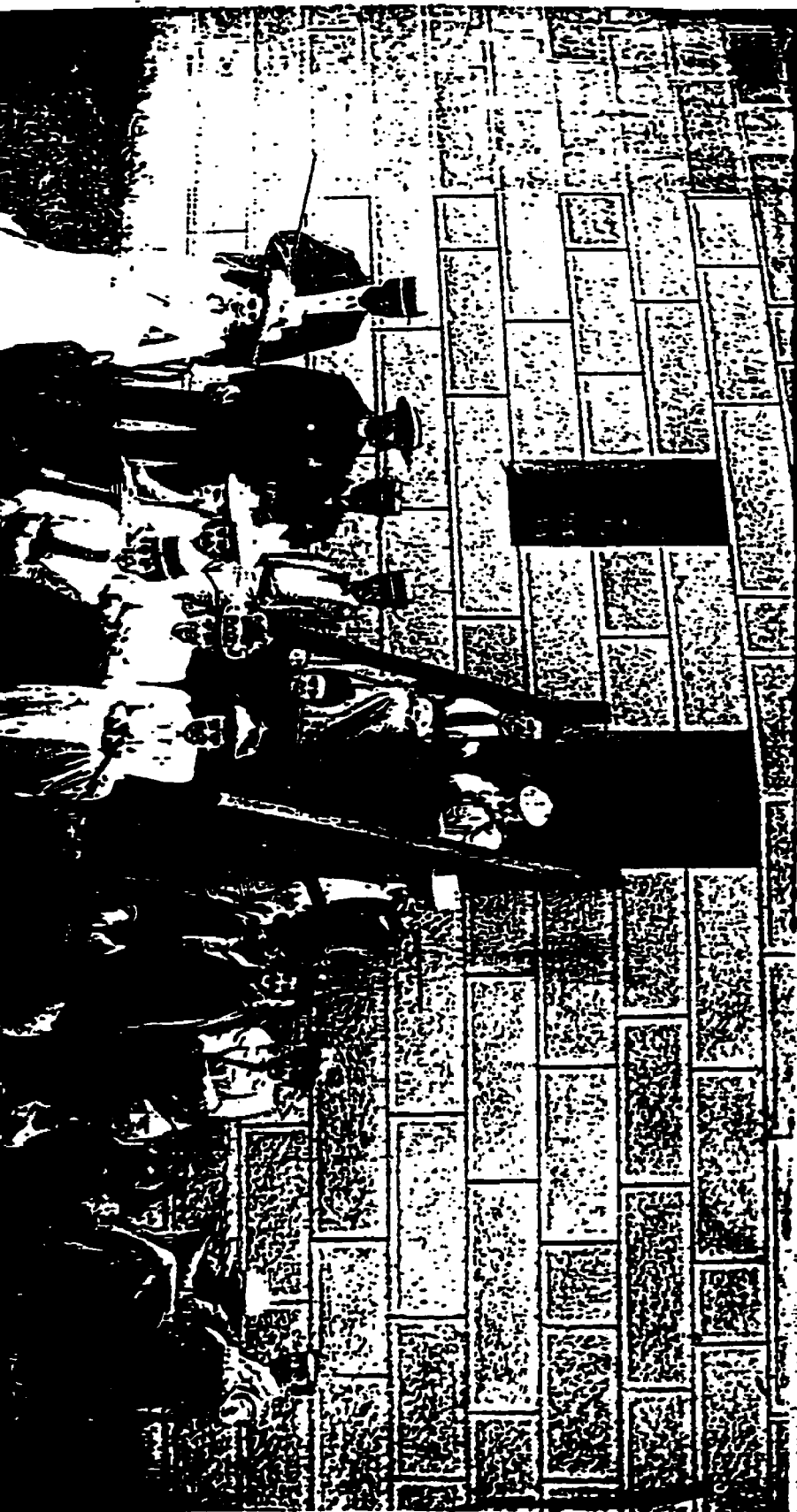
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<sup>352</sup> Suzanne Morton, Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) 37-38.

were especially influential in their choices about how to use their leisure time. When choices existed women had more freedom to decide how they were going to use their time. The constrain of the social body over the physical body was also limited, since were able to negotiate a space for themselves in certain sports and recreations.

Women's time use was constrained by the ideal image of Victorian womanhood of purity, virtue and domesticity. However, women often accepted and used these ideals to maintain their status in society. Specific women's cultures deemed appropriate uses of time and therefore what was deemed respectable in one culture was not necessarily deem respectable in another. This differentiation between women's cultures frequently resulted in clashes over how time should be spent. However, these unique cultures provided groups of women to maintain their control over their use of time. For example, while middle class reformers attempted to limit the amount of time young women spent on the street, the youth had developed their own culture which regarded street entertainment as an acceptable way to spend one's leisure time. Consequently, despite the attempts of one group of women to influence to time use of another, each group created its own survival strategies and managed to maintain some control over how they used their time.

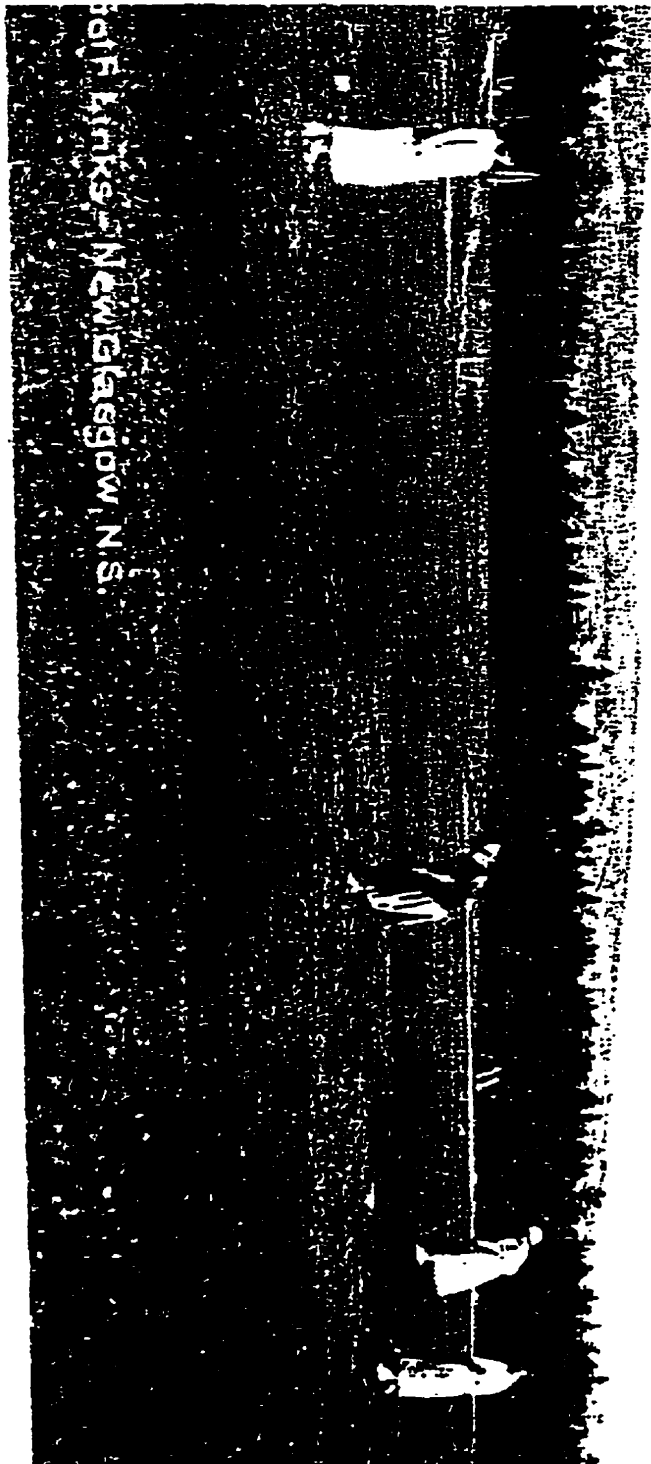




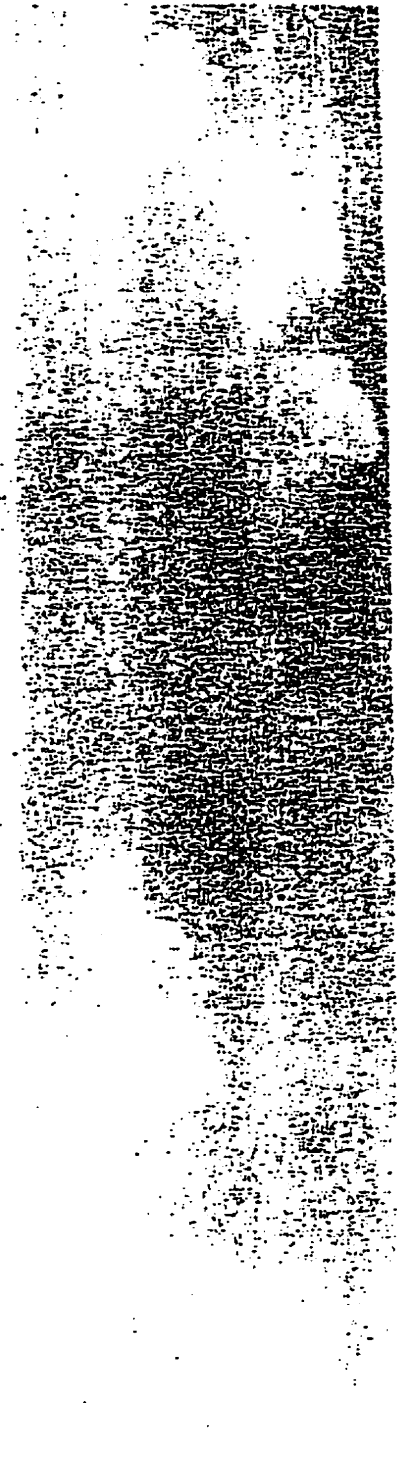
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Appendix 3

Monday Oct-13/1890 -

Series in honor of Prince Leopold, & the Emperor  
 of the Republic prepared for the Government of Hawaii for the  
 Plan of Government of Hawaii



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Sunday Picnic in Park-Deerkin' Stearns Park Aug



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**UMI**

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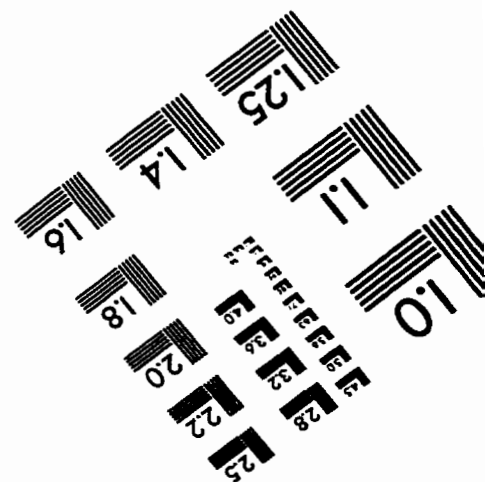
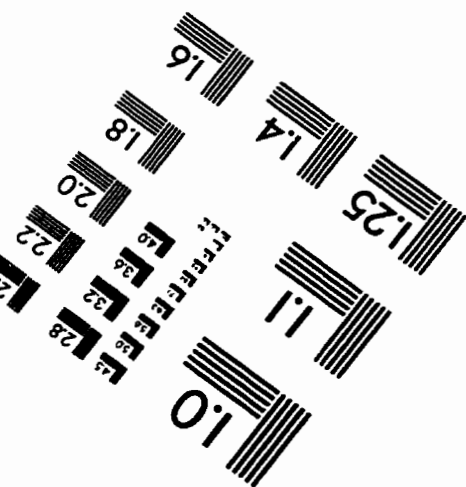
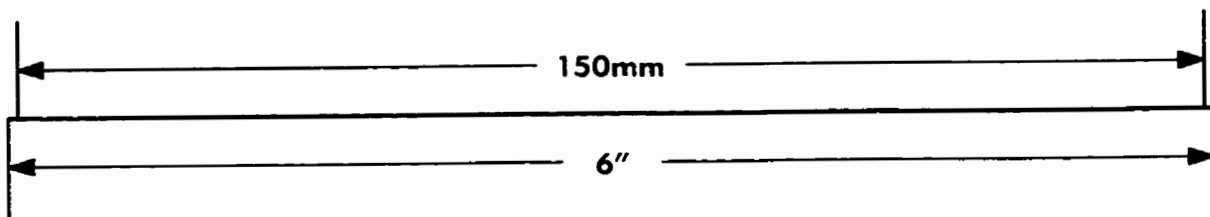
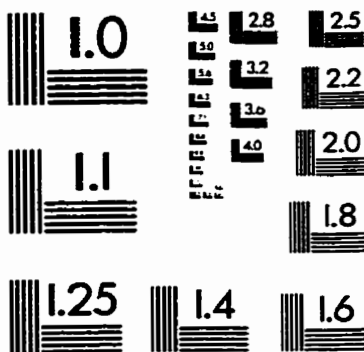
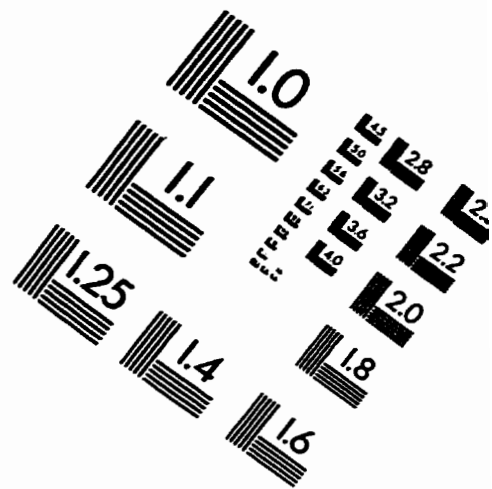
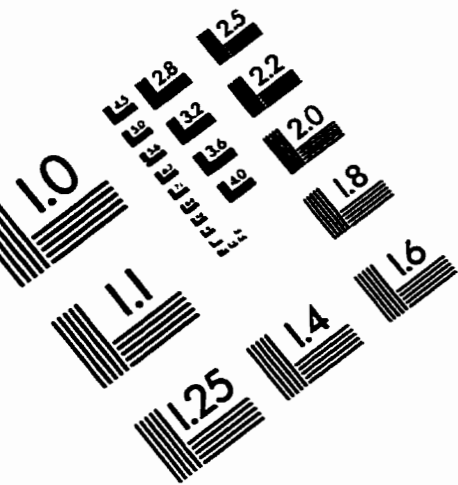
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