

**FAMILIES IN TRANSITION:
RICHMOND COUNTY, NOVA SCOTIA, 1871 - 1901**

BY

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ABSTRACT

During the nineteenth century the rapid development of the pioneer stage of rural settlement was coming to a close across North America, particularly in the eastern part of the continent. Land resources, as well as other natural resources, were reaching the limits of their ability to supply the needs of families and political changes were forcing the restructuring of economic activities. At the same time industrialization and mass production, coupled with increased literacy, increased the perceived standards of living needed to move beyond subsistence and to reach competency. A consequence of these factors made it necessary for families to adapt strategies that would provide their family members with the ability to meet their perceived needs.

In Richmond County, Nova Scotia, families adapted to these changes during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. There was no new farm land for settlement within the county boundaries and the fisheries could only sustain a finite number of workers because of the limitations of the resource and the shortage of markets. The restructuring of the economy resulting from tariff policies and railway expansion restricted the potential of the coastal trade. Families adapted the situation by making decisions that allowed the population to decline to the point where a balance was achieved between resources and population. That reduction was made possible by the growth of opportunities elsewhere, especially in the cities, and the perception of many young people that their needs could be met through urban relocation. The resulting adjustments meant that new levels of competency were possible for the persistent population.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

%	percentage
AC	Archives of Canada
BI	Beaton Institute
bk	book
CO	Colonial Office
col.	Column
Div.	Division
g.s.	grave stone inscriptions
LDS	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
mfm	microfilm number
MG	Manuscript Group
n.p.	no paging
n	number
PANS	Public Archives of Nova Scotia
Pt	part
RG	Record Groups
Vol.	Volume
WB	workbook

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Introduction

The historian should neither completely repress nor cheerfully unleash his bias; he should, above all, become aware of it, and judge whether it is compatible with historical work. For the rest he will have to rely on his sense of truth and must remember that even if the existence of truth be problematical, truthfulness remains the measure of his intellectual and moral achievement.¹

Historians, like all human beings, are products of their environment, making the writing of objective history problematical.² As a result of this, historians write the history of the past anew, with references to the conditions uppermost in their own time.³ The development of several schools of thought regarding development and change evolved through the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, each influenced by the circumstances of the time. The first clearly rural theory was the frontier theory, articulated by Frederick Jackson Turner in the late nineteenth century. He believed that the development of American independence, democracy, and materialism, was dependent on

¹ Fritz Stern, ed., The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present, (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 26.

² Ellen Somekawa and Elizabeth A. Smith, "Theorizing the Writing of History or, 'I Can't Think Why it should be so Dull, For a Great Deal of it Must be Invention,'" Journal of Social History 1:22, 1988, p. 154.

³ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of History" in Ray Allen Billington, ed., Frontier and Section, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1961). p. 17.

western territorial expansion.⁴ This theory was adopted by many of his contemporaries and had a lasting impact on North American rural history. However, he interpreted the 1890 Census maps as indicating that the frontier was closing because they did not depict the frontier line as earlier maps had. Although settlement continued through the 1890s, by the second decade of the twentieth century, the gradual closing of the frontier in the United States and the growth of industrialization undermined the frontier thesis, forcing even Turner to rethink the applicability of his theory to the changes taking place.⁵

Some Canadian historians adopted the frontier thesis but it was never as dominant as in the United States.⁶ A theory that became more nearly central to the analysis of Canadian developmental history was based on the staples approach and it played a major role in Canadian historiography. Although the theory was often revised to deal with specific circumstances, its main feature was to explain change through the products destined for international trade,⁷

⁴ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Problem of the West," in Ray Billington, ed., p. 68; Michael S. Cross, ed., introduction to The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment, (Toronto: the Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970), p. 1.

⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, "Social Forces in American History," American Historical Review XVI (Jan., 1911), pp. 217-233.

⁶ Cross, p. 1.

⁷ Melville H. Watkins, "A Staple Theory of Economic Growth," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science XXIX: 2 (May, 1963), pp. 141-158; Kenneth Buckley, "The Role of Staple Industries in Canada's Economic Development," The Journal of Economic History XVII (1958), pp. 439-452.

such as fur, fish, and lumber. This theory tended to place development in a broad framework that generally considered the development of the internal economy as being largely irrelevant.⁸ The growing complexity of internal economies made it more difficult to explain growth in terms of export staples after 1820, and particularly by the late nineteenth century,⁹ but economic historians adapted elements of the framework and expanded it to fit changing conditions.¹⁰

Other historians replaced frontierism with "metropolitanism" as their framework for analysis. This theory was similar to the frontier thesis except that it identified the city, rather than the frontier, as the dynamic force in promoting change.¹¹ The growth of the urban regions created a reaction to the Jacksonian idea that "pioneer society, the West, and simple farmers became virtuous and forward-looking to the beholder, while town society, the East, and un-simple business men became selfish and reactionary."¹² The metropolitan school regarded the east and the urban businessmen as agents of national expansion,

⁸ Buckley, pp. 440-442.

⁹ Ibid., p. 444.

¹⁰ David McCallum, Unequal Beginnings: Agriculture and Economic Development in Quebec and Ontario until 1870, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985)

¹¹ J. M. S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History," The Canadian Historical Review XXXV:1 (1954), p. 14.

¹² Ibid., p. 12.

who were more far-sighted than their "agrarian opponents."¹³ While decrying the "moral" implications of the frontier thesis, proponents of the metropolitan thesis set a tone that was just as value laden.¹⁴

However, these approaches dehumanized history and provided inadequate frameworks for the study of social history. They attributed development and change to geographical forces, not people. Prejudicial terms such as "hinterland," "marginal", "on the periphery", or "underdeveloped",¹⁵ were applied to large geographical areas and the people who lived there were treated as unimportant or at best as cultural idiosyncrasies.¹⁶ In Canada, Montreal at first captured the status of metropolis but it was later superseded by Toronto.¹⁷

The failure of the broad theories of development to explain the wide variation in social change resulted in the adoption of the concept of

¹³ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁴ Careless, p. 18, speaks of "learning and ideas radiating" from the metropolis and the metropolis supplying the "intellectual leadership."

¹⁵ The use of these terms is widespread in the Canadian historiography of the last half of the twentieth century. Some examples of this terminology can be found in L. D. McCann, "Metropolitanism and Branch Businesses in the Maritimes, 1881-1931," Acadiensis 13:1, (Autumn, 1983), p. 112; Graeme Wynn, "The Maritimes: The Geography of Fragmentation and Underdevelopment," in L. D. McCann, ed., Heartland and Hinterland, 2nd. ed., (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice Hall, Canada, 1984), p. 179.

¹⁶ Pieter J. De Vries and Georgina MacNab-De Vries, "They farmed among other things: Three Cape Breton case studies, (Sydney, N.S.: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1984).

¹⁷ McCann, "Metropolitanism...", p. 117.

"modernization."¹⁸ This theory was so broad that it could, in many respects, encompass the other three theories of development. Horace M. Kallen defined it as "that attitude of mind which tends to subordinate the traditional to the novel and to adjust the established and customary to the exigencies of the recent and innovating."¹⁹ Inherent in the definition was the assumption that there were identifiable differences between traditional and modern societies. According to Harry Ritter, modernization was characterized by "secularization, rationalization in political and economic life, industrialization, accelerated urbanization, the differentiation of social structures, and an increased level of popular involvement (direct or indirect) in public affairs."²⁰ The term came to mean far more than change from some time in the past to the present caused by the use of new technology, because in application it took on a wide range of assumptions.

Modernization became the central focus of rural history in North America although many of the basic assumptions about the nature of "traditional" society were challenged by a wide range of studies. Several of these assumptions were of particular importance to the study of rural families. The application of the idea

¹⁸ For an in-depth discussion of the inadequacies of modernization as a framework for rural social history see R. W. Sandwell, "Rural Reconstruction: Towards a New Synthesis in Canadian History," Histoire Sociale/Social History XXVII: 53 (1994), pp. 1-32.

¹⁹ Horace M. Kallen, "Modernism" in Edwin R. A. Seligman, ed., Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, (New York: The MacMillan Company, MCMXXXIII), p. 564.

²⁰ Harry Ritter, Dictionary of Concepts in History, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 273.

of "modern" and "modernization" needs to be explored before examining several of these assumptions in detail.

The topic of rural change in the nineteenth century is dealt with extensively, especially in the American literature,²¹ but the variety of interpretations of "modernization" suggests that there is no general definition of the concept. Gerard Bouchard and Regis Thibeault defined modernization as the decline of the subsistence economy and the introduction of capitalism.²² Robert Swierenga described the modern stage of development as being characterized by increasing control over the environment, coupled with urbanization, complex institutions, specialized labour, and mass politics.²³ To

²¹ Hal Barron, Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Clarence H. Danhof, Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820-1870, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969); Gilbert C Fite, The Farmers Frontier, 1865-1900, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966); Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985); James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: Mentalité in Pre-Industrial America," William and Mary Quarterly 35 (1978), pp. 3-32; John L. Shover, First Majority-Last Minority: The Transforming of Rural Life in America, (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976). For the Canadian context see Rusty Bittermann, "Middle River: The Social Structure of Agriculture in a Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton Community," M.A. Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1987; David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

²² Gerard Bouchard and Regis Thibeault, "Change and Continuity in the Saguenay Agriculture: The Evolution of Production and Yields (1852-1971)" in Donald H. Akenson, ed., Canadian Papers in Rural History VIII, p. 234.

²³ Robert P. Swierenga, "Theoretical Perspectives on the New Rural History: From Environmentalism to Modernization," Agricultural History 56 (1982), p.

Swierenga, the "driving forces of modernization" governed the changes in human behaviour in rural communities as they moved through the historical process of establishment, growth, maturity, and decline.²⁴ Bouchard and Thibeault pointed out that the interpretation of the term modernization has a significant impact on the interpretation of change. They suggested that if capitalism is defined as the "separation of capital and labour," or "the withdrawal of the family," then the process of modernization has not as yet been completed.²⁵ According to Graeme Wynn, in Canada the forces of modernization "undermined the traditional bases of rural settlement" and "family-centred independence (secured by the possession of one's own land, the provision of the bulk of one's needs, and freedom from onerous financial obligation)."²⁶ What becomes apparent by reading the literature is that the term "modernization" was used in a variety of ways.

While modernization theory underlined the positive elements of social change, another group of historians adopted class as a framework to emphasize its negative impact. Their concept of class evolved from the Marxist definition in which the economic position of groups was the main component:

497.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Bouchard and Thibeault, p. 256.

²⁶ Graeme Wynn, "The Maritimes: The Geography of Fragmentation and Underdevelopment," in L. D. McCann, ed., A Geography of Canada: Heartland and Hinterland, (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1984), p. 90.

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them they do not form a class.²⁷

Marx's description of class was strongly influenced by his personal observations of processes that were taking place in the manufacturing regions of England. Historians who adopted class as their central focus accepted most of the underlying assumptions of modernization theory, but did not accept the idea that the change was positive.²⁸

Working definitions of "rural" and "urban" society were as diverse as those for modernization. Most of the literature on rural history defined rural in restrictive terms. Swierenga believed that two criteria are required for a standard operational definition of rurality: "residence in an area of low population density and chief livelihood earned in agriculture."²⁹ Restricting the term "rural" to only the segment of the population involved in agriculture, especially in the nineteenth century, leaves the significant proportion of the

²⁷ T. B. Bottomore, Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), pp. 188-189.

²⁸ Christopher Clark, "Household Economy, Market Exchange and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley, 1800-1860," Journal of Social History 13 (1979/80), pp. 169-187; Allan Kulikoff, "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series: 46 (1989), pp. 120-144.

²⁹ Swierenga, p. 496.

North American population engaged in fishing, lumbering, mining, as well as a whole series of minor manufacturing industries, outside the definition of either rural or urban. Other definitions designed to establish a dividing line between rural and urban, merely provide some arbitrary figure for aggregations of population ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 inhabitants.³⁰ Defining urban as specific aggregations of population may provide some measure of rurality but where do county towns and villages fit in to the overall picture of rural and urban life? In fact, the roles of towns and villages varied and some could be described as "rural" in mentalité and others as urban.³¹

This brings us back to the assumptions concerning "traditional" society as accepted by modernization and class theorists, and which could be deemed to be relevant to the study of rural families. Five major assumptions about traditional society, that have been challenged in the last three decades, relate to the self-sufficiency of the family farm, family structure, equality and inequality in rural areas, extended family networks, and mentalité.

One of the earliest debates on the transformation from "traditional" to "modern" society centred around whether traditional farmers were self-sufficient.

³⁰ Swierenga (1982), p. 496; Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 8.

³¹ Jean Burnet, Next-Year Country: A study of rural social organization in Alberta, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951, reprinted 1978), Chapter 4, provides interesting discussion of the differences between rural villages and their relationship to the surrounding countryside.

The view was that farmers in the past provided for all their needs and did not participate in market transactions. The origins of this assumption go back to ancient times, but in America the idea was exemplified by an article that appeared in a Philadelphia magazine in 1787, where a "farmer" lamented his departure from self-sufficiency and noted how his family's participation in the market economy had ruined him financially.³² Several researchers who took a close look at available sources discovered that this was an inaccurate representation of the past, because in most regions of North America farmers could not produce all required items.³³ Vernon Fowke estimated the requirements for establishing a farm in Canada during the pioneer stage and stressed the point that during this period, farmers had to rely on outside supplies for virtually everything they needed, forcing them into market relationships.³⁴ Carole Shammass found that in Massachusetts in 1774, fewer than one-half of the farmers had a spinning wheel and only 5.7 per cent had all items necessary for the manufacture of clothing.³⁵ Bettye Hobbs Pruitt discovered that large

³² Carole Shammass, "How Self-Sufficient was Early America," Journal of Interdisciplinary History XIII:2 (1982), pp. 247-249.

³³ Bettye Hobbs Pruitt, "Self-Sufficiency and the Agricultural Economy of Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts," William and Mary Quarterly 41, 3rd series (1984), pp. 333-364; V. C. Fowke, "The Myth of the Self-Sufficient Canadian Pioneer," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada LVI, Series III, 1962, pp. 23-37; Shammass, pp. 247-272.

³⁴ Fowke, pp. 31-32.

³⁵ Shammass, p. 257.

numbers of Massachusetts farmers did not have adequate land or grain to feed their livestock.³⁶ Self-sufficiency was the first assumption underlying the traditional view of rural society to be refuted.

Some historians were unwilling to accept the argument that the transactions in traditional North American society were similar to those in modern society. The validity of their conceptual framework depended on identifying a transition from traditional to capitalist society.³⁷ Alan Kulikoff and Michael Merrill, who used class as their analytical framework, argued that there was a difference between "use" value in household production and "market" value in commodity production. In traditional societies it was only the usefulness of a product to a person that determined its value.³⁸ Self-sufficiency was attained, not by the family producing everything but by disposing of items that it needed less in exchange for items it needed more. The value of the item was only determined by what a family was willing to exchange for it. However, Merrill was unable to explain one of his own findings: why values or prices were assigned to items in 'contemporary' records.³⁹ Daniel Vickers challenged the

³⁶ Pruitt, p. 351.

³⁷ Allan Kulikoff, The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism, (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992), pp. 1-9.

³⁸ Allan Kulikoff, "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America," William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, 46 (1989), pp. 120-144; Michael Merrill, "Cash is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States," Radical History Review 7 (1975), pp. 42-71.

³⁹ Merrill, "Cash is Good to Eat...", pp. 55-58.

idea that there was an important distinction between market and use value.⁴⁰ He argued that the main objective of early American families was competency, which he defined as "the possession of sufficient property to absorb the labours of a given family while providing it with something more than a mere subsistence."⁴¹ Farmers used a variety of means to achieve competency and they saw no threat in using markets to achieve their goals.⁴² The debate over the concept of self-sufficiency underlined the problems associated with the assumptions of modernization theory.

The work of Peter Laslett and others challenged another main assumption of modernization: that industrialization resulted in a transformation in the structure of families from complex to nuclear.⁴³ Laslett developed a methodology which illustrated that for as long as there have been data to study them, English families have been primarily nuclear.⁴⁴ Although studies have challenged Laslett's methodology and some have illustrated that there were exceptions to the rule, none have been able to demonstrate that Laslett's general conclusion

⁴⁰ Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," William and Mary Quarterly 47 (1990), p. 7.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁴³ Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, eds., Household and Family in Past Time, (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), p. 5.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 66.

was invalid.⁴⁵

A third assumption of modernization theory was that the settlement process created equality at the frontier⁴⁶ and inequality was a feature of modern urban society. Although the idea was challenged repeatedly,⁴⁷ those who accepted modernization theory tended to argue that the inequality found in rural areas was insignificant. The theory of a transformation from traditional to capitalist society required the identification of a time when there was relative equality.⁴⁸ According to this assumption, inequality in rural society was created

⁴⁵ Steven Ruggles, "The Transformation of American Family Structure," American Historical Review 99 (Feb., 1994), pp. 103-128; J. I. Little, "Ethnicity, Family Structure, and Seasonal Labour Strategies on Quebec's Appalachian Frontier, 1852-1881," Journal of Family History 17:3 (1991), pp. 289-302; Gisli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson and Loftur Guttormsson, "Household Structure and Urbanization in Three Icelandic Fishing Districts, 1880-1930," Journal of Family History 18:4 (1993), pp. 315-340; W. A. Armstrong, "A Note on the household structure of mid-nineteenth-century York in comparative perspective," in Laslett and Wall, pp. 205-214; Yves Blayo "Size and Structure of households in a Northern French Village between 1836 and 1861" in Laslett and Wall, pp. 255-281; Michael Anderson, "Household structure and the industrial revolution; mid-nineteenth century Preston in Comparative Perspective," in Laslett and Wall, pp. 215-235.

⁴⁶ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Problem of the West," in Billington, p. 68.

⁴⁷ Rusty Bittermann, "The Hierarchy of the Soil: Land and Labour in a 19th Century Cape Breton Community," Acadiensis 18 (1988), pp. 33-55 ; Debra McNabb, "The Role of the Land in Settling Horton Township, Nova Scotia, 1766-1830," in Margaret Conrad, ed., They Planted Well: New England Planters in Maritime Canada, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1988), pp. 151-160; David Grayson Allen, In English Ways, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); Allan Greer, Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), pp. 89-99.

⁴⁸ Jonathan Prude, "Town-Factory Conflicts in Antebellum Rural

by the introduction of capitalist values that resulted in the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small group. However, from the time of earliest settlement, social distinctions resulted from inequality in the settlement process.⁴⁹

One assumption about the differences between "traditional" rural society and "modern" urban society was that rural society was distinguished by the extended family networks that resulted in close-knit communities.⁵⁰ It was urban studies that undermined the basis of this assumption. Political historians had for many years recognized that urban "compacts" formed from related families controlled political and economic life in urban, as well as rural centres.⁵¹ Beyond

Massachusetts," in Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, eds., The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 75-76; Kulikoff, "The Transition...", pp. 129-130.

⁴⁹ Philip J. Greven, Jr., Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University, 1970) p. 45; Bittermann, p. 24; Lyle Dick, Farmers 'Making Good': the Development of Abernethy District, Saskatchewan, 1880-1920. (Studies in Archaeology, Architecture, and History, National Historic Parks and Sites, Canadian Parks Service, Environment Canada, 1989), p. 66.

⁵⁰ Swierenga, p. 496.

⁵¹ J. Murray Beck, The Government of Nova Scotia, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), Appendix C, p. 349 provides a chart of the Halifax, Nova Scotia, family compact and how the members were related; R. MacGregor Dawson, The Government of Canada, 4th ed. revised by Norman Ward, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), p. 12; Frederick H. Armstrong, "The Oligarchy of the Western District of Upper Canada 1788-1841" in J. K. Johnson and Bruce G. Wilson, Historical Essay on Upper Canada: New Perspectives, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989), pp. 513-535; Edward M. Cook, Jr., The Fathers of the Towns: Leadership and Community Structure in Eighteenth-Century New England, (Baltimore and London: the Johns Hopkins

these elite groups the importance of family networks in urban areas was ignored. However, micro-studies of specific urban areas by historians such as Bettina Bradbury revealed that extended family networks were just as important and widespread in cities among the working poor.⁵²

These assumptions were ancillary to the central assumption of modernization: the transformation in the "mentalité" of the members of traditional society to the "mentalité" of the modern world. In 1969, when Clarence H. Danhof published his book on change in agriculture in the mid-nineteenth century American north-west, he characterized American rural societies as being in conflict over the best methods of achieving material gain. The 'traditional' farmer who adhered to the old standard of being "careful, economical, and primarily self-sufficient," was designated in modern terms as being "conservative, stubborn, tradition-bound, miserly, ignorant or blind to self-interest." The farmer who accepted the modern system of values centred on money profits, was seen as being intelligent, scientific, progressive, and rational.⁵³

University Press, 1976), pp. 144-145.

⁵² Bettina Bradbury, Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc., 1993), pp. 67-68.

⁵³ Clarence H. Danhof, Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820-1870, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 16-17.

James Lemon used this conceptualization to describe eighteenth century Pennsylvania farmers, in order to discount the "[r]omantic notions of the subsistent and self-sufficient farmer" and replace it with a concept of farmers as individualists, who placed material gain over community interest.⁵⁴ James A. Henretta objected to this depiction of the mentalité of eighteenth century Pennsylvania farmers. Henretta argued that communal goals were central to farm communities because farmers were generally tied into the broader community through ethnicity and religion. Thus, the "calculus of advantage' for these men and women was not mere pecuniary gain, but encompassed a much wider range of social and cultural goals."⁵⁵ On the other hand, Henretta portrayed modern society as being motivated by liberal, entrepreneurial, individualistic, and capitalistic values.⁵⁶ Henretta refused to accept the contention that farmers in the eighteenth century could have exhibited 'modern' motivations, as was contended by Lemon.

Attempts to establish motivation often resulted in new untested assumptions being accepted. This was a feature of two Canadian studies: one dealing with an urban environment and one with a mainly rural environment.

⁵⁴ James T. Lemon, The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early South-eastern Pennsylvania, (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins Press, 1972), p. XV.

⁵⁵ James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: Mentalité in Pre-industrial America," William and Mary Quarterly 35 (1978), pp. 4-5.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

Michael Katz, in his study of Hamilton, Ontario,⁵⁷ was heavily influenced by the ideology of modernization, but he pointed out that assumptions about the nature of earlier societies were often vague and incorrect. One of these assumptions, that modernization resulted in the transformation of families from extended to nuclear, had already been challenged by Peter Laslett and others. Katz focused mainly on the structure of Hamilton's society. Central to his thesis was the concept that "inequality represents the underlying structural rigidity of the society while transience reflects the continual flow of people throughout the city's relatively fixed structures."⁵⁸ He identified a persistent group that made up about one-third to two-fifths of the population.⁵⁹ He postulated a two tiered society, one relatively fixed, comprised of those who were successful, and a floating group of "failures," people who were poorer and less successful.⁶⁰ The conclusions reached in the Hamilton study suggested that persistency, not mobility, was the key to "success."

David Gagan conducted one of the first studies that dealt with some of the issues of micro-history in a rural setting.⁶¹ He selected as the focus of his study,

⁵⁷ Michael B. Katz, The People of Hamilton Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁵⁸ Katz, p. 17.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

⁶¹ David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in

Peel County, Ontario. Like Katz, Gagan found a high rate of mobility, reflected in the fact that he could find only about one-quarter of the families persistent in the County from 1851 to 1871. Gagan suggested that this mobility was the result of Peel settlers, and Canadians in general, being taught to equate moving on with moving up, but he concluded that "the race was invariably won by those who stayed put."⁶² Although in the Peel study he examined many of the variables important to micro-history, such as age at first marriage, family size, occupational mobility, inheritance patterns, and the differences between the population of the rural areas and the town of Brampton, Gagan did not follow his out-migrants and like Katz accepted the assumption that physical mobility did not result in social mobility.

Two micro-studies on Nova Scotian communities dealt with motivation but from a different perspective. Debra McNabb studied the settlement patterns in the Township of Horton, King's County by focusing on the behaviour of the settlers in acquiring land in the eighteenth century.⁶³ She identified two main motivations exhibited by the New Englanders who colonized Horton: an attempt to gain security and prosperity through a sizeable family farm and to gain status

Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

⁶² Gagan, p. 96.

⁶³ Debra Anne McNabb, "Land and Families in Horton Township, N. S. 1760-1830," M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1986, and Debra McNabb, "The Role of the Land...."

in the new community.⁶⁴ Her findings indicated that the settlers' behaviour implied that they were motivated by goals related to individual and family acquisition at first but eventually they became more community oriented. Like McNabb, Rusty Bittermann, in his study of Middle River, Victoria County, concentrated on the social inequality created through the settlement process.⁶⁵ He found that the first settlers were usually better able to meet their needs than those who came later, creating a clear economic hierarchy.

The bulk of these studies concentrated on the early settlement phase of development or the growth period. One important study that concentrated on a community in its 'mature' stage was Hal S. Barron's analysis of Chelsea, Vermont.⁶⁶ Barron postulated that, in contrast to the continuous change inherent in pioneer rural societies and urban societies, older rural areas reached a kind of equilibrium.⁶⁷ Barron's results appeared to confirm Wilbert L. Anderson's contention in his 1906 publication, The Country Town: A Study of Rural Evolution, that out-migration from the country came from both the top and bottom of society, leaving the middle class behind. Barron found that two-thirds of

⁶⁴ McNabb, 1988, p. 6.

⁶⁵ Rusty Bittermann, "Middle River: The Social Structure of Agriculture in a Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton Community," M.A. Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1985; "The Hierarchy of the Soil: Land and Labour in a 19th Century Cape Breton Community," Acadiensis 18 (1988), p. 45.

⁶⁶ Hal A. Barron, Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

household heads and three-fourths of farm operators remained in Chelsea, Vermont from 1860 to 1880. He also concluded that age was one of the most important factors in selective out-migration, as those under thirty were less persistent than those over thirty. His findings illustrated that "any wealth, whether it was a farm, or other real estate, or personal property, was associated with greater persistence," and, except for the richest group, "persistence rates increased as the level of wealth went up."⁶⁸ Although Barron found that concerns for family and community were a central feature of Chelsea life,⁶⁹ he believed that these were not incompatible with commercial agriculture and the capitalist market economy.⁷⁰ His final conclusion was that the process of out-migration had left Chelsea, at the beginning of the twentieth century, "a remarkably homogeneous and like-minded community," with few class, ethnic, or ideological conflicts dividing the residents.⁷¹

Even when it was not directly addressed in these micro-studies, the subject of human motivations intruded. Hal Barron claimed that "concern for the family line and the central role that the family continued to play in older rural communities," resembled the mentalité attributed to "early" settlements.⁷² In her

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 97.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 106.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 112.

⁷² Ibid., p. 106.

thesis on Horton Township, McNabb concluded that "[a]cquisitiveness was the motor of colonization and formed the central tendency in the mentalité of the settlers who founded these communities."⁷³ Gagan put forth the idea that people moved because they held the mistaken idea that moving on was equivalent to moving up. People were motivated to move by the belief that there was a relationship between physical mobility and economic upward mobility.⁷⁴ Bittermann illustrated how the Middle River farmers exhibited a materialist mentalité by their export of farm products in the 1840's, while their neighbours were starving.⁷⁵ Katz recognized that behaviour often reflected family and individual motivation. For example, in regard to migration, he recognized that: "children usually accompany their parents; people in their late teens and early twenties often strike out on their own in search of jobs, in pursuit of education, or to accompany or join a spouse. People with families usually are more settled; and old people simply do not move around very much if they can help it."⁷⁶

Several studies have illustrated the difficulties with using class as an organizing principle because of the difficulty, at the micro level, of establishing the class position of any individual, family, or group. Rusty Bittermann found that farmers from all economic levels worked away from their farms as wage

⁷³ McNabb, 1986, p. 106.

⁷⁴ Gagan, p. 96.

⁷⁵ Bittermann, 1988, p. 46.

⁷⁶ Katz, p. 114.

labourers in the first half of the nineteenth century. Even the most affluent and “capitalist” farmers, who often employed labour themselves, were at times drawn toward wage opportunities.⁷⁷

In an early twentieth century Cape Breton village, Constance P. deRoche discovered that workers often moved from the ownership of their own business, to wage labour, and back again. She argues that during economic recessions these people were most likely to establish businesses but in boom times they would close their operations, lay-off their employees, and become wage-earners themselves.⁷⁸

Cecilia Danysk suggests that even on the Canadian prairies, where it might be expected that the ownership of a farm would have a major impact on the relations between farmers and their hired help, class analysis was difficult to apply. She discovered that in the late nineteenth century, relations between farmers and their help were heavily influenced by the fact that the employers considered their employees as eventual farmers. This placed the farm labourer on a more equal footing with his employer and allowed him to identify with the employer. Most farmers had gone through a period when they had worked for others. As a result, they considered their employees farmers-in-waiting, whose

⁷⁷ Rusty Bittermann, “Farm Households and Wage Labour in the Northeastern Maritimes in the Early 19th Century,” in Daniel Samson, ed., Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada 1800-1950, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1994), p. 64.

⁷⁸ Constance P. DeRoche, Doing Something to Help Yourself: A Village Work History, (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton, 1984), pp. 66-67.

status would eventually be equivalent to their own.⁷⁹

None of the aforementioned theories studied seemed to provide a perfect model for application elsewhere. They could be applied to specific aspects of social development but they were too rigid for comprehensive use in the case study which follows. The difficulty of employing these concepts for a family-based community study derives largely from the problem of moving from a macro to micro-level perspective. The former studies look at issues from a distance. But as we move closer and closer, we discover that the patterns that seemed apparent from a distance become dimmer and more obscure. These theories also concentrate on evaluating society from the top down. They analyse social change through the lens of a controlling group or elite. At the micro level we need a new theoretical framework, one which explores community and household from the bottom up.

Searching for a New Theoretical Framework

The central problem of the analytical theories that have been developed for evaluating social change has been that they try to describe the broad picture before understanding the component parts. Both the theories and the methodologies that have developed from them have provided only partial

⁷⁹ Cecilia Danysk, Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1995), pp. 25-37.

overviews of social change. To find the underlying dynamics of that change we need a closer examination of the various elements that make up the whole social microcosm. Understanding the parts is essential for understanding the operation of the whole.

In order to reach an understanding of society we need to examine its main building block: the family. The establishment of family groupings had one overriding purpose and that was survival. Survival of the individual, the group and the species, required both reproduction and a method of providing the basic essentials for life. This reality governed a series of mechanisms that developed to reach that goal. The interaction of human beings was required for reproduction and the family was established as a unit for protection, production, and support. Particular aspects of family living, such as gender roles, emerged to help organize family strategies for survival.⁸⁰

The term family used throughout this study refers to the functional family, or to the domestic household, which operated for the benefit of the unit and individuals within that unit. The most common form of family, as Laslett and others have found, consists of parents and their offspring, but in many cases other kinfolk and occasionally unrelated individuals became part of the

⁸⁰ Robert F. Winch and Rae Lesser Blumberg, "Societal Complexity and Familial Organization", in Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick, Family in Transition: Rethinking Marriage, Sexuality, Child Rearing and Family Organization, (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1971), pp. 122-144; Sherwood L Washburn and Irven Devore, "The Social Behaviour of Baboons and Early Man," in Skolnick and Skolnick, pp. 39-43; Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Family," pp. 333-357.

household by sharing living space and engaging in social interaction.

Geographical theories such as frontierism, staples, and metropolitanism have tended to take human agency out of the process of social change. Change, they suggest, was determined by geographical forces beyond the control and influence of human actors. Modernization and class theories recognized human agency, but often betray a leaning toward elitist determinism. Those who accepted modernization as their framework saw the capitalist system as one in which the most capable rose to the top and directed change in a way that was most beneficial to all. Those who accepted class as their central focus agreed with the underlying assumptions of modernization except they portrayed the system as being dominated by exploiters who used predatory means to achieve their position. Both frameworks tended to reduce the bulk of society to automatons.

Historians who have conducted micro-studies have found these frameworks inadequate because they do not allow for the subtlety of motivation and behaviour which emerges from detailed empirical research. What historians such as Danysk, Bittermann, and DeRoche have found is that when viewed close-up, families and individuals maintained considerable control over their lives and thus could exercise discretion with respect to the shaping of their lives.

If we assume that the central goals of family living is survival then families must adopt strategies to reach that goal. They have to procreate and then supply food and protection, thereby meeting physiological needs. Families also

have to help the individual member satisfy basic psychological needs such as love, a sense of belonging, and personal self-esteem.⁸¹ As children mature, and therefore need less physical and psychological nurturing, the family unit usually helps prepare them to go out on their own through training and encouragement designed to build up the skills and contacts required to establish families of their own.

Families have two basic general goals: to advance the collective household interests, while also attending to the well-being of individuals within the household. These two goals are sometimes in conflict, and the overall success of a domestic unit depends on how well these conflicts are reconciled. Given this dynamic, families often adopt a complex set of strategies designed to achieve a hierarchy of objectives. The process is not rigid or clear cut. Generally, issues are worked out gradually over time, often on an ad hoc basis, and in many cases the end result is not satisfactory to everyone. Many different factors, both internal to the family and external, influence domestic planning. Elements of this process can be seen in some of the micro-studies mentioned earlier.

Katz's study of Hamilton shows that the daughters of the wealthy were able to stay at home, while daughters of the poor had to work to provide for

⁸¹ See Abraham H. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 2nd ed., 1970).

themselves.⁸² The family dynamic in poorer families determined that scarce resources could be stretched by having older children leave the family home and support themselves or, through their employment, assist the family by contributing to its support. In David Gagan's study of rural Peel County, Ontario, he outlined strategies used by parents to maintain their own security while providing for the next generation. Here fathers transferred land to their sons but, at the same time, insured their own security and that of their wives by using a system of contracting with their heirs to provide them with the necessities of life.⁸³ Debra McNabb identified the goals of her Horton families as gaining security and prosperity through a sizeable family farm.⁸⁴ Bittermann recounted an incident during the 1840's when people who had food talked of moving to the United States so that the little they had would not be devoured by the hungry.⁸⁵ This initiative was designed to protect the family, its members, and its resources.

In order to understand why families selected the strategies they did it is important to understand the environment in which they operated. Variations in external conditions often required different responses, and similar responses were often used to deal with different conditions. To understand the variety of

⁸² Ibid., p. 284.

⁸³ David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 51.

⁸⁴ Debra McNabb, "The Role of the Land....," p. 151.

⁸⁵ Bittermann, "Hierarchy," p. 46.

responses something needs to be known about the overall context in which families lived. It is with this in mind that we will look at Atlantic Canada in the nineteenth century.

Rural Atlantic Canada in the Nineteenth Century

“Diverse” is the one word that describes the rural world of Atlantic Canada in the nineteenth century. That diversity was largely a result of the rate of settlement, which was in turn determined by other factors, including geography, soils, climate, and the technology available to develop resources. The diversity in the region, coupled with a limited historiography, makes it difficult to draw generalizations about the region.

The Atlantic region of Canada was the homeland of various first nations for centuries before the first European settlements were established in the early years of the seventeenth century. Early attempts at settlement by Europeans had varying levels of success, but in spite of difficulties, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the region had a population estimated at around 100,000.⁸⁶ By the mid-nineteenth century the flow of immigrants into the area had slowed to a trickle and most population growth was a result of natural increase. The long settlement process, covering more than three hundred years, meant that by mid-century some families were still in the pioneer stage of development, while

⁸⁶ Graeme Wynn, “1800-1810, Turning the Century,” in The Atlantic Region to Confederation, Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 212.

families in other areas had been settled for generations and lived in well-developed communities. The maturity of the region was reflected in the growth of movements for political reform.⁸⁷

Areas close to the in-shore fishing grounds received early settlement. These included the south and north-east coasts of Newfoundland, as well as the south-east coast of Cape Breton. The best and most accessible agricultural areas, such as the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, the St. John River Valley in New Brunswick, and central Prince Edward Island, attracted the earliest farming settlements. Areas in which farming could be combined with other economic activities, such as fishing or lumbering, also received early settlement. Those included the Upper St. John River Valley in New Brunswick, and Lunenburg and Pictou Counties in Nova Scotia.

The most difficult of the nineteenth-century communities to explore are those dependent on the sea, not only because there are gaps in our knowledge but also because recent research suggests that there was far more diversity in the local experience than was first thought. Rosemary Ommer's study of the Robin Company of Gaspé of Quebec makes a major contribution to our knowledge of fishing communities. Ommer discovered that the fisheries in much of the Gaspé were under the monopsonistic control of the company for more than one hundred years. The company was able to control the resource by

⁸⁷ Ian Ross Robertson, "The 1850s: Maturity and Reform," in The Atlantic Region to Confederation, pp. 333-359.

constantly adapting to the changing economic environment. However, during the 1880s the company became too dependent on one source of credit. This led to its collapse in 1886.⁸⁸ Although Quebec is not one of the Atlantic provinces, the Gaspé region is part of the Atlantic ecosystem and shared many of its socio-economic characteristics. Unlike most parts of Newfoundland, fishermen were able to grow much of their own food, making it possible for them to decrease their dependence on the company.⁸⁹ In Newfoundland, as well as on the Gaspé, the prosecution of the fisheries had evolved from a system in which large companies hired 'servants' on wages to a system in which 'independent' resident fishermen purchased both household and enterprise supplies on credit from a merchant, who took their output to pay for the purchases.⁹⁰ During periods when there were supply or market problems or a combination of both, merchants were often unable to carry the debts of the fishermen. Once credit was curtailed hardship descended on those within the system.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Rosemary E. Ommer, From Outpost to Outport: A Structural Analysis of the Jersey-Gaspé Cod Fishery, 1767-1886, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill University Press, 1991), pp. 182-185.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 88.

⁹⁰ Patricia Thornton, "The Transition from the Migratory to the Resident Fisher in the Strait of Belle Isle," in Rosemary Ommer, ed., Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1990), pp. 138-166.

⁹¹ David A. MacDonald, "They Cannot Pay us in Money: Newman and Company and the Supplying System in the Newfoundland Fishery, 1855-1884," Acadiensis XIX:1 (1989), pp. 142-156.

These supply and marketing problems, the result of an unreliable resource base, coupled with a changing international environment,⁹² created a situation in which it was necessary for all participants to make constant adaptations. Inflexibility could result in the insolvency of a business, forced migration, or even starvation. Fishing families were constantly at risk because of their exposure to the fickle nature of fish, international politics, and markets but most found creative and successful ways of adapting to circumstances.⁹³ Several historians have illustrated the strategies employed. Robert M. Lewis discovered that the planters who had acted as middlemen between the merchants and the fishermen had not disappeared by 1840, as other historians had claimed. Instead they had altered their activities by hiring others, who accepted a share of the catch as payment for their labour. This meant that the 'planter' survived into the twentieth century.⁹⁴ David A. MacDonald illustrated how the Newman Company tried to innovate by restricting and eventually eliminating credit but the strategy failed and the company folded.⁹⁵ One of the best illustrations of successful adaptation was the transition from a migratory to resident fishery in

⁹² Shannon Ryan, Fish Out of Water: The Newfoundland Saltfish Trade, 1814-1914, (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1986).

⁹³ Shannon Ryan, "The Industrial Revolution and the Newfoundland Seal Fishery," International Journal of Maritime History IV:2 (1992), pp. 1-43.

⁹⁴ Robert M. Lewis, "The Survival of the Planters' Fishery in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Newfoundland," in Ommer, Merchant Credit..., pp. 102-113.

⁹⁵ MacDonald, pp. 142-156.

the Strait of Belle Isle.⁹⁶ This shift was fuelled by young men's need to establish themselves and form families. 'Servants' in the fisheries could provide themselves with food and clothing through their work, but their contracts dictated that their purpose was to serve their employer, a 'job description' that precluded the service to personal family needs. To satisfy personal needs, they had to separate from the fishing companies and set themselves up as independent fishermen, who were released from private, if not economic, service to the company. In this way they could engage in family formation. For them, the economic security of wages was not adequate to compensate for non-fulfilment of other basic life-style requirements, such as a home and family environment.

Insight into how individual fishing families adapted to the uncertainty of their environment also comes from other studies on late nineteenth and early twentieth century communities. In her exploration of the gender division of labour in fishing communities, Marilyn Porter discovered several strategies that helped families survive⁹⁷. Women and children cared for animals, planted and maintained gardens, picked berries and made preserves, selling the surplus for extra income. They also made clothes for the family.

Rosemary Ommer dealt with similar issues for Newfoundland families in

⁹⁶ Thornton, "The transition...."

⁹⁷ Marilyn Porter, "'She Was Skipper of the Shore-Crew': Notes on the Sexual Division of Labour in Newfoundland," Labour/Le Travail 15 (1985), pp. 105-123.

the early twentieth century.⁹⁸ However, Ommer described the process of adaptation as a mercantile solution “to encourage the labour force to blend commercial and non-commercial activities, because this ensured year-round settlement as cheaply as possible, with the merchant providing essential supplies on credit to a labour force that otherwise supported itself by subsistence production.” This interpretation tends to support the position taken by Gerald Sider, who depicts Newfoundland as a two-class society with a relatively homogeneous fishing class exploited by an equally homogeneous merchant class.⁹⁹ Sean Cadigan disputes this view. He portrays the fishing folk as people successfully struggling to find ways to deal with the problem of the fishing industry, while limited by the low potential for agriculture in Newfoundland.¹⁰⁰ In Newfoundland, the inadequacy of the land for farming and the climate relegated agriculture to a minor position. However, the keeping of a few animals and the planting of small gardens helped prevent a total dependence on the fishery, although few areas were able to engage commercial

⁹⁸ Rosemary E. Ommer, “Merchant Credit and the Informal Economy: Newfoundland, 1919-1929,” Historical Papers: A Selection From the Papers Presented at the Annual Meeting Held at Quebec, 1989, pp. 167-189.

⁹⁹ Gerald M. Sider, “The ties that bind: culture and agriculture, property and propriety in the Newfoundland village fishery,” Social History 5:1 (1980), pp. 1-39.

¹⁰⁰ Sean T. Cadigan, Hope and Deception in Conception Bay: Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland, 1785-1855, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 163.

agriculture.¹⁰¹

One of main deficiencies in research on fishing families has been the neglect of hierarchy within outport communities. If, as Lewis suggests, the planters or "middle class" fishermen did not disappear and not all fishermen were equally as indebted to merchants,¹⁰² then more research is required to determine whether fishermen were equally 'exploited' by merchants. If the system was as exploitive as some of the researchers suggest, the outport merchants must have experienced an exceedingly lonely existence where their wealth and material standard of living separated them from the society in which they resided. However, Cadigan's research indicates that outport merchants often received support from the other residents.¹⁰³ It appears likely that in isolated communities such as these, a sense of community was extremely important to everyone.

The picture of Atlantic Canada's coastal countryside is far from complete. If research on Newfoundland is inadequate, the research on outports in the

¹⁰¹ Sean Cadigan, "The Staple Model Reconsidered: The Case of Agriculture Policy in Northeast Newfoundland, 1785-1855," Acadiensis XXI:2 (1992), 48-71; Marilyn Porter, "She Was Skipper of the Shore-Crew," pp. 105-123; John J. Mannion, Point Lance in Transition: The Transformation of a Newfoundland Outport, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976).

¹⁰² Rosemary E. Ommer, "The Truck System in Gaspé, 1822-77," Acadiensis 19 (1989), p. 107.

¹⁰³ Cadigan, (1995), p. 117.

Maritimes is virtually non-existent.¹⁰⁴ This is particularly true for the Acadian fisheries,¹⁰⁵ which were central to the Acadian work experience.

Ship building and trading have been debated more extensively in the Atlantic region than fishing. These enterprises increased during the first half of the nineteenth century but historians have divided this sector into two separate industries: long-distance, or ocean-going, trade and coastal trade. The coastal trade depended on short-haul routes along the coast of North America and as far as the West Indies. Vessels active in this trade were generally under one hundred and fifty tons and included schooners, brigantines, sloops, shallops, and ketches.¹⁰⁶ Those under fifty tons were mainly fishing vessels.¹⁰⁷ Vessels

¹⁰⁴ A few historians have examined certain aspects of the Maritime nineteenth fishing industry but there is little published material that addresses the major social issues. See, for example, B. A. Balcom, History of the Lunenburg Fishing, (Lunenburg: Lunenburg Marine Museum Society, 1977); L. Gene Barrett, "Underdevelopment and Social Movements in the Nova Scotia Fishing Industry to 1938," in Robert J. Brym and R. James Sacouman, eds., Underdevelopment and Social Movements in Atlantic Canada, (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1979), pp. 127-160.

¹⁰⁵ Nicholas Landry, "Acadian Fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia in the Nineteenth Century," in Dorothy E. Moore and James H. Morrison, eds., Work, Ethnicity, and Oral History, (Halifax: International Education Centre, 1988), 55-61, points out this fact and stresses how the pattern of fisheries development in Southwest Nova differed from the Gaspé and other parts of the Atlantic region.

¹⁰⁶ Eric W. Sager and Lewis R. Fischer, "Atlantic Canada and the Age of Sail Revisited," Canadian Historical Review LXIII:2 (1982), p. 127.

¹⁰⁷ David Alexander and Gerry Panting, "The Mercantile Fleet and its Owners: Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, 1840-1889," in P. A. Buckner and David Frank, eds., The Acadiensis Reader: Atlantic Canada Before Confederation, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1985), p. 316.

between 50 and 249 tons could be used in the coastal trade,¹⁰⁸ although there was considerable overlap in usage for the larger vessels in this category between short-haul and long-haul shipping. It is estimated that forty per cent of the entire shipping industry in the nineteenth century was involved in the coastal trade. The St. John's, Newfoundland fleet, the sixth largest in the Atlantic region, was almost totally composed of these vessels.¹⁰⁹

The ocean going trade and its concomitant ship-building sector has been more widely studied than the coastal trade. Most ocean trade was dominated by the larger ports of Halifax and Saint John. However, the building of ships for both sectors was carried on in many of the smaller ports. The value of linkages from these sectors for rural areas has been widely debated. Eric Sager argues that many of the inputs and the capital came from Britain, an argument that had been used extensively to suggest that ship-building created few spin-offs for the rest of economy. However, Sager claimed that local linkages did exist: "Farmers provided labour, timber, foodstuffs, and other inputs in shipbuilding, and the industry became part of the seasonal round of activity in a society characterized by occupational pluralism."¹¹⁰ What is evident is that both ship-building and coastal trading were important activities for the rural population of the Atlantic region.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Sager and Fischer, p. 129.

¹¹⁰ Eric Sager, Maritime Capital, p. 180.

Although there is a wider range of material available on the farming countryside in the Atlantic region, there are still major deficiencies, especially for rural Prince Edward Island. Apart from the problems generated by a land system that left ownership in the hands of absentee proprietors, the story of Prince Edward Island farmers has been largely untold. However, what is available suggests that Prince Edward Island had as much diversity as the other provinces.¹¹¹

New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had much more diversified economies than did Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. The forestry industry in New Brunswick provided an important staple for trade that helped develop agriculture¹¹² and other sectors of the rural economy, such as ship building and milling. In Nova Scotia the fishing industry and the coal mines served a similar function. Both provinces developed fisheries, lumbering, as well as some mining and manufacturing but farming was the most important economic activity in the nineteenth century, not only because more workers in the region claimed

¹¹¹ Rusty Bittermann, "Farm Households and Wage Labour in the North-eastern Maritimes in the early 19th Century," in Daniel Samson, ed., Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800-1950, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1994), p. 41.

¹¹² Beatrice Craig, "Agriculture in a Pioneer Region: The Upper St. John River Valley in the first half of the 19th Century," in Kris Inwood, ed., Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic History of the Maritime Provinces, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1993), pp. 17-36; Graeme Wynn, "'Deplorable Dark and Demoralized Lumberers,'? Rhetoric and Reality in Early Nineteenth-Century New Brunswick," Journal of Forest History 24:4 (Oct, 1980), pp. 168-187.

to be farmers than any other occupation but also because it provided about one-half of all production.¹¹³ The central position of farming in the countryside was linked closely to the need for family security. Daniel Samson, in his introduction to Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800-1950, summed up the relationship between access to resources and security this way:

What marked life for country people - and defined it as rural life - was their ability to exploit the land or the sea to produce for themselves a major part of their subsistence either directly (as food, shelter and clothing) or indirectly through exchange, and their ability to obtain some measure of independence - derived from either their own resources or resources from which access was not restricted in this way - at least deferring full dependence on wage labour. Many urban households also worked toward independence, but their capacity for self-reliance usually was much more limited.¹¹⁴

If security was their goal, not all within rural Atlantic Canada in the nineteenth-century were able to achieve it. In Middle River, Victoria County, Hardwood Hill, Pictou County, and in the Acadian settlements of Richmond County, Nova Scotia, and on the upper St. John River, at Wakefield and St. David's in New Brunswick, there was a wide variety in the ability of residents to achieve their

¹¹³ Kris Inwood and Phyllis Wagg, "Wealth and Prosperity in Nova Scotian Agriculture, 1851-71," The Canadian Historical Review LXXV:2 (1994), p. 257.

¹¹⁴ Daniel Samson, Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800-1950, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1994), p. 26.

goals from the land, sea, and forest.¹¹⁵ According to Graeme Wynn, contemporary commentators described Nova Scotian farmers during the mid-nineteenth century as running the gamut from the half-lumberer-half-farmer of a new country to those who practised some of the principles of formal and scientific husbandry.¹¹⁶

The Atlantic provinces of the nineteenth century was a region full of contradictions. Affluence lived next door to poverty. Relative independence resided alongside total dependency on the resources of others. Some of the most up to date technology was applied, while neighbouring enterprises were still using primitive methods. Understanding the reasons for this diversity requires a better understanding of the region's social history. The best way to achieve insight is to take a closer look at the individuals, families, and communities that made up the Atlantic region. This study proposes to examine one small Nova Scotia county in which farming, fishing, and seafaring employed the majority of the population. The diversity of this county reflected the diversity

¹¹⁵ Rusty Bittermann, Robert A. MacKinnon, and Graeme Wynn, "Of Inequality and Interdependence in the Nova Scotian Countryside, 1850-70," Canadian Historical Review LXXIV:1 (1993), pp. 1-43; Phyllis Wagg, "Stratification in Acadian Society: Nineteenth Century Richmond County," La société historique acadienne: les cahiers 23:3 and 4 (1992), pp. 158-167; T. W. Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture at the End of the Colonial Era: A Reassessment" in Inwood, Farm, Factory and Fortune..., pp. 37-60; Beatrice Craig, "Agriculture in a Pioneer Region ...," in Inwood, pp. 17-36.

¹¹⁶ Graeme Wynn, "Exciting a Spirit of Emulation Among the 'plodholes': Agricultural Reform in Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia," Acadiensis XX:1 (1990), p. 7.

of the Atlantic region itself, but like the rest of Atlantic Canada, its one unifying element was the family.

This study proposes to look at Richmond County, Nova Scotia, from the perspective of its families and the strategies these families employed for reaching their collective and individual goals in the period 1871 to 1901. Chapters 1 to 3 will consider county families from the perspective of their history and the wider demographic changes that were taking place in the County. Chapters 4 to 6 focuses on families and the specific strategies they employed to reach their goal of providing for the needs of the unit and its component parts.

In Chapter 1, the settlement and the development of the Richmond County to 1871 is discussed. Chapter 2 looks at how the population made a living and explores the relationship between the prices they received for their products and what they had to pay for consumer goods. Chapter 3 considers the general structure of the population and analyses demographic change between 1871 and 1901. Chapter 4 explores the formation of families to determine the shifting blend of continuity and change within rural households. Chapter 5 examines persistency and out-migration, focusing on evolving family strategies as Richmond County entered a stage of mature development. Chapter 6 examines hierarchy within the County and explores the relationship between inheritance and social mobility. The conclusion is designed to draw together these elements and try to place Richmond County into the history of the Atlantic region and of North America through the history of its families.

Chapter 1

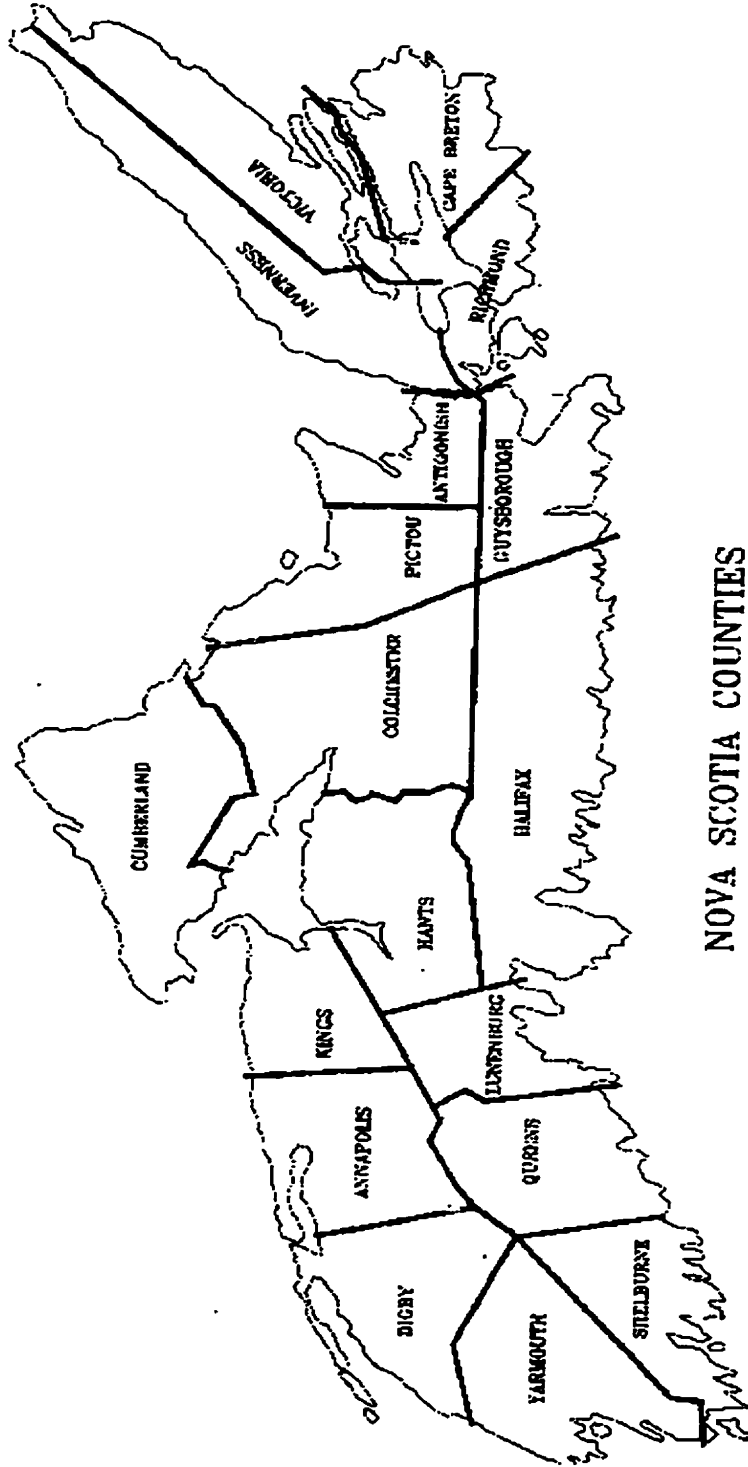
Setting the Stage

This chapter is designed to provide an overview of the geography, the origins of Richmond County families, and the development of the County up to 1871, in order to place the events of the last three decades of the nineteenth century in their historical context. Here the purpose will be above all to present Richmond County as a community which, by mid-century, had moved beyond a frontier stage of development, to what might be considered as a condition of maturity.

The area selected for this study is a small municipality on the southwestern corner of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, covering an area of 1,230.2 square kilometres (map 1).¹ The terrain is one of low relief with the highest elevation, 180 metres, occurring in the uplands of a range of hills bordering the Bras d'Or Lakes, called Sporting Mountain.² A second range of hills borders the lake in the Johnstown-Irish Cove areas but the remainder of the area is characterized by lowlands.

¹ Nova Scotia Statistical Services Branch, Richmond County Statistical Profile, October, 1981, p. 3.

² Albert E. Roland, Geographical Background and Physiography of Nova Scotia, (Halifax: Nova Scotian Institute of Science, 1982), p. 251.



NOVA SCOTIA COUNTIES

MAP 1

The County is almost severed in two parts near St. Peters, where an isthmus barely quarter of a mile wide separates the Bras d'Or Lakes from the Atlantic Ocean. In 1864 work began on a canal from the lake to the ocean, which was completed a couple of years later but widened and deepened in 1875-1876.³ The County's other two main waterways are River Inhabitants, in the Western part of the County and Grand River, in the Eastern Section. Isle Madame, just off the western section of the County, was one of the first areas settled.

The main indigenous population was a band of Micmacs who roamed Cape Breton Island. It is difficult to determine how large this population was before the coming of the Europeans because no major archaeological research has been carried out. By the time permanent European settlement was taking place, it appears that the aboriginal population was small. The first clearly recorded European attempt at settlement was that of a French trader, Nicholas Denys, who established a trading post at St. Peters around 1650. This experiment at settlement was beset by problems because of the competing interests that claimed the area in which the post was located. The final setback was a fire that destroyed Denys' trading post⁴ and its existence left no major impact on the geography.

³ John Morrison, Esq., "St. Peter's Canal," Bras d'Or Gazette, 2 May 1896.

⁴ Nicholas Denys, Description géographique des Costes de l'amérique septentrionale, reprinted by the Champlain Society, 1908, introduction and translation by W. G. Ganong.

In 1713, by the Treaty of Utrecht, France ceded the mainland of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland to the British. This left the French with what is now Prince Edward Island, which they called Ile St. Jean, and Cape Breton Island, which they renamed Ile Royale. Although the Acadians were encouraged to move from Nova Scotia to the French territories, their reluctance to leave their fertile farms in the Annapolis region, combined with the reluctance of the British officials to allow a major addition to the population of the rival French colonies, resulted in the slow growth of the Acadian population on Ile Royale.⁵ Although the French officials at Louisbourg wanted the Acadians to settle in other parts of the island, those who did come in 1714 generally preferred to settle around St. Peters, and on Isle Madame.⁶ Initially they thought the fishing was good there but when the fishery failed in 1715, most returned to Acadia.⁷ The reason that St. Peters was selected by the next group of settlers is not clear but it appears that the bulk of this group were coastal traders hoping to provide supplies to the Fortress at Louisbourg. A proportion of this trade was illegal. St. Peters and the

⁵ Bernard Pothier, "Acadian Settlement on Ile Royale 1713-1734," M. A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Ottawa, 1967; Bernard Pothier, "Acadian Emigration to Ile Royale After the Conquest of Acadia," Histoire Sociale – Social History 6 (1970), pp. 116-131; Rameau de St. Père, France aux Colonies, (Paris: A. Jouby, 1859) chapter VI; Sally Ross and Alphonse Deveau, The Acadians of Nova Scotia: Past and Present, (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1992), pp. 114-115.

⁶ J. S. McLennan, Louisbourg: from its foundation to its fall, (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd, 1918), p. 19; Pothier, "Acadian Settlement...", p. 32.

⁷ Pothier, p. 33.

surrounding coastline provided secluded havens for the transferral of contraband goods to Acadian coastal traders from New England and Nova Scotia.⁸ As well, the forests around the Bras d'Or Lakes near St. Peters provided a good supply of forest products for building vessels, other construction materials⁹ and firewood.¹⁰

Although the capture of Louisbourg in 1745 by New England forces aided by British sea power, and its subsequent return to France in 1748, disrupted the colonists,¹¹ by the time of a French census taken in 1752 most of them had returned.¹² The political events in Nova Scotia that eventually led to the expulsion of the Acadians brought additional settlers from the mainland.¹³ By 1752, according to Thomas Pichon, a British spy, the residents of Port Toulouse supplied Louisbourg with most of its provisions, built boats and small vessels, cut fire-wood in winter, traded furs with the natives, made maple syrup, farmed and "kept a sufficient quantity of cattle and poultry."¹⁴

⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

⁹ Ibid., p. 96 and pp. 121-123.

¹⁰ Thomas Pichon, Genuine Letters and Memoirs, (London: J. Nourse, 1760), p. 40.

¹¹ Rameau, p. 72.

¹² Sieur de la Roche Census, Archives of Canada Report, Sessional Paper No. 18, pp. 8-38, 1906.

¹³ Ross and Deveau, p. 116.

¹⁴ Pichon, p. 40.

Settlement was again disrupted in 1758 when the British captured Louisbourg for the second time. This time, however, by the Treaty of Paris in 1763 the colony came under the control of Britain and Cape Breton became a part of the British colony of Nova Scotia. Although orders were given to clear the settlers from both Cape Breton Island and Prince Edward Island, as early as 1765 Acadian settlements were again forming on Isle Madame and at L'Ardoise.¹⁵ However, the dislocations of the war had changed settlement patterns. During the British invasion the Acadian establishments at Port Toulouse and other settlements had been destroyed, their boats, shore equipment and houses burned but most of the inhabitants had escaped.¹⁶ After the expulsion of the Acadians from their settlements on Cape Breton Island in 1758 some of them, especially those from the southern part of the island, divided into small groups so that the British authorities would not consider them a threat and survived by a nomadic existence of hunting and fishing.¹⁷ A major catalyst for the resettlement of Cape Breton Acadians was the Channel Island mercantile

¹⁵ McLennan, p. 290; PANS, RG 20, Series B, Calendar of Cape Breton Land Papers, especially petition nos. 1428, 1435, 1801, and 2045.

¹⁶ Diary of Dudley Bradstreet, Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society XI, second series (1896-1897), p. 427; "Notes On The Early History Of Arichat," Richmond County Record, 3 Sep. 1960.

¹⁷ Stephen A. White, "The Arichat Frenchmen in Gloucester: Problems of Identification and Identity," New England Genealogical Society Quarterly, April, 1977, p. 84; "Notes On The Early History of Arichat," Richmond County Record, 3 Sep. 1960.

houses that were anxious to take over the lucrative fisheries that the French had been forced to abandon. One of these companies, generally referred to as the Robin Company,¹⁸ wanted to use the Acadian workforce to establish profitable trading ventures.¹⁹ The bilingual entrepreneurs who owned and operated these companies had close ties with officials in Britain and were willing to use their influence to secure permission for the Acadians to stay, return, and resettle. At first farming and hunting was a major feature of their plans but they were faced with opposition from the British colonial officials when they proposed settling the Acadians in one coherent group.²⁰ These officials believed that concentrations of Acadians in one location would provide a threat to the security of the British colony. Unable to secure permission for their proposals, the Channel Island companies turned to the fish trade. The Channel Island merchants were willing to provide the Acadians supplies in return for dried and salted codfish for shipment to markets in the Mediterranean, Brazil, and the West Indies.²¹ Although the arrangement was not ideal for the Acadians, they were able to resettle and establish permanent homes for their families. The results of the war

¹⁸ This company was known under several different names but the name Robin was always prominent.

¹⁹ PANS, RG 1, Vol. 37, p.41; CO 217, Vol. 28, nos. 19 and 20, John Robin to J. & A. G. Lempriere, 23 Mar. 1778.

²⁰ Mason Wade, "After the Grand Dérangement: The Acadians' Return to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and to Nova Scotia," American Review of Canadian Studies 5:1 (1975), p. 43.

had left most of the Acadian settlers with few assets to fight any abuses that the more affluent merchants and their representatives might inflict on them. C. A. Herbin of Arichat described the plight of the fisherman:

In return for the labours of his hazardous calling, risking limb, life and health, he received materials to build a shelter, food, clothing and fishing supplies, but practically no cash until 1841.... His horizon was definitely limited. He had no hope for the future, no say in regulating his masters' treatment of him for profit, no money with which to build better boats and homes. Any surplus he might have at the end of the year was simply credited to his account against the next seasons expenses. Neither he nor his sons had a ghost of a chance of being taken into the service or on the staff of the Jersey traders. They were fishermen and labourers with no opportunity for betterment.²²

However, not all Acadians were as helpless and as exploited as Herbin's description suggests. Well before 1841 some Acadians had secured new coastal vessels and were engaged in coastal trade and records of their involvement date at least back to the 1790's.²³ In fact as early as 1787 P. Babong, probably Pierre Babin,²⁴ was owner and master of the 27 ton schooner

²¹ White, "The Arichat Frenchmen....," p. 84.

²² C. A. Herbin, "Notes on the Early Fishing Industry in Arichat and Isle Madame," The Richmond County Record, 20 Nov. 1960.

²³ CO 217, Vol. 110, p. 53, receipt for payment to Francis Gurion [sic] for carrying despatches from Sydney to Arichat in his Shallop, 17 Aug. 1793; p. 193, at least 15 of the vessels leaving the mines with coal from April to June 1894 had masters with Arichat names, including P. Babin, S. Forest, L. DeRoche, V. Poirier, and J. Landrie.

²⁴ Registre de l'Abbé Charles-François Bailly, 1768 à 1773 (Caraquet), Transcrit sous la direction de Stephen A. White, (Moncton, Nouveau-Brunswick:

"Only Son" built at Arichat and involved in carrying coal from Sydney to Halifax.²⁵

Little secondary information is available for the period from 1763 to 1784 but Cape Breton Island was annexed to Nova Scotia and governed as part of the municipality of Halifax County. No land grants were permitted, although some licenses were granted to both Acadians and traders for land to be used in prosecution of the fisheries.²⁶ In 1784 the British government made Cape Breton a separate colony and the following year Sydney was chosen as the seat of government. This development was partly a response to the demands from loyalists fleeing from the American Revolution for property on which to resettle. Abraham Cuyler, the former Mayor of Albany, New York, was influential in having Cape Breton established as a loyalist colony. It appears that Cuyler was personally responsible for bringing only about 140 loyalists to Cape Breton but others followed by a variety of routes. Nonetheless, it is estimated that no more than 500 loyalists actually settled on the Island.²⁷ About the same time as the first loyalists arrived the newly appointed lieutenant-governor, J. F. W.

Centre d'études acadiennes and Université de Moncton, 1978), p. 59. On July 26, 1771, Pierre Babin stood as godparent in the baptism of several children.

²⁵ CO 217/34, Shipping Returns, pp. 2-3, 15 and 16 Oct. 1787. *Ibid*, p. 5, the same vessel cleared Arichat on 12 Oct. 1787.

²⁶ CO 217, Vol. 195; Extracts from the Licence Books, Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Lands and Forests, 12 Oct. 1763 to 28 Apr. 1768.

²⁷ Robert J. Morgan, "The Loyalists of Cape Breton," in Cape Breton Historical Essays, Don Macgillivray and Brian Tennyson, eds., (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1985), pp. 19-20.

DesBarres, brought 129 settlers with him from Britain. Representatives from these two groups dominated the newly appointed council set up to govern the colony but rivalry between them often resulted in ineffective government. Few other settlers attained a seat on council and difficulties of travel precluded any councillors living outside the Sydney area from attending meetings on a regular basis. The period of colonial rule, from 1784 to 1820, was one filled with political turmoil.²⁸ For the most part the settlers of the South Western district of the Island, later Richmond County, did not become involved in the conflicts²⁹ although they were no doubt affected by the jealousies that abounded in official circles.

Meanwhile, a gradual resettlement process was taking place that saw the return of some Acadian families that had been expelled from Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward Island during the 1750's and early 1760's. The introduction of new families, some of whom had been released from detention in Nova Scotia after the expulsion of the Acadians, and especially some who had returned from New England and France, brought resources and assets that prevented all the Acadians from being exploited by the Channel Island mercantile houses. By 1774 there were 186 residents of French origin living

²⁸ Robert Morgan, "Orphan Outpost: Cape Breton Colony, 1784-1820," Ph. D. Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1972, provides an overview of the problems that beset the Cape Breton colonial government.

²⁹ PANS, RG 1, Vols. 320-323, Minutes of the Council, Sydney, 1785-1820.

around St. Peters Bay, 76 at Petit de Grat and 167 at Arichat.

The existence in Cape Breton of merchants directly tied to Halifax and London concerns, such as Laurence Kavanagh I and his family,³⁰ undermined any hope that one company could achieve a monopoly similar to the Robin Company's monopoly in the Gaspé region of Quebec, as identified by Rosemary Ommer.³¹ However, there is little information on how the competition operated and on whether it prevented the fishermen from becoming as dependent on a company as they were in Gaspé, except that fishermen who were unhappy with their treatment could transfer their accounts from one merchant to another.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century at least three large firms were operating out of St. Peters and Arichat: the Robin Company, the Kavanaghs, and the Janvrin Company, also from the Channel Islands.³² The prominence of the Channel Island merchants and the lifestyle of the agents who represented these companies, created the impression of major inequality between them and the fishermen. Several of the former agents of the large companies, such as Clement Hubert (1765-1850), John Jean (ca. 1783-1849), and Peter deCarteret

³⁰ Phyllis Wagg, "Lawrence Kavanagh I: An Eighteenth Century Cape Breton Entrepreneur," Nova Scotia Historical Review 10:2 (1990), pp. 124-132.

³¹ Rosemary Ommer, "The Truck System in the Gaspé, 1822-1877," in Rosemary Ommer, ed., Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies In Historical Perspective, (Fredericton, N. B.: Acadiensis Press, 1990), pp. 49-78.

³² CO 221/25, Shipping Returns, Cape Breton 1807-1815; PANS, MG 3, Vol. 302, Kavanagh Account Book.

(ca. 1790-ca. 1883), were not only able to become active players in commercial activities but also captured the political and judicial power of the County between 1804 and 1850.³³

It was during the last half of the period of colonial government that rapid changes began to take place on Cape Breton Island and in what was to become Richmond County. The Acadian population was expanding both from natural increase and the arrival of newcomers from France via St. Pierre and Miquelon and some from Quebec and other locations. A few Irish who had arrived following the defeat of the French regime were joined by others. Laurence Kavanagh,³⁴ for example, appears to have been instrumental in attracting his fellow countrymen. In addition to these settlers were some loyalists and a few who had been members of regiments and eligible for free grants, although it appears that only one or two of those who came to Richmond County ever received such grants.³⁵

³³ Sally Ross and Alphonse Deveau, The Acadians of Nova Scotia: Past and Present, (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1992), pp. 120-121. John Jean and Clement Hubert both died in Richmond County, Peter deCarteret returned to Jersey after 1838 but his brothers-in-law Isaac and William LeVesconte carried on the family business interest in Cape Breton.

³⁴ Phyllis Wagg, "Lawrence Kavanagh I: An Eighteenth-Century Cape Breton Entrepreneur," Nova Scotia Historical Review 10:2 (1990), p. 127.

³⁵ The possible exceptions to this were Francis Murphy and Neil Robertson but neither remained in the County. Murphy appears to have been lost at sea on a trip to Europe and Robertson appears to have moved to the Baddeck area of Victoria County. See Robert Morgan, "The Loyalists of Cape Breton," in Brian Tennyson and Don Macgillivray, eds, Cape Breton Historical Essays, (Sydney:

One of the main deterrents to immigration prior to the second decade of the nineteenth century was the policy of the British government regarding allocation of land. Although land grants were allowed during the post-revolutionary war period when loyalists pressured the government for assistance in establishing themselves on Cape Breton Island, the policy changed several times during this period and by 1789 a "Restraining Instruction" was placed on the granting of land on Cape Breton Island. That policy was still in place in 1801 when, in the place of grants, Cape Breton officials were instructed to "allot to any real settlers of good character... suitable portions of Land according to Their respective abilities to improve and cultivate the same which they should be allowed to hold as tenants at the will of the Crown...."³⁶ An instrument called a "Crown Lease" was one document introduced as a method of implementing this policy. While the rights given to individuals under its terms were limited because the tenure was "at the will of the Crown" and the property could not be sold or transferred to the next generation, its implementation increased the demand for land.³⁷ Once grants were re-instituted in the second decade of the century the

University College of Cape Breton Press, 3rd ed., 1985), p. 29.

³⁶ PANS, RG 1, Vol. 320, letter dated Whitehall, 9 May 1801.

³⁷ PANS, RG 1, Vols. 320-323, Minutes of Council, 1801-1820, shows the numbers of petitions for land that resulted from the new policy and the later introduction of actual grants. Although these leases did not provide for a direct ownership of land many of them changed hands several times before they were granted.

volume of requests overwhelmed the land registration system. In order to provide a temporary solution to the volume of requests that were received, other claims to land were also invented, such as a "licence of occupation"³⁸ and a "ticket of location" and even the provision of a "warrant of survey" gave an individual some claim to a piece of property. The temporary remedies were piecemeal, leaving the land situation in Cape Breton confused. The inability of officials and surveyors to handle the demand, and sometimes their ineptitude and dishonesty, left both new settlers and the resident population uncertain as to the legality of their claims.³⁹

Before 1800 the area that became Richmond County developed as a series of communities that were predominantly French-Acadian. A wave of Scottish immigration, beginning about 1810, changed the ethnic composition of the County and placed non-French speaking settlements, in particular on the mainland of the County, adjacent to Gaelic speaking settlements. The tri-lingual nature of the population helped to distribute families into settlements divided on a linguistic basis.

The Development of Communities

³⁸ See for example the petition of Hugh Miller, River Inhabitants, PANS, RG 20, Cape Breton Land Papers, no. 255.

³⁹ Papers in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia recount many of the problems encountered, for example PANS, RG 20, Cape Breton Land Papers, nos. 140, 264, and 514.

Isle Madame developed primarily as a series of Acadian settlements that could be classified into four basic regions or parishes: Petit de Grat, Arichat, Little Arichat (later changed to West Arichat) and D'Escousse.⁴⁰ Although by the 1870's various ethnic and religious groups could be found throughout the census districts, the families of Isle Madame were basically French in origin and Roman Catholic in religion.

Arichat quickly developed as the centre of commerce and the most cosmopolitan section of the County. It was the centre of the mercantile interests, such as the Robin Company, which built its first permanent establishment on Jerseyman's Island in Arichat Harbour about 1766, a time when there were only twelve Acadian families at Arichat all employed by Robin.⁴¹ The growth of the community over the next few years was slow but constant as by 1774 there were 32 families and a population of 237 with 167 of French origin and 66 English Protestants.⁴² During the American War of Independence the Robin

⁴⁰ These four parishes made up the four Census districts from 1871 to 1901. In 1871 there were three Roman Catholic Parishes: Notre Dame de L'Assomption in Arichat, St. Hyacinth in D'Escousse, and Immaculate Conception in West Arichat. Petit de Grat became a separate parish only after the turn of the century and until that time was part of the Arichat Parish. Louisdale, which was founded by families mainly from the Little Anse District of Petit de Grat, was also part of the Arichat parish.

⁴¹ Dr. C. A. Herbin, Articles regarding the ships and history of Arichat, C. B. and its vicinity, from the Richmond County Record, p. 51 and p. 62, Centre d'études acadiennes, Moncton, N. B. According to Herbin the Robin Company began to buy fish at Arichat in 1764.

⁴² CO 217, Vol. 51, p. 26, "A Return of the state of the Isle of Breton," Oct.

establishment on the island was destroyed by privateers and after the war the company rebuilt their premises on the mainland near the village.⁴³ In 1811 Arichat had 99 families, 81.6 per cent of which were of French origin, excluding Channel Islanders. Sixty household heads, making up 56 per cent of those with occupations, were mariners, twelve were yeomen, and nine were fishermen. There were two each of tavern keepers, farmers, blacksmiths, and traders and one priest, a naval officer, an agent for the Janvrin Company, a collector of customs, a doctor, a shoemaker, a tailor and constable, a yeoman and constable, and a tailor.⁴⁴ Although English was probably spoken and much of the business as well as correspondence with the government was in English,⁴⁵ Arichat was still overwhelmingly French.

Petit de Grat was actually a better location for inshore fishermen because its harbour provided a safer refuge for boats than the more open Arichat Harbour but the shallow water at its entrance prevented it from becoming a major shipping port.⁴⁶ By 1774 Petit de Grat had 168 residents but only about 76 were

17, 1774.

⁴³ Herbin, p. 51.

⁴⁴ 1811 Census, in Holland's Description of Cape Breton Island and other Documents, (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia), pp. 139-140 and p. 145.

⁴⁵ All grants, crown leases, deeds, and most wills were in English, both in the Cape Breton County Registry before 1820 and in Richmond County after 1820. Court records, business ledgers, and most correspondence that has been located was in English.

⁴⁶ Herbin, p. 37.

likely permanent, as 92 of them were English Protestants, probably seasonal fisherman.⁴⁷ In 1811 there were 44 families of Acadian origin at Petit de Grat and a total population of 305. Twenty-five heads of household were fishermen and fifteen mariners.⁴⁸ The Petit de Grat district developed as an Acadian fishing community, although a small Irish enclave developed at Rocky Bay around the 1820s.⁴⁹

West Arichat, or Little Arichat as it was first called, developed as an extension of Arichat itself. It was not provided with a separate listing in the 1774 returns for Cape Breton Island but by 1811 it had 48 families and a total population of 347. According to local tradition the main settlement at West Arichat began in 1782, when a group of Acadian families that had settled at River Inhabitants after the dislocations of the 1750's moved over to Isle Madame. At that time there two or three families widely scattered in the district.⁵⁰

However, West Arichat quickly developed as a major base for ship-building and the coastal trade, with 32 of the 44 heads of households in 1811 giving their

⁴⁷ CO 217, Vol. 51, A Return of the Isle of Breton, Oct. 17, 1774, p. 26.

⁴⁸ Census Rolls of Cape Breton Island, 1811, in Holland, p. 142.

⁴⁹ A. A. MacKenzie, The Irish in Cape Breton, (Antigonish: Formac Publishing Company Limited), 1979, pp.39-40.

⁵⁰ S. R. LeBlanc, "History of West Arichat including Port Royal, St. Mary's, and Janvrin's Harbour, " Normal College, Truro, 1911, (available at Centre d'études Acadiennes, Moncton, N.B.), p. 2.

occupations as mariners and only ten as fishermen.⁵¹ By the 1790's the West Arichat mariners were apparently actively engaged in the coal carrying trade from the mines near Sydney to Halifax.⁵²

D'Ecousse was settled in the 1770's by families that had been part of a nomadic group based mainly around Gabarus. In 1768, when a list was compiled of the residents on Cape Breton Island, the names Edward and Thomas McDonald, John Clewly, Francis Joice, Peter Jervois, and Curdo appear among others at Gabarus.⁵³ These families were still at Gabarus in September 1771 when the area was visited by Father Charles-François Bailly but a month later they were at D'Ecousse⁵⁴ and they appear to have formed the nucleus of the D'Escousse settlement in the 1770s, although no separate entry was made for the settlement in 1774. By the time the Loyalists arrived in the 1780s the Acadians appear to have abandoned Gabarus. In 1811 D'Ecousse contained 46 families. Half of these families were headed by mariners, fifteen by

⁵¹ 1811 Census, Holland, p. 141.

⁵² LeBlanc, p. 2; CO 217, Vol. 110, p. 193, Account of Coal Ships, one-half year ending 30 June 1794, at least two of the coastal traders on this list appear to be from West Arichat, J. Landrie and P. Forrest; on a list in Ibid., vol. 111, p. 40, 31 Dec. 1794 the masters M. LeBlanch, J. Landrie, and R. Forrest were all likely from West Arichat.

⁵³ Richard Brown, A History of the Island of Cape Breton, (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing, 1979, first published by Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, London, 1869), p. 368.

⁵⁴ Registre, p. 75 and p. 82.

fishermen, and six were designated as yeomen.⁵⁵

On the mainland two other important Acadian settlements formed in the 1700's: one at L'Ardoise and the other at River Bourgeois. L'Ardoise was the oldest of the two, dating from 1765 when a few families, who appear to have remained on the island, made permanent homes there. These were mainly descendants of Gabriel Samson, who came from Lévis, Quebec, married in Port Royal, Nova Scotia in 1704 and settled at Port Toulouse about 1720 or 1721.⁵⁶ By 1774 there were 167 inhabitants of French origin in the St. Peter's Bay area⁵⁷ and it is likely that most of them were at L'Ardoise. The figures in 1774 suggest that L'Ardoise families were more heavily engaged in farming than the other Cape Breton communities at the time because they had 30 oxen and bulls, 77 cows, 68 young cattle, and 97 swine.⁵⁸ In 1811 there were 34 families at St. Peter's Bay, all of French origin. Seventeen family heads were mariners, eight fishermen, but only three yeomen.⁵⁹

River Bourgeois became an Acadian settlement in 1789,⁶⁰ when several

⁵⁵ 1811 Census, Holland, p. 143.

⁵⁶ Stephen A. White, "Samson," Centre d'études acadiennes, Moncton, N. B.

⁵⁷ CO 217, Vol. 51, p.26.

⁵⁸ Loc. cit.

⁵⁹ 1811 Census, Holland, p. 145.

⁶⁰ PANS, RG 20, Series B, Cape Breton Land Papers, no. 306, Petition of Peter Landree and others, 1807.

families moved over from Isle Madame to take advantage of unclaimed land. In 1811 there were nineteen Acadian families, fourteen of which were headed by fishermen, two were mariners and two yeomen.

It has been generally assumed that the fisheries provided the main opportunity for the first settlers but it was sea-faring that provided a major attraction for Acadians who wanted to improve their conditions. Many of the original Acadian settlers took part in the carrying trade and in 1811 and 1851 more were employed as mariners than as fishermen.⁶¹ In fact, ten of the first sixty-seven emigrants to Cape Breton from Acadia were navigators and thirteen others combined coastal navigation with other occupations.⁶² The growth of coastal trade by the 1790's caused the fishing companies to complain that they were having difficulty getting crews to fish for them.⁶³ The carrying trade, coupled with the fisheries, increased the need for new floating stock and provided the basis for a ship building industry.

Although not one of the two major ethnic groups in Richmond County, the first group of Irish settlers arrived in the late 1700s and the early 1800s and most seem to have come via the fishing industry. During the period from 1750 to 1850 population growth in Ireland, a country made up mainly of tenant farmers,

⁶¹ 1811 Census, Holland, pp. 136-145 and 1851 Census of Nova Scotia.

⁶² Bernard Pothier, "Acadian Emigration to Isle Royale After the Conquest of Acadia," p. 130.

⁶³ CO 217 Vol. 112, p. 47.

meant that the country was quickly approaching the limit of its resources.⁶⁴ One of the methods that the Irish used to ease population pressure was for young men to hire on as indentured servants in the Newfoundland fishery. The fisheries were also used by those with more resources as a means for upward mobility. This group of Irish settlers appear to have come as traders and servants. A second method of coping with the pressure on the land was for young men to become artisans. However, by 1801 industrialization in England made inexpensive goods available, undermining the ability of artisans to make a living.⁶⁵ Many of the artisans who had sufficient resources to emigrate came to North America. Some of the Irish who arrived in Richmond County in the 1820s and 1830s appear to have belonged to this group.

By the first decade of the nineteenth century Scots began their settlement. Some may have come via Sydney, the only official port of entry for Cape Breton Island, but most appear to have entered at Pictou and gradually moved east from what is now Antigonish County and Prince Edward Island. With the increased availability of titles to land, by 1820 most of the area along the Bras d'Or Lakes had been settled by Scots and they were moving into the areas along the waterways.⁶⁶ After 1820 tradition suggests that many vessels

⁶⁴ Terrence M. Punch, Irish Halifax: The Immigrant Generation 1815-1859, (Halifax: International Centre, Saint Mary's University, 1981), p. 1.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁶ See Calendar of Cape Breton Land Papers and the Department of Lands

avoided the official ports and left their human cargoes at various points along the shores of Cape Breton.⁶⁷

During the last half of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century the highlands of Scotland, like Ireland, had become less capable of supporting a rapidly rising population.⁶⁸ During the late eighteenth century the Scots used military service as one means of alleviating the unemployment problems that faced the country. When the regiments were disbanded the soldiers that had served in North America were often offered free grants of land in the colonies rather than have them return to Scotland.⁶⁹ The end of the Napoleonic Wars resulted in two major problems for the population of the highlands: the decline in opportunities for military service and the decline of the kelp industry. During the war kelp was used to produce alkali for the industries of Glasgow and other centres but after the war less expensive sources in Europe again became available.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, land owners had increased rents to take

and Forests Index Sheets (Land Grant Maps).

⁶⁷ Donald Neil Morrison, "Recollection of Early Days at Loch Lomond," with Supplement by Dr. Murdoch Chisholm, "Loch Lomond and Its First Settlers," p. 2. Dr. Chisholm recounts the voyage of his family from Lewis in July 1821 and their arrival at St. Peters 21 days later.

⁶⁸ D. Campbell and R. A. MacLean, Beyond the Atlantic Roar: A Study of the Nova Scots, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974), p. 7.

⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 7-8.

⁷⁰ Stephen J. Hornsby, "Migration and Settlement: The Scots of Cape Breton," in Geographical Perspectives on the Maritime Provinces, Douglas Day, ed., (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Saint Mary's University, 1988), p.17.

advantage of the boom created by kelp harvesting and had improved their standard of living as a result. They were unwilling to lower their incomes but tenants found it more difficult to pay increased rents and were evicted in favour of less labour intensive activities, such as sheep farming,⁷¹ a process generally referred to as the "highland clearances." Although many of the Scots who migrated before 1829 were not directly affected by clearances and the decline of the kelp industry, they were affected by the declining ability of the country to support them.

Some historians suggest that the Scottish settlers who arrived in Nova Scotia were the poor and more desperate crofters, labourers, and small tenants.⁷² In fact, many of the Scottish families that settled in the Black River and Grand River districts were from the same regions of Scotland as the Middle River settlers, were closely related to, and intermarried with the Middle River families. To illustrate this point, three children of Finlay MacRae, the son of one of the original Middle River families, married three children of Alexander MacRae of the River Bourgeois and Black River districts, Donald McInnes of the Black River district married Mary McRae of Middle River, and Jessie Finlayson of Grand River married Dan McLennan of Middle River.⁷³ Two of the three McRae

⁷¹ ibid., p. 18.

⁷² Morgan, "Poverty, wretchedness and misery," p. 89.

⁷³ Based on re-constructions of Richmond County families; John A. Nicholson, et. al., Middle River: Past and Present History of a Cape Breton

families that settled in the Black River area are reported to have had Middle River branches.⁷⁴

Several of the early families, including Mary McRae and her son Murdoch, had sufficient funds to pay for their grants as soon as they were approved by council,⁷⁵ but other families chose to use their resources to improve their properties before they paid the final fees for the grants.⁷⁶ Many problems in registering grants arose from the bureaucratic overload and settlers exhibited a mistrust of a system in which payments often had a habit of disappearing.⁷⁷

Community, 1806-1985, p. 159, pp. 171-172.

⁷⁴ This is based on oral traditions related by Joan Calder, formerly of St. George's Channel, and George MacRae Dundee, Richmond County. Mary McRae, a widow who settled at St. George's Channel about 1820 reportedly had at least one son who settled in Middle River; George MacRae's great grandfather was born in Middle River and had siblings who remained there.

⁷⁵ PANS, RG 20, Series B, Cape Breton Land Papers, petitions no. 2505 and 2506. Murdoch went to Sydney to register his grants in December 1820 and perished on the ice on the Bras d'Or Lakes when a storm came up on his return. The deeds were registered in Cape Breton County in January 1821; Katherine Easthouse, Settlers of Southside, p. 39.

⁷⁶ Most of the grants for the settlers who arrived between 1815 and 1825 were registered in the early 1830's. See PANS, Micro Places Nova Scotia, Index to Nova Scotia Land Grants.

⁷⁷ Examples of these problems are found particularly in PANS, RG 20, Series C, Vol. 55, a source that is difficult to reference because it is not catalogued. However, several petitions refer to the loss of money paid for grants. A letter from Alexander Matheson of Grand River to Ch. F. Harrington, 4 Dec. 1851, refers to money deposited in 1819 for a lot, only to have the lot granted to someone else; a similar problem was explained in a letter from Norman McIntyre to John S. Morris on 2 Oct. 1851. On the 19 May 1840 Clement Hubert of Arichat, acting as an agent for several parties since 1827, refused to pay for grants until the documents were ready.

Although some immigrants came to the County after 1829, there is little evidence that they were poor and desperate. In fact, unlike in Middle River, many of these late comers settled in coastal areas such as Framboise and combined subsistence farming with fishing and coastal trading.⁷⁸ Like the Middle River settlers, the majority had sufficient resources to obtain legal title to land, stock, and the implements for the clearing and improvement of the land.⁷⁹

The oldest Scottish settlement was at Red Island, where Roman Catholic settlers, mainly from Outer Hebridean Islands such as Barra, and South Uist, began a settlement in the first decade of the century. The first record of Scottish settlement in this district is that of a Hector McNeil, who claimed to be settled at Red Islands for 16 years and 4 months in 1818 but most of the early Scottish families appear to have arrived about 1809 or 1810.⁸⁰ The settlement extended eastward into what became Cape Breton County and westward into the District of St. Peters, although broken by the lands of the Chapel Island Micmac Reservation. The reserve lands appear to have a long tradition of Micmac residency, and "Chapel Island" itself was an important spiritual centre for the

⁷⁸ See Chapters 5 and 6 for information on the Stewart family that came during this migration.

⁷⁹ Several land papers for Scots who came in the 1830's and 1840's appear in PANS, RG 20, Series E. See for example petitions no. 1808, a land dispute between John Morrison and John McAskill, Framboise, 1844; no. 3482, Roderick Morrison, St. George's Channel [Back lands], 1856; no. 3990, Alexander Morrison "Flambois," 1857.

⁸⁰ 1818 Census Rolls, Cape Breton Island, Holland, p. 167.

natives.⁸¹

About 1812 the first Scottish Protestant settlers arrived on the West Bay of the Bras d'Or Lakes and settled in what later became the Black River district. The advance wave of settlers had first sojourned in the Pictou area for several years after their emigration from the Island of Lewis.⁸² These settlers were joined by others from a wide range of areas of Scotland including Loch Alsh, in Ross-shire, Cromartyshire, the Scottish Lowlands, Loch Erribol in the North of Sutherlandshire, and the Isle of Mull and surrounding areas in Argyllshire.⁸³ By 1820 most of the Scots that migrated into this district had already arrived and received some title to their lands.

Grand River became the next Scottish Protestant settlement, receiving the bulk of its settlement between 1820 and 1829. It received settlers mainly from the Loch Alsh area of Scotland but the surrounding localities had settlers from Harris and North Uist.

The Loch Lomond district, adjacent to Grand River, was settled mainly after 1829 by people from Harris and North Uist.⁸⁴ Until this period the

⁸¹ Unfortunately, the Micmac families were not included in the 1811 Census.

⁸² PANS, RG 20, Series A.

⁸³ Origins of many of the settlers appear on the grave stones in the MacKay Cemetery, St. George's Channel, the MacLeod Cemetery at The Points, and the Black River Cemetery at Dundee.

⁸⁴ Donald Neil Morrison, "Recollections of Early Days at Loch Lomond," Unpublished paper, 1965, provided by A. Ross MacKay, Bedford, N.S.

development of the Loch Lomond district had been retarded by the lack of a road into one of the most landlocked regions of the County. Although late arrivals, several of the Loch Lomond Harris settlers appear to have had considerable resources when they arrived because they made rapid progress in farming and commercial endeavours. One family that illustrated the rapid progress of some Loch Lomond families was the sons of Allan Morrison, who arrived in Cape Breton in 1828. Three of his sons became successful merchants: William at Cleveland in the River Inhabitants district, Roderick at Gabarus, Cape Breton County, and Alexander A. at St. Peter's.⁸⁵

By the 1830's Scottish settlement had moved toward the coast at Framboise, but most of its first settlers arrived as part of the overflow of other settlements, such as L'Ardoise Highlands, Loch Lomond, and Grand River. The result of this process was that the Framboise settlers were more mixed in their origins⁸⁶ than Grand River and Loch Lomond pioneers and more like the earlier arrivals in the Black River area. In 1838 there were only eight Scottish farming families at Framboise, with a population of 55.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ "With Lottie Morrison of Gabarus", Cape Breton Magazine 40, pp. 1-2; information provided by A. Ross MacKay, Bedford, N. S.

⁸⁶ Peter Cumming, Heather MacLeod, and Linda Strachan, The Story of Framboise, (Framboise: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 1984), pp. 13-14.

⁸⁷ 1838 Census of Cape Breton, no 124 "Return of the Census of Framboise."

In the 1850's and 1860's the last settlement in the County was formed, at Fourchu. It appears that the location had been used as a temporary fishing area long before the arrival of permanent settlers.⁸⁸ The settlement developed from the overflow of families from the Cape Breton County areas around Gabarus and was made up of families descended from Loyalists and Pre-Loyalists, as well as Scots.⁸⁹

Meanwhile, beginning in the early 1800s., the areas along the Strait of Canso and Lower River Inhabitants were being settled by Loyalist descendants. Most of these had come to Nova Scotia as children and as such, were not qualified for a portion of the original Loyalist grants in Guysborough County. When they reached adulthood they moved across the Strait to take advantage of vacant land. By 1818 there were at least forty-four families of a variety of origins settled at the South end of the Gut of Canso and the Lower Settlement River Inhabitants.⁹⁰ The area became culturally mixed and by 1818 the census enumerator found nineteen families of Scottish origin, sixteen Irish, seven Americans, most probably of English origin, and one English family.⁹¹

⁸⁸ ibid., p. 11.

⁸⁹ Beverly MacGillivray, Annabel MacLeod, and Marie Jaarsma, A History of Fourchu, (Fourchu-Framboise Fire Department, 1985), pp. 11-12.

⁹⁰ 1818 Census, Holland, p. 160, not all of these settlers appear to have been settled in what became Richmond County but most of them can be identified in later records as resident of the County.

⁹¹ Loc. cit.

The St. Peters district was settled slowly over a number of years and could be described as a district composed largely of parts of other "communities." The area to the east of the canal could be described as offshoots of the Red Islands and L'Ardoise districts and was predominantly made up of Irish and Scottish Catholics. An area in the district along the Bras d'Or Lakes, now French Cove and Sampsonville, was largely Acadian and composed of the overflow of families from the River Bourgeois area along with a few Irish families. The Sporting Mountain area was composed of Scottish Protestants whose ties were closer to the settlers along the Bras d'Or Lakes in the Black River district. The building of the St. Peters Canal between the Bras d'Or Lakes and the Atlantic ocean changed the nature of the village by attracting people from different areas of the County, as well as from outside. Like Arichat, St. Peters was made up of a more complex mix of families.

As the population of what was to become Richmond County grew between 1800 and 1820, the political situation in the colony did not improve. There was some clamour for an elected assembly from the Sydney elite,⁹² but residents of the remainder of the colony seemed largely uninterested. The British Colonial office, however, in order to simplify colonial administration and to save money, proclaimed the annexation of Cape Breton to Nova Scotia on 16 October 1820. While the residents of the Sydney area opposed the union, the

⁹² Richard Brown, A History of the Island of Cape Breton, (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing Company, 1979), p. 438.

population of the other parts of the island seemed ambivalent or favoured annexation.⁹³ The differences in the interests between Sydney and Arichat residents were reflected in the first Cape Breton election after re-annexation to Nova Scotia. Two members were to be elected to the Nova Scotia Assembly to represent Cape Breton. The first poll was held in Sydney and three candidates stood for election. The results were 210 votes for Edmund Dodd, 131 for Richard Gibbons, and 42 for Richard John Uniacke, Jr. When the poll moved to Arichat another candidate stood for election, Laurence Kavanagh, Esq. The results of this poll were 310 votes for Kavanagh, 288 for Uniacke, 17 for Dodd, and 1 for Gibbons.⁹⁴ The southern part of Cape Breton not only determined the outcome of the election but records also suggest that the area benefited from the change, especially in the expenditure of money on roads and bridges.⁹⁵ It is not surprising that when a movement for the reestablishment of a separate government for Cape Breton was instituted by Sydney businessmen and politicians, there was little support from the rest of the island.⁹⁶ The conflict

⁹³ Robert Morgan, "Separatism in Cape Breton 1820-1845," in Kenneth Donovan, ed., Cape Breton at 200: Historical Essays in Honour of the Island's Bicentennial 1785-1985, (Sydney, Nova Scotia: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1985), p. 1.

⁹⁴ PANS, RG 1, Vol. 334, no. 38.

⁹⁵ Ibid., no. 60 and no. 69 provides a good example of the competing interests. There is little evidence that any road money was provided for the southern part of the island before annexation.

⁹⁶ Morgan, "Separation...", p. 49.

between the Sydney district and the southern part of the island led to the establishment of separate counties by 1835, although Victoria County was not separated from Cape Breton County until 1851.⁹⁷

In 1835, when Richmond County was given status as a municipality, the area had already taken on its main characteristics. The Acadians had settled along the Atlantic coastline and were mainly dependent on the sea for their livelihood; the Scots had settled along the Bras d'Or Lakes and inland, where they depended mainly on the land and farming.⁹⁸ The Micmacs carried out a mixture of activities that were both traditional and influenced by the impact of European settlement: they hunted, fished, made baskets and other wooden items, farmed,⁹⁹ and worked as labourers in the fisheries. The Irish fished and farmed.¹⁰⁰ A wide variety of people in trades and service occupations provided services to the two main industries: blacksmiths, ferrymen, turners, joiners, coopers, carpenters, coastal traders, shoemakers, dressmakers, weavers,

⁹⁷ W. James MacDonald, ed., Patterson's History of Victoria County, (Sydney: College of Cape Breton Press, 1978), p. 109.

⁹⁸ Stephen J. Hornsby, Nineteenth Century Cape Breton: A Historical Geography, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), Chapter 3.

⁹⁹ Richard Brown, A History of the Island of Cape Breton, (London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, 1869, Reprint by Mika Publishing Company, Belleville, Ontario, 1979), p. 459.

¹⁰⁰ A. A. MacKenzie, The Irish in Cape Breton, (Antigonish: Formac Publishing Company Limited, 1979), pp. 39-44.

millers, teachers, barristers, physicians, and merchants.¹⁰¹

Richmond County at Mid-Century

At mid-century Richmond County was in the midst of its worst recorded farming crisis of the nineteenth century. During the period 1845 to 1851 blight affected the potato crops of Cape Breton, eastern Nova Scotia,¹⁰² and Prince Edward Island¹⁰³ as well as parts of Europe. How extensive the problem was in Richmond County is not clear but it is evident that people in the areas affected by early frosts, where the growing season made it difficult to produce alternative food crops, and the areas that were the most newly settled, were dependent on the potato as their main staple. The winter of 1847 was particularly bad as the food sources for many families had been depleted by February. The government at Halifax supplied two hundred barrels of flour and cornmeal for the most severe sufferers, and it was stored in George Handley's store in St. Peter's until the commissioners, appointed by the government at Halifax, were ready to undertake allocation. In February 1847 a group of seventy people approached Handley demanding food and when they were refused, they sawed the door off

¹⁰¹ 1871 Census of Canada, Richmond County, Nova Scotia, Schedule 1.

¹⁰² Robert J. Morgan, "Poverty, wretchedness, and misery:" The Great Famine in Cape Breton, 1845-1851," Nova Scotia Historical Review 6: 1 (1986), pp. 88-89.

¹⁰³ Georges Arsenault, The Island Acadians, trans. by Sally Ross, (Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1989), p. 74.

his shed¹⁰⁴ taking 137 barrels of the flour and meal. The Grand Jury, a body whose membership was selected by lot and whose duties were to make recommendations to the Court of Sessions regarding the administration of the County, requested that the provincial authorities replace the flour "for the relief of the suffering Inhabitants of the County" who, although "in equal distress with the rioters have conducted themselves in a peaceable and or duly manner...."¹⁰⁵

The problems with scarcity of food because of the blight continued through 1848 and 1849, when the Grand Jury stressed "the imperative necessity of taking into immediate consideration the great and increasing destitution under which very many inhabitants of several portions of this county are now lying."¹⁰⁶ By 1850 there was no further mention of destitution and in 1851 only thirty-one paupers were reported, a figure slightly below the provincial per capita average and about one-third the rate in Halifax County.¹⁰⁷

By 1851 Richmond County contained a population of 10, 381 or 3.8 per cent of the population of Nova Scotia, living in 1731 family groups or households. The main occupations of the inhabitants were coastal trading,

¹⁰⁴ Arthur J. Stone, Journey Through a Cape Breton County: Pioneer Roads in Richmond County, (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1991), p. 60.

¹⁰⁵ PANS, RG 34-320, P1 and P2, Proceedings of the Grand Jury, 5 March 1847.

¹⁰⁶ Proceedings, 9 Mar. 1849.

¹⁰⁷ 1851 Census of Nova Scotia, p. 4.

employing 597, farming with 490, and fishing with 473. One hundred and seventy one workers were referred to as mechanics, most probably employed in shipbuilding. There were sixty-seven merchants and traders living in the County, forty employed in manufacturing, along with four clergymen, four doctors, three lawyers, and one employed in lumbering. However, it was in shipbuilding that Richmond County had entered its "golden age." Richmond County outstripped all other counties in Nova Scotia in the number of vessels built, 185, and total tonnage, 11,346 and as a result, produced 38 per cent of the vessels built in the province and 19.6 per cent of the tonnage. As well, Richmond County came third in the province in boat building, with 335 or 12.6 per cent of the provincial output.¹⁰⁸ This was a major achievement for a county with less than four per cent of the population.

While production in ship-building was above the provincial average, the 490 farmers produced output in most categories close to the provincial average, except in potatoes, which still may not have recovered completely from the effects of the blight. They produced an average of 67.6 bushels of oats per farmer, 42.9 bushels of potatoes and 120.3 pounds of butter, compared to the provincial averages of 43.8 bushels of oats, 62.9 bushels of potatoes, and 114.3 pounds of butter.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Although there were only 473 designated fishermen in the County, far more found work in the fisheries. Four hundred and fifty-six men were employed in the vessel and 860 were employed in the boat fishery. The discrepancy in these figures reflects the numbers of young boys and others who participated in the fisheries, other than as their principal occupation. At mid-century Richmond County fishermen accounted for 16.4 per cent of the cured dry fish, 15.4 per cent of the mackerel, 2.5 per cent of the salmon, and 8.3 per cent of the herring, produced in Nova Scotia.¹¹⁰

The success in shipbuilding, fisheries, and to a lesser extent farming, may have retarded the growth of other industries, since Richmond County lagged the provincial average in virtually every other manufacturing endeavour. In 1851 there were only two saw mills, ten grist mills, one tannery, and one weaving or carding establishment. The production of woven goods was also below the provincial average, with only 2.4 per cent of the provincial output.¹¹¹

The political maturity of Richmond County's residents was becoming more apparent as the Grand Jury pressured the Court of Sessions, composed of the county magistrates and the body that ran the municipal administration, to improve its operations. This "grass-roots" movement was province-wide¹¹² but

¹¹⁰ ibid.

¹¹¹ ibid., p. 17.

¹¹² J. Murray Beck, "The Evolution of Municipal Government in Nova Scotia, 1749-1973," a study prepared for the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on

the power struggle between the magistrates and the Grand Jury expressed itself in different ways across the province. In Richmond County the conflict featured increasingly assertive complaints made to the Court of Sessions. Relations between the two bodies became strained and in 1856 the jury protested the language and conduct of the custos, or chief magistrate.¹¹³ By 1858 the Grand Jury was advocating the acceptance of a Municipal Incorporation Bill that would strip the Court of Sessions of its powers and place them in the hands of elected councils.¹¹⁴ During the 1860's the relations between the Grand Jury and the Sessions had mellowed, possibly because a more important political issue had surfaced: Confederation.

The Confederation issue tended to unite the County. It was one issue in which the County acted as a cohesive community and drew the "ins" and "outs" together in a common concern: that the legislators of the province would pass a measure for a federal union of the British North America provinces without the consent of the electors of the province. More than one thousand Richmond County residents signed petitions requesting that no attempt be made to alter the constitution without the authority of the people decided at the polls.¹¹⁵ The

Education, Public Services, and Provincial-Municipal Relations, Sept., 1973, pp. 12-24.

¹¹³ Proceedings, 15 Feb. 1856.

¹¹⁴ Proceedings, 13 Feb. 1858.

¹¹⁵ PANS, RG 5, Series P, Vol. 19, no. 94, Petition the Nova Scotia General

137 petitioners from the Red Islands district all claimed to be opposed to the union on the conditions agreed to at the Quebec conference.¹¹⁶ The provincial government refused the requests from the people from all parts of the province to have the decision for or against Confederation made at the polls and voted to join the union without the consent of the electorate. The Richmond County voters expressed their disapproval in 1867 when they elected, by a two-thirds majority, W. J. Croke, an anti-confederate Conservative, as their first representative to the Canadian House of Commons.¹¹⁷ When Croke died in 1869 the electorate replaced him with another anti-confederate Conservative, Isaac LeVesconte.¹¹⁸

At mid-century Richmond County's prospects were good. Shipbuilding, seafaring, fishing, and farming were productive industries and especially the first three, contributed more to the total provincial output than might be expected, based on population. This new prosperity freed the representatives of the people from their own personal economic struggles and made it possible for them to become more confident and more politically active.

Assembly from River Bourgeois, 9 March 1865.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 20 Jan. 1865.

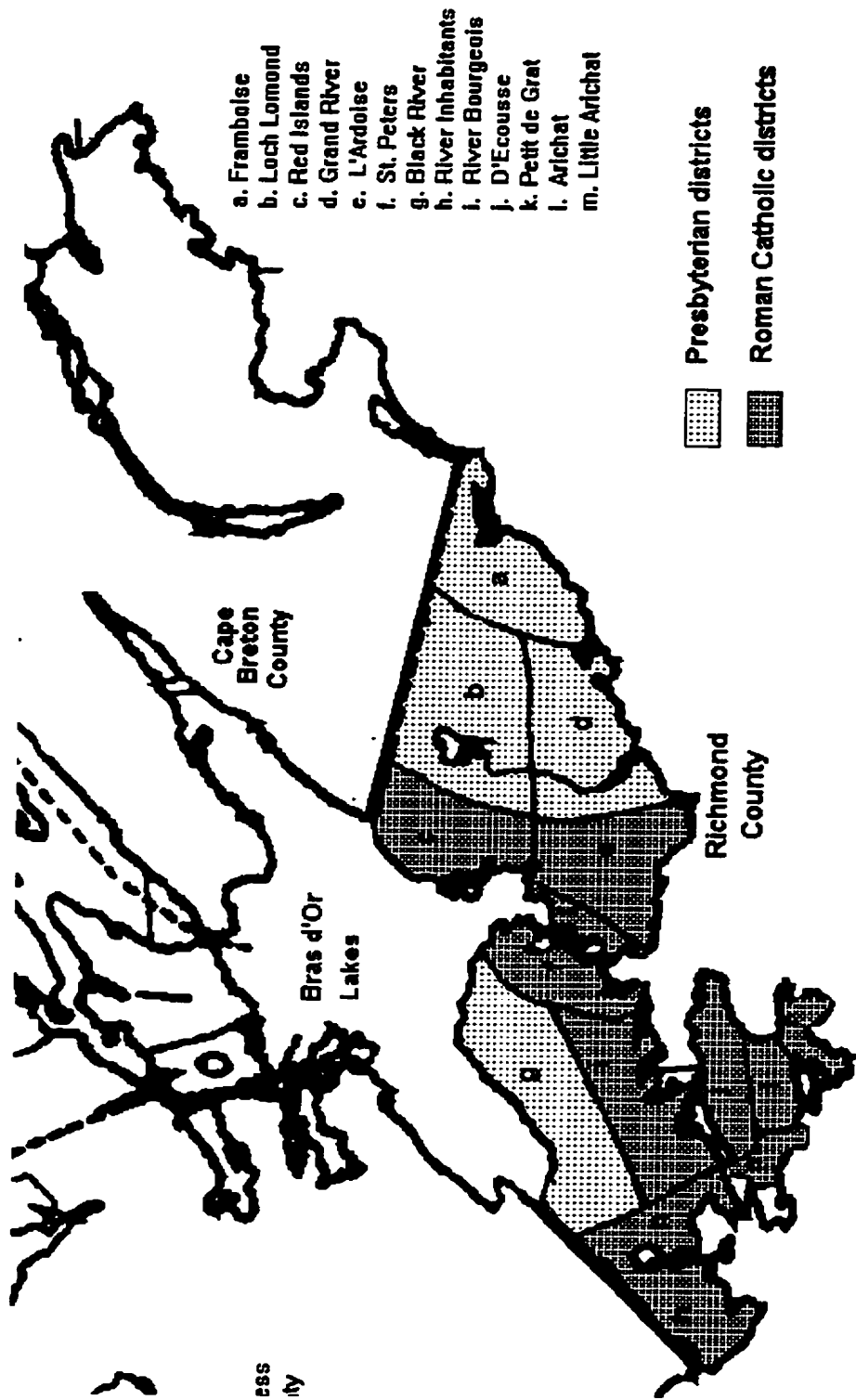
¹¹⁷ J. K. Johnson, ed., The Canadian Directory of Parliament, (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1968), p. 143; The Canadian Parliamentary Companion, 1869, p. 296.

¹¹⁸ Shirley B. Elliot, ed., The Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia 1758-1983, (Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia, 1984), p. 116; The Canadian Parliamentary

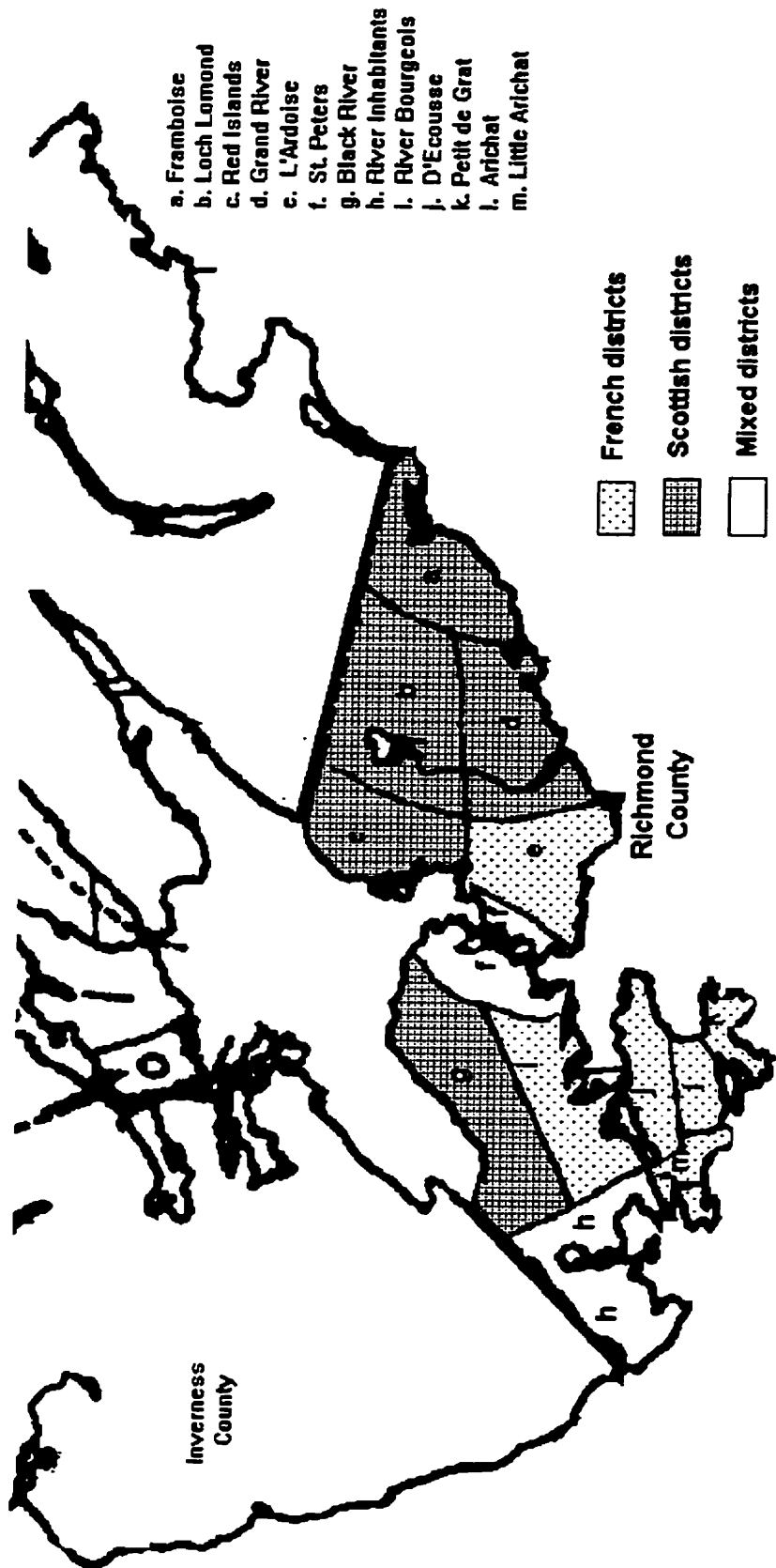
By mid-century most of the population had moved from the pioneer stage, during which meeting basic needs were paramount. They had established safe and secure communities among others of the same ethnic origin, religion, (see maps 2 and 3) and among those who spoke the same language. This provided them a sense of belonging. Some had gained self-confidence from their achievements in building homes, clearing land, owning vessels, and gaining a sense of mastery over their environment. The political activism of some of these people suggests that by mid-century they were striving for family prestige and status through community service. Throughout the 1850's and early 1860's the population of the County expanded, ship building, coastal trading, farming, and fishing grew and developed. However, by the mid-1860's, there were signs that conditions were changing. Most of the arable land had already been taken up, free trade with the United States ended, dampening the coastal trade, and local supplies of lumber for ship-building were exhausted. These factors, coupled with the new political environment created through Confederation, seemed to generate insecurity.

There appears to have been a general insecurity about the future and the next thirty years, especially for ocean based industries, seemed in some ways to have justified the pessimism. There is no way of knowing whether the attitudes toward Confederation were responsible for the difficulties of the next few years

but they do appear to have influenced the entrepreneurship of the most affluent group in the County. It was clear that making a living in the next few years required adaptation to a new internal political environment, changes in international trading patterns, and changes within families and local communities.



MAP 2. Districts by main religion in 1871 (50% or more)



MAP 3. Districts by ethnic origin in 1871 (50% or more)

Chapter 2

Subsistence and Competency

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century Richmond County, like rural areas in all parts of North America was undergoing change. The County had exited its pioneer stage, moved through the rapid development of its youth, and was now entering a period of maturity. It was entering a period in which continuity and change worked together to create a balance between resources and population. This process resulted in a gradual loss of population and gradual adaptations by those left behind to achieve their level of economic competence. Achieving this balance meant maintaining traditional ways of life at the same time as accepting and applying new strategies.

When Margaret W. Morley visited Cape Breton in 1912 she expected to “step at once into a region of wild mountains and picturesque Highlanders” but she was disappointed as she had to cross the Strait of Canso in a “wheezy little steamer” and found the strait unattractive with its only virtue being its depth “a wholly commercial virtue.” Along the route north of the Bras d’Or Lakes from the strait to Grand Narrows she found the countryside “rough and dreary-looking, with much gypsum cropping out white and ghostly in the wilderness.”¹ Edwin Lockett provided a different perspective on his entry to the island.

¹ Margaret W. Morley, Down-North and Up Along, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912), pp. 161-163.

The bell rings – the paddles splash, – and as the good steamer leaves the railway wharf at Mulgrave, Cape Breton bound, items of quaint interest, little camera peeps, succeed each other. The funny fishing boats with their tan dyed sails – to the right – Pirate Cove now the location of Terminal City some day to be another Southampton – on the left and opposite – Cariboo with seam after seam of coal inexhaustible....²

Later Lockett described in glowing terms the development of Port Hawkesbury, with its stores and hotels, the Paint shipyard where fishing and pleasure boats were constructed, its billiards room and restaurant.³ Morley, on the other hand, was not interested in change but rather in some concept she had of what was quaint and rustic. Reactions to continuity and change were often value-laden and agenda-driven and it is difficult to rely on contemporary accounts for that reason. What is apparent from available sources is that continuity and change created a situation in late nineteenth century Richmond County that is not easily analysed.

In 1871 the County had no town but it did have two villages: St. Peters and Arichat. Arichat had prospered during the years of reciprocity with the United States because of the carrying trade and ship-building but by 1871 there were hints of decline.⁴ St. Peters, on the other hand, had seen a minor boom

² Edwin Lockett, Cape Breton Hand-Book and Tourist's Guide, (North Sydney and Sydney: Edwin Lockett Publisher, 1890), p. 15.

³ Ibid., p. 99.

⁴ Paul Touesnard, "Growth and Decline of Arichat, Nova Scotia 1765-1880," M. A. Thesis, Department of Economics, Dalhousie University, 1984.

with the construction of the canal. St. Peters was also in a more favourable location to become the focal point of the surrounding farming communities and Arichat merchants were losing that business to St. Peters merchants who had moved in largely to take advantage of the opportunities provided by canal construction.

In Richmond County, the two main settlement groups, the Acadians and the Scots, respectively made up about 50 and 40 per cent of the population. The remaining ten per cent included the descendants of Micmac, Irish, English, German, Belgian, Portuguese, Dutch, African, and Scandinavian pioneers. Although ethnic groups generally married within their own community,⁵ by 1871 there was a growing population whose origins were mixed.

As a result of the seafaring of a large segment of the population, there was significant and constant contact with the world beyond. The heavy reliance on the fishery and coastal trade meant that the economy of the region was, from the earliest period of settlement, tied to international markets and international business. There was no simple rural economy, as depicted by modernization theory.⁶ There were families and groups of families that were linked firmly to the

⁵ See Chapter 4.

⁶ Robert P. Swierenga, "Agriculture and Rural Life: The New Rural History" in James B. Gardner and George Rollie Adams, Ordinary People and Everyday Life: Perspectives on the New Social History, (Nashville, Tennessee: The American Association for State and Local History, 1983), p. 94; Helen C. Abel, "The Social Consequences of the Modernization of Agriculture," in Marc-Adéland Tremblay and Walton T. Anderson, Rural Canada in Transition, (Ottawa:

outside world through complex structures and mechanisms that determined costs and prices, and that opened and closed economic opportunities.

By 1871 Richmond County contained 14,259 individuals, grouped in 2433 households. Of the 1848 families headed by a person with a given occupation, 637 were described as farmers and 757 as fishermen, with another 454 employed in other sea based activities, mainly coastal trading. These three categories accounted for almost 87 per cent of family heads with given occupations. If we include seamen as service personnel, about one-quarter to one-third of the population was involved in service occupations. Only 128 household heads were involved in any form of manufacturing and, of that group, almost one-half produced both goods and services. The largest single group involved in manufacturing, once ship-building declined, were the natives, who produced wooden wares such as butter tubs, staves, baskets, and other wooden products for the local market.⁷ The activities that employed most county residents, fishing, farming, and seafaring, all experienced changes that required major adaptations by those who worked in the industries.

Agricultural Economics Research Council of Canada, 1966), pp. 178-225 challenges many of the assumptions of modernization as it related to agriculture.

⁷ 1871 Census Richmond County. Although the Micmacs were given an occupational label, the manufacturing schedule omitted them entirely. However, local business ledgers provide evidence that this group was active in the local economy. See John McInnes Ledgers, Marble Mountain Museum, Ledger, 1881, folio 203; Ledger 1885, folio 285.

Fishing

Those who followed ocean-going occupations were more entangled in commercial transactions than were farmers. Although most families headed by fishermen and mariners produced some of their own food and clothing,⁸ a much larger proportion of their needs was derived from market transactions.⁹

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century a significant feature of the fishing industry was the apparent withdrawal of capital. In 1873, the first year in which estimates are available, capital invested in vessels and nets was \$217,508. Although the estimates fluctuated throughout the period, bottoming out at \$80,503 in 1892, and moving back up to \$98,030 in 1900, investment after 1876 never reached the levels attained in the early 1870s. Throughout the period the fisheries return on equity ranged from \$2.59 to \$4.66. In other words, for every dollar invested in fishery's capital, the investor could expect a return of from \$2.59 to \$4.66. The lowest returns were in years when capital was destroyed by adverse weather conditions, such as in 1873, when a severe gale devastated the fisheries and in years when fish stocks were low, as in 1894 to 1896.

⁸ 1871 Census, Richmond County, Schedules 4 and 5; C. A. Herbin, "Notes on the Early History of Arichat," published in The Richmond County Record, Centre d'études acadiennes, Moncton, article 64.

⁹ D. N. Macleod Ledger, 1868-1879, L'Ardoise, Nicholas Denys Museum, 80-2-4, St. Peters.

During the 1870's it is not clear how dependent fishermen were on credit. Income for fishermen, based on a ledger from L'Ardoise, suggests that fishing incomes were very low, varying from \$18.91 in 1870, \$14.80 in 1871, \$10.99 in 1872, \$25.88 in 1873 and \$24.49 in 1874,¹⁰ the last year for which information is available. Eight other merchants were operating in L'Ardoise at the same time and it is possible that fishermen were dealing with more than one merchant.¹¹ It is also possible that fishermen were dealing with fish buyers from outside the County. This idea is supported by a comment by a correspondent from L'Ardoise in an article that appeared in the Antigonish Aurora in 1884. This correspondent claimed that local merchants carried little stock because each family in the community imported its winter supplies from Halifax.¹² This suggests that they may have been disposing of at least a portion of their fish there, as well and dealing with the local merchants only when absolutely necessary.

The ratio of labour to productivity varied greatly during the period under study: declining from a high of \$316.98 in 1873 to a low of \$130.45 in 1896 and rising to \$189.32 in 1900. With the costs of labour falling, capital withdrew and

¹⁰ D. N. MacLeod Ledger, Nicholas Denys Museum, St. Peters, 80-2-4. These figures are based on a sample of 30 accounts for 1870 to 1873 and 17 accounts for 1874.

¹¹ 1871 Census, L'Ardoise.

¹² Antigonish, Aurora, 31 December 1884, n.p.

used increased labour to achieve profits. These figures must be used with extreme caution. In 1880, W. H. Rogers, Inspector of Fisheries for the Province of Nova Scotia, informed Ottawa that "as the prices of fish fluctuate more or less year by year, and, as there is considerable difference in prices ruling in different parts of the province, it is difficult to obtain a correct rate, I have, therefore, adopted a uniform price for each item and continue it because this will the more readily indicate the increase or decrease of the quantity of fish taken year by year throughout the Province."¹³ Whether the officials in Ottawa accepted his reasoning is not recorded but the argument is difficult to follow because the quantity of fish was also reported.¹⁴

Throughout the 1880's the fisheries continued to grow in value, as well as in the numbers of men employed. By 1890, it was valued at \$755, 732 and employed 3052. After 1890 the numbers employed in the fisheries began to decline but that decline did not take place as rapidly as the decline in the value of production. By 1900, the movement of men out of the fisheries was resulting in a increase in the returns to those left in the industry.

The figures reveal that the fisheries could only employ a limited number of people and a limited level of technology. New methods of fishing often were

¹³ Sessional Papers, 1880-81, Part 3, Appendix no. 9. In the 1870's the fisheries over-seers included local prices in their reports to the inspector. It is not evident why this procedure could not be continued.

¹⁴ This issue is explored further below.

followed by major changes in production. Fisheries over-seers were quick to recognize potential problems but Ottawa was slow to react because "no definite proof"¹⁵ could be provided that gear such as purse seines and trawls had an adverse effect on fish stocks. In 1877, the fisheries officer for the eastern part of the County reported problems with trawls: "when trawls are left in the water unattended, the fish which get caught in them die in a short time, are shaken off the hooks; they then lie rotting on the bottom...."¹⁶

In 1875 the government did place a ban on using seines within half a mile of any fishing grounds where boats were anchored and fishermen were actually engaged in fishing with hand-lines. However, this did little to meet the objection of fishermen that purse seines caught both large and small fish and broke up the schools.¹⁷ Although the officials would not recognize a possible relationship between the use of purse seines and the decline in the mackerel fishery, mackerel production in Richmond County declined by more than 10,000 barrels between 1886 and 1891, when new regulations against these nets were put in place. However, fisheries over-seers complained that seiners from the United States continued breaking up the schools off the coast.¹⁸ Eventually the new

¹⁵ B. A. Balcom, History of the Lunenburg Fishing Industry, Lunenburg Maritime Museum Society, 1977, pp. 18.

¹⁶ Sessional Papers, 1878, pt. 3, no. 1, p. 149.

¹⁷ Balcom, p. 17.

¹⁸ Sessional Papers, (Ottawa), Vol. XXXI, no. 8, 1897, pt. 8, p.47.

regulations may have had a positive effect because the mackerel fishery began to recover in 1898.¹⁹

Lobster processing had started in the County in 1872. As the value of canned lobsters rose and competition increased, the over-seers began to warn of possible abuses²⁰ and the need for more controls.²¹ In 1890, Francis Marmeau of Arichat reported how the abuse of the resource was perpetrated: "the average fisherman has become an expert in the canning business, and resorts to out-of-the-way places where he can engage in the illegal packing of lobsters during the close [sic] season. These men receive supplies from factory proprietors, to whom they agree to dispose of their stock."²² By 1898 the lobster stocks were declining.²³

If the average income of fishermen was so low and declining as much as this analysis suggests, how could a large decline in the standard of living be avoided? If we only consider incomes this is a good question, but if we consider the cost of living as well, the situation becomes less obvious. While the return on labour declined by 40 per cent, the prices of the most common items

¹⁹ Sessional Papers, 1881-1899.

²⁰ Sessional Papers, no. 6, A. 1888, p. 102; 1889 pt. 8, p. 55.

²¹ Ibid., 1890, pt. 12, no. 17, pp. 57-58.

²² Sessional Papers, 1891, pt. 8, p. 10.

²³ Ibid., 1898, pt. 9, no 11a, pp. 43-44.

purchased by families declined 50 per cent.²⁴ It appears that the withdrawal of capital from the fisheries, while generally portrayed as having a negative impact on the economy because productivity declined, may have been a positive development for family survival, as more families could be supported by the industry. With costs falling fishing families, in general, may actually have made slight gains in their standard of living, especially in the 1890's when catches were good. There were also significant sources of fisheries income that were not reported in the Sessional Papers such as production of fresh cod and lobsters as well as the incomes of Richmond County fisherman employed by American vessels.²⁵ Data collected in the 1901 Census indicates that, by that date, the incomes of fishing families averaged about \$247.23 per year.²⁶ Whether cash was becoming more important in the fishing communities is not

²⁴ See chapter 5, pp. 218-219.

²⁵ In 1901 D. R. Boyle, fisheries overseer of West Arichat reported decreases in dried fish were largely a result of the "increased quantities of the fresh article disposed of." Sessional Papers, 1902, pt. 9, Maritime and Fisheries, p. 40; also Sessional Papers, 1898, pt. 9, 11a, p. 43-44. It is difficult to arrive at any specific numbers of fisherman working for the American vessels. Newspaper reports of American vessels arriving for their crews in the spring were common. See for example the Antigonish Aurora, 21 May 1884 which reported the American fishing vessels were calling at St. Peters for men, and the Bras d'Or Gazette, 6 May 1896 which reported that the Provincetown vessels were expected to call the next week for crews and he listed six fisherman from the St. Peters area who had just shipped on the Gloucester Schooner "Mary E." As well newspapers carried frequent references to Richmond County fishermen being lost from American vessels.

²⁶ 1901 Census, L'Ardoise.

clear because no records have been located that cover a period of more than few years. A sample of accounts in the ledgers of a Halifax County fish merchant shows a ten per cent increase in the use of cash between the periods 1871 to 1875 and 1876 to 1881.²⁷

If the Census data are accurate, the values given in the Sessional Papers may underestimate the actual value of fisheries production. Merchants could not operate if they were paying fishermen more for their production than they received in return. A return on labour of \$189.32, when the fishermen were earning \$247.23, would suggest that the merchants were losing money. It is more likely that inadequacies in the collection of data and the incomes generated by those employed by American companies, created the apparent discrepancy.²⁸

Although there was an out-migration from the fisheries, the ability of fishing to support families remained high but fishing incomes did not appear to provide anything extra for times when recessions and declines in stocks affected income. As well, fishermen's incomes did not provide adequate resources for social mobility. The changes in fishing technology appear to have had an

²⁷ PANS, MG 3, Vol. 6190, No. 1, Maher Ledgers. Like the ledgers for a farming area the Maher ledgers do not record cash payments to their fishermen but fishermen paid part of their accounts in cash.

²⁸ It appears likely that the method of computing the value of fish production did not take into consideration local variations in quality and price. If a standardized system was used for the entire Atlantic region this would create local distortions between the actual value and the reported value.

overall negative impact on fishermen who remained in the inshore industry, particularly those who lived in areas where they could not supplement their fishing income with subsistence agriculture or other activities.²⁹ Unlike farmers, they did not produce a product that they could readily sell to others, by-passing the commercial establishment.³⁰ Those who were totally dependent on fishing, in times of depression or when stocks were poor, suffered from severe poverty.³¹ However, few fishing families in Richmond County were totally dependent on fishing for survival, and like many Newfoundland fishing families, had gardens and livestock to supplement fishing income.

Farming

Although some historians painted a dismal picture of Maritime and Cape Breton agriculture in the Post-Confederation period,³² contemporary sources

²⁹ One area that suffered from the absence of land with agricultural potential was the community of Little Anse in the Petit de Grat district. This fishing community was constantly at the mercy of market conditions and in times of recession faced severe poverty.

³⁰ There was a market for fish in the farming communities but this market was not sufficiently large to support many fishing families.

³¹ Fortunately, most fishing families were able to avoid total dependence on fish, and many provided at least part of their own food.

³² Larry McCann, "The 1890's: Fragmentation and the new social order," in E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muise ed., The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 134-135; Michael J. Troughton, "From Nodes to Nodes: the Rise and Fall of Agricultural Activity in the Maritime Provinces," in Doug Day, ed., Geographical Perspective on the

record no major problems in agriculture and, if there were problems, they were not well recognized. Most of the references to problems in agriculture relate to two periods of depression in the 1870's and the early 1890's. In fact, if researchers wanted to portray agriculture from an optimistic point of view, they could find contemporary commentary to support them.

Surprisingly, an industry that was so important to the livelihood of such a large part of the Nova Scotian population drew little comment, even from those involved in the industry. The main agricultural publication, The Nova Scotia Journal of Agriculture, which existed from the 1860's to 1885, provides little insight into the general conditions affecting agriculture in the province. Reports of local growing conditions were often included but the purpose of the journal, as articulated by its editor in 1875, was the dissemination of "useful information in regard to improved modes of culture and stock raising" and the "publication of articles on subjects of practical and scientific agriculture, adapted to the wants of the Province."³³

Reports of the legislative committee on agriculture and the Reports of the Central Board of Agriculture were more concerned with the operations of the board than with the state of agriculture in the province during the 1870's. In

Maritime Provinces, (Halifax: Saint Mary's University, 1988), pp. 23-36; Stephen Hornsby, Nineteenth Century Cape Breton, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), pp. 129-130.

³³ Nova Scotia Journal of Agriculture, May 1875, Vol. II, no. 113, p. 342.

1879 however, J. Winburn Laurie, President of the Central Board of Agriculture, suggested that farmers had been affected by the "financial depression" but not to the same extent as other commercial interests.³⁴

Through the 1880's local attitudes toward Nova Scotian agriculture appeared to be optimistic. In 1889 the Kings County Agricultural Society reported that, although "the products of the farms, with a few exceptions (notably eggs, large quantities of which are shipped to Boston), are shut out of the markets of our neighbours by their tariff, yet foreign markets have been successfully sought, and our apples are shipped direct to London, our potatoes to the West Indies, while the home market takes the beef, hay, small fruits, butter, etc., and year by year our people are becoming less dependent on the U.S. for a market."³⁵ The same commentator indicated that the relationship between producer prices and consumer prices for farmers was positive.³⁶ However, in the early 1890s a second depression³⁷ affected agriculture and arrested its development. It was not until 1895, when the results of the 1891 federal census became available, that the Nova Scotia Assembly began to pay attention to agriculture. Figures revealed the loss of more than 10, 000 farmers

³⁴ Journal of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, 1880, Appendix, p. 2.

³⁵ Journals of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia, 1890, Appendix 8, p. lxxxviii, report dated Grand Pre, 25 Nov. 1889.

³⁶ Ibid., p. lxxxvii.

³⁷ McCann, p. 120.

in the province since 1881. Members attempted to attribute the difference to different methods of counting farmers in 1881 and 1891.³⁸ It was also suggested that the growth of industrial jobs in places such as Amherst, Halifax, and Dartmouth was giving other types of employment to the farmer's sons enumerated in 1881.³⁹ In 1896 it appears that the members suddenly became aware that there had been a rapid decline in agricultural exports and attributed this slump to "want of paying markets, and not because farmers of the province had not the ability to produce."⁴⁰

By 1899 the reports to the Assembly were far more optimistic and referred to the "encouraging character" of agriculture⁴¹ and how there was "a largely increased interest in most branches of agricultural pursuits."⁴² Similar reports appeared in 1899 and 1900 but it was the local, not the export, market that was credited with the improvement. Members of the legislature attributed the increase in the mining and manufacturing industries as responsible for "creating

³⁸ Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia, 1875, p. 8. Although the category "farmer's son" was omitted from the 1891 Census, these farm sons were simply identified as "farmers" in 1891, making this explanation less valid. However, in 1881 sons of fishermen were often entered as "farmer's sons," at least in Richmond County, suggesting that this might have been a catch-all for those that did not fit in any of the other categories and resulting in the over-counting of farmers in 1881.

³⁹ Loc. cit.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1896, p. 133.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1899, p. 89.

⁴² Ibid., p. 125.

an active and steady home market and good prices for the products of the farms...."⁴³

Most of the data that has been used by scholarly pessimists regarding agriculture was taken from the period of the 1890's depression.⁴⁴ The use of statistics from the 1891 Census, which were collected during a poor crop year, possibly combined with data reflecting the early stages of depression, along with commentary from the early 1890s, does provide a pessimistic picture of agriculture, at least from a commercial and developmental point of view. However, there is no evidence from this period that farmers were having difficulty with providing adequate food, clothing, and housing for their families, nor is there evidence from the non-recessionary periods that agriculture was in crisis situation.⁴⁵ It is in this context that agriculture in Richmond County needs to be examined. The fact that politicians only became aware of the decline in agriculture after the statistics were released suggests that there was no general perception of a crisis in agriculture among their constituents.

There was a vague line between subsistence farming and commercial

⁴³ Ibid., 1899, p. 126 and 1900, p. 166.

⁴⁴ Both Hornsby and Troughton draw most of their conclusions based on the 1891 Census.

⁴⁵ Robert MacKinnon, "The Historical Geography of Agriculture in Nova Scotia, 1851-1951," Ph. D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1991, provides a generally optimistic picture of agriculture in Nova Scotia to 1891 and even in the 1890's his focus is the adaptation of Nova Scotia to markets.

farming in the nineteenth century, especially in areas like the Maritimes, where specialization was combined with mixed farming.⁴⁶ In 1882 Professor Lawson of the Central Board of Agriculture reviewed the nature of Cape Breton agriculture in a speech given at the Cape Breton County Exhibition:

The secret of agriculture of any country is to produce those products for which its soil, climate, capital, labour, markets, and other economic conditions, render it more suitable. The large proportions of Ayrshire and Jersey cattle and the splendid show of butter indicates a growing tendency towards dairy farming. This is not to be wondered at, since Cape Breton has the conditions necessary to a remarkable extent. The abundant pastures give the material for a full flow of summer milk.⁴⁷

As early as 1850 dairy farming appears to have been the focus of agriculture in some of the Richmond County farming settlements, such as Grand River and Red Islands, where the ratio of milch⁴⁸ cows to neat cattle was 408 to 226 and 356 to 258 respectively but in Black River the ratio was 882 neat cattle to 424 milch cows, suggesting a concentration on beef.⁴⁹ By 1871 the number of milch cows in Black River exceeded that of neat cattle, suggesting that Black River as

⁴⁶ T. W. Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture at the End of the Colonial Era: A Reassessment," *Acadiensis* XXII:2 (Spring, 1993), pp. 5-26 attempts to deal with this problem in a New Brunswick context.

⁴⁷ Nova Scotia Journal of Agriculture IV: 29 (Nov.-Dec. 1882), p. 289.

⁴⁸ "Milch" is synonymous with "milk."

⁴⁹ 1851 Census of Nova Scotia.

well had converted to dairying.⁵⁰ The transition from beef to dairy cattle took place at varying rates across Cape Breton but by 1871, all areas of Richmond County appear to have made the transition.⁵¹

Although most farms in nineteenth century Richmond County might be characterized as subsistence, since much of their production was probably used for home consumption, farmers could not avoid market entanglements because certain goods necessary both to farming and to the family culture could not be produced locally, or were uneconomical to produce locally. The most commonly purchased food items included tea, sugar, molasses, flour, and tobacco.⁵² In return, the most common items farmers sold were butter, eggs, sheep, and cattle. As local business records indicate, virtually every rural household participated in some form of market transaction.⁵³ This was especially

⁵⁰ 1871 Census, Black River, Schedule 5.

⁵¹ Hornsby, p. 131 indicates that parts of Cape Breton were still predominantly involved in beef production as late as 1891.

⁵² The term "family culture" seems appropriate here because none of the food items mentioned were absolutely necessary to sustain life but were cultural preferences. The most "necessary" of these items, "flour," was produced in small quantities, and there were important nutritional substitutes that could be produced locally, such as oatmeal, buckwheat, and barley.

⁵³ This conclusion is based on the examination of local business records. These records are available in several locations. The D. N. McLeod Ledger, containing entries from 1868 to 1879 as well as several unidentified ledgers are available at the Nicholas Denys Museum, St. Peters, covering St. Peters and L'Ardoise. The Alexander Finlayson Ledger, 1881-1901, Grand River, is available at PANS. The John McInnes Ledgers and Day Books (1879-1920), from his business at West Bay, are available at the Marble Mountain Museum,

necessary because cash was required for paying county rates and poll taxes. Although the prices received for farm goods varied over the period and in general declined, it does not appear that real farm incomes fell because the fall in prices for goods purchased more than compensated for the decline.⁵⁴

Accurate measures of the extent and value of farming in the County are more difficult to find than for the production of the fisheries. The main quantitative sources are the census for 1871, 1881, 1891, and 1901. However, figures that are available only once in ten years provides a situation in which some attempt is needed to evaluate whether these were typical or average years.

Table 2.1 illustrates the production of the main farm items as reported in the census from 1871 to 1901. The general trend of the figures suggests that production of crops increased to 1881, declined in 1891 and began a recovery in 1901. However, a major problem is that the census records do not provide sufficient information to evaluate how representative they are on a local basis.

Marble Mountain, Inverness County. No business records that cover this particular period for Isle Madame have been located but for earlier years the DeCarteret and LeVesconte papers, the Wilson Papers, and the Kavanagh Papers are available at PANS.

⁵⁴ The only figures available for farm output come from the four Federal Government Census taken in 1871, 1881, 1891, and 1901. Although farm output was down in 1901 the Agricultural Report for 1900 reported that the season was late and crops fell a little short of an average good crop but the prices obtained by farmers were good. Journals and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia, 1901, Appendix 8, p. 29.

Table 2.1a

**Production of Richmond County Farms Crops
1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901**

CROPS	1871	1881	1891	1901
Wheat (bus)	873	1,560	625	1,158
Oats (bus)	30,604	24,553	13,213	28,919
Potatoes (bus)	94,943	149,619	95,571	101,539
Turnips (bus)	2,335	6,532	5,102	
Hay (tons)	6,731	13,265	12, 523	14,576

Table 2.1b

**Production of Richmond County Farms Stock
1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901**

STOCK	1871	1881	1891	1901
Horses	1,268	1,312	1,377	1,467
Oxen	284	540	433	
Cows (milk)	3,980	5,019	5,115	5,199
Cattle (other)	2,898	3,379	3,837	4,120
Sheep	15,212	17,302	15,358	14,336
Swine	977	1,140	642	453

Table 2.1c

Production of Richmond County Farms Products
1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901

STOCK	1871	1881	1891	1901
Butter (lbs)	224,220	185,708	204,537	207,383
Cheese (lbs)	3,162	7,760	8,136	
Wool (lbs)	31,559	51,214	40,785	35,685
Cloth (yds)	51,377	78,616		
FARMERS	1,308	1,230	1,333	765 ⁵⁵

Sources: 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 Census of Canada, published reports. Numbers of farmers for 1891 and 1901 (including those who reported farming and some other occupation) are estimated from the Census Schedules.

An attempt to evaluate the representative nature of the data by using contemporary accounts has proven to be largely unsuccessful. Most of the information available comes from newspaper reports and reports of the Central Board of Agriculture. These reports are extremely subjective and often contradictory. The basic problem seems to originate in the wide variety of eco-systems created both by topography and the Maritime climate that often resulted in widely divergent growing conditions within a small area. This

⁵⁵ The 1901 published census returns do not include figures for occupation. These figures are a compilation based on the census schedules. It is possible that the vast decline in the number of farmers may be a result of different methods of counting.

diversity can be illustrated by the reports on the potato crop grown on Cape Breton Island for 1882. In Grand Anse, Richmond County it was reported as "a partial failure," in Middle River, Victoria County the crop was "enormous," at St. Ann's, Victoria County, it was described as "a good average." In Cape Breton County the report from North Sydney described the crop as "fair" and one from Sydney described it as "good," while the report from Christmas Island indicated that the crop there was "light, and much destroyed by rot." At LeMoine, in Inverness County the potato crop was described as providing "a larger yield than for many years."⁵⁶

Without actual production figures, the overall evaluation of any growing season was often speculative. Reports in The Journal of Agriculture, during the growing season in 1870 made statements such as, "the fields in general never looked more verdant than they do at the present time."⁵⁷ Later in the year the results of the Exhibition indicated that a very favourable season had permitted grain and seed crops to attain full growth to maturity and perfect ripening and that vegetable and root crops were "far in advance of that in any previous year."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Journals and Proceedings of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, 1883, pp. xxii-xxv.

⁵⁷ The Journal of Agriculture, Halifax, Vol. 1, no. 58, June 1870.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Vol. 1, no. 58, Oct. 1870, p. 573.

In comparing the Census for 1881 with those for the other three available years, it would appear that it was an exceptional year. The only report for Richmond County for that year came from River Bourgeois, where it was reported that "oats, and in some places, potatoes, yielded very good crops. Hay above average."⁵⁹ This comment appears to be supported by the Census figures. The only suggestion that there were problems for agriculture during the period covered by the 1891 census was a brief item from River Bourgeois in a September newspaper that "rain for the past few weeks has considerably damaged the farmers crops."⁶⁰

The 1901 figures are much better than those of 1891 but in general did not reach the 1881 levels. However, a general report on growing conditions in the province indicated that although there had been an early spring, continuous rain and cold weather later in the spring resulted in little seeding before June, "making the season late and crops backward, and generally speaking, the season was not favourable to growth."⁶¹

Contemporary anecdotal sources suggest that the data for 1871 and 1881 were collected in above average years and those for 1891 and 1901 in below average years. Comments in the Journal of Agriculture, the Journals of the

⁵⁹ Journals and Proceedings, 1882, Appendix 8, p. 123.

⁶⁰ Antigonish Casket, 4 September 1890, n.p. "River Bourgeois Items."

⁶¹ Journals and Proceedings, 1901, Appendix 8, pp. 29-30.

House of Assembly of Nova Scotia, and in newspapers, generally describe crop yields as average, but by chance it appears that no census was taken in an "average" year.

The responsibility for agriculture was split between the federal and provincial governments but the provincial government made little attempt to collect data on agriculture. There was no provincial department of agriculture and administration of financial support given by the province to farming was assigned to a body called "The Central Board of Agriculture." This Board was set up to administer grants-in-aid made to Agricultural Societies across the province for the improvement of seed and stock and it was composed of members who were elected by the societies in each district. One government representative also was appointed to the Board.⁶²

The method of collecting information on farming by the Central Board of Agriculture was "hit or miss" and depended primarily on the subjective evaluation of observers within certain locations who sent in reports. There does not appear to have been any method of selecting these observers other than the fact that the Secretary of the Board was acquainted with them. Most of the published

⁶² Journals and Proceedings, 1883, p.1, outlines a new Board that was appointed 31 Jan. 1883. District 1 was made up of Halifax and Lunenburg Counties; District 2 of Kings, Annapolis, and Queen Counties; District 3 of Digby, Shelburne, and Yarmouth; District 4 of Hants, Colchester, and Cumberland; District 5 of Pictou, Antigonish, and Guysborough; and District 6 of Cape Breton, Richmond, Inverness, and Victoria. The officers were elected from the district representatives except for the Secretary-Treasurer, Professor Lawson.

information coming from the societies dealt with administrative matters. Even these sketchy minutes and reports are often missing for Richmond County because it did not have a society that met government requirements for grants for nine of the thirty years covered by this study.

The main problem for agriculture in the County was the nature of the topography and soils. The best farming lands were found in scattered locations in widely separated plots. Most of the intervening land was suitable for only forests or pasture. The best locations for farming were in a long strip along the West Bay of the Bras d'Or Lakes, inland toward Grand Anse and Kempt Road, at D'Escousse on Isle Madame, near St. Peters, and around Loch Lomond. These lands occurred in strips rather than in compact plots, meaning that from one end to the other could be as much as fifteen or twenty miles.⁶³

This type of topography made it difficult for Agricultural Societies to operate efficiently. One of the main purposes for the societies was the improvement of stock through the purchase of purebred animals for the use of the members.⁶⁴ Each society might be able to purchase one or two purebred animals but because of the distances between farms, the use of these animals by members, other than those boarding the animals, was difficult. Most societies

⁶³ D. B Cann, J. I. MacDougall, and J. D. Hilchey, Soil Survey of Cape Breton Island Nova Scotia, Agriculture Canada, 1863, Report No. 12.

⁶⁴ Journals and Proceedings of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, 1879, Appendix 8, p. 83.

were formed with a great deal of enthusiasm but before long membership declined and the society would fail to meet the government requirements for the grant-in-aid. In effect, the limited resources of the societies and the dispersal of farms, resulted in a system which appeared to be largely operated for the benefit of a very small number of people, who maintained the society for the purpose of getting the government grant.⁶⁵

In general, membership in an Agricultural Society cost one dollar and the government provided two dollars for every paid membership. With this money the society paid its administration costs, purchased seed or stock, and often a purebred bull. When purebred stock was purchased it was allotted to one of the members to keep and a contract or agreement was drawn up. A common contract was for the member to agree "to keep the animal for two years for the use of the Society, at the expiration of which time the animal [became] his property."⁶⁶

Although the societies purchased stock from outside the County, often from J. Winburn Laurie⁶⁷ of Oakfield, for many years President of the Central

⁶⁵ This was actually suggested by J. Winburn Laurie in his report to the Legislature for 1879. Journals and Proceedings of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, 1880, Appendix 8, p. 143 and the minutes of the Richmond County Societies suggest this since few of the Societies before the late 1890's were in agricultural communities and run by farmers.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 106. Report of the Isle Madame Agricultural Society, 2 Dec. 1879.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1878, Appendix 8, Report of the Richmond Agricultural Society, 4 Dec. 1877; 1880, p. 106, Report of the Isle Madame Agricultural Society, 2 Dec.

Board of Agriculture, it was a fairly common practice for a member of the executive to use the society for disposing of his own stock. In 1881, for example, the Richmond Agricultural Society completed the arrangements "for the purchase from D. Cameron, Esq., the newly elected President, of a full-blood Ellesmere sow."⁶⁸ The following year, the Lennox Agricultural Society purchased an Ayrshire bull "Rob Roy" from Farquhar McPherson of Grand Anse, according to the report sent to the Central Board "at the very low price of \$80.00." The report was written by the Secretary and Treasurer of the Society, Farquhar McPherson.⁶⁹

There is also evidence that those who were involved in the societies were not bona fide farmers. This was admitted in the 1880 report of the Richmond Agricultural Society, which stated that the "meeting made a very good selection of officials, some of whom, although not practical agriculturalists, have always evinced the deepest interest in everything calculated to benefit the County at large."⁷⁰ The executive referred to was made up of a merchant and J.P., Duncan Cameron, as President; F. W. Bissett, Vice President, a clerk for his father George H. Bissett, a fish merchant at River Bourgeois; and Angus J. Boyd,

1879.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 1881, Appendix 8, p. 119, Report of the Richmond Agricultural Society.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 1882, p. 120, Report of the Lennox Agricultural Society, 27 Dec. 1881.

another River Bourgeois merchant and former teacher, as Secretary and Treasurer.⁷¹ The executive of the Arichat Society was as devoid of farmers as the Richmond Society. In 1882 the President was John F. Fuller, High Sheriff of the County; Fuller's son Charles J., a storekeeper and later Preventive Officer, was the Secretary and Treasurer; and the Vice-President was Remi Benoit, Collector of Customs.⁷²

Membership in the agricultural societies was low. Table 2.2 provides the average number of members of agricultural societies by five year intervals from 1871 to 1900. It is impossible to determine how many members actually made most of their living from their farms, and the ratio of society members to farmers probably over estimates the number of farmers who belonged.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1881, p. 119, Report of the Richmond Agricultural Society.

⁷¹ The information on the executive is compiled from the family reconstruction database on which this study is based.

⁷² Journals and Proceedings, 1882; family reconstruction database.

Table 2.2
Membership in Richmond County Agricultural Societies,
1871 to 1900

YEARS	NUMBERS OF YEARS IN WHICH OFFICIAL SOCIETIES WERE OPERATING	AVERAGE NUMBER OF MEMBERS	MEMBERS TO FARMERS
1871-1875	1	42	1 to 31
1876-1880	4	84	1 to 15
1881-1885	4	129	1 to 10
1886-1890	2	66	1 to 20
1891-1895	5	88	1 to 15
1896-1900	5	229	1 to 3

Sources: Journals and Proceedings of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, 1872 to 1901, Appendix on Agriculture; numbers of farmers from the 1871, 1881, 1891, and 1901 Census.⁷³

Fluctuations in membership appear to be directly related to the fact that only a small number of people received any direct benefit from the money expended by the society. The 1880 Secretary-Treasurer of the Isle Madame Agricultural Society illustrated this point when he reported to the Central Board that membership had decreased from seventy-eight to forty. "[M]any persons, we

⁷³ The ratios for 1871-75 are based on the number of farmers reported in the published 1871 Published Census, for 1876-85 on the 1881 Census, for 1886-1895 on the 1891 Published Census, and for 1901 Census on the Census schedules.

are sorry to say, being of opinion that they derive no personal benefits from the Society...."⁷⁴

By 1900 new agricultural societies were forming that appear to have had more involvement by actual farmers, but the executives still contained many who were not directly involved in agriculture. One possible reason why the participation of farmers at the executive level was poor is that the education level of farmers was low. However, there is little evidence that supports this theory. Areas such as the Black River district and Loch Lomond were located in some of the best farming areas and had some of the highest literacy levels in the County but did not even have societies until the late 1890's. Some of the executive members of these societies had previously been appointed Justices of the Peace and the level of literacy needed to act as a justice should have been sufficient for them to participate at the executive level of an agricultural society.

What is clear in the case of Richmond County is that, before the late 1890's, agricultural societies did not exist in the most productive agricultural communities, and those that did exist were dominated by people who were not primarily concerned in agriculture. By the time societies were being formed in the agricultural districts, government grants-in-aid had been reduced below the amount of local subscriptions.⁷⁵ The formation of these societies appear to have

⁷⁴ Journals and Proceedings, 1881, Appendix 8, Report of the Isle Madame Agricultural Society.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1902, Appendix 8, p. 8. In 1901 only the Red Islands Agricultural

had a different rationale than the earlier societies and may be directly related to the increased problems that these areas were having in competing with outside products.⁷⁶ Either these farmers were becoming more commercially oriented or they were having to band together as traditional markets disappeared. The proliferation of societies and increased membership indicates a change in farming communities⁷⁷ but census data and other reports do not provide clear reasons for this change and a far more detailed analysis of agriculture is required before conclusions can be drawn.

Another feature of agriculture was the increase in the use of cash, rather than produce, for paying accounts with local merchants. In the 1880's about 50 per cent of accounts were paid in cash and 50 per cent in produce or labour but by the 1890's 70 per cent of payments were in cash.⁷⁸ The source of this cash has not been identified because the available rural ledgers do not indicate that farmers were paid in cash for their produce. But the diary of Mary Wood Smith of

Society received more in Government Grants than it had raised in local subscriptions.

⁷⁶ This assumption has been made by historians, such as Hornsby, because they found reports indicating that items such as potatoes had entered local markets but without a better overall analysis of agriculture this assumption cannot be justified. See Hornsby, p. 130.

⁷⁷ The increase in participation in agricultural societies was province-wide. Journals of the House of Assembly, Appendix 8, 1895-1902.

⁷⁸ This is based on a sample from the John MacInnis Ledgers, West Bay. A similar trend was seen in the Dickie Ledgers of Upper Stewiacke, from the opening of the business in the 1860's to the 1890's.

Smithville, in neighbouring Inverness County, tells of her son selling livestock in Sydney on a cash basis.⁷⁹ It is possible that farmers sold much of their production to buyers outside the local area. The movement of people from the less prosperous farms to work outside the primary industries probably generated cash for the more commercially viable farming operations, as these workers purchased food from local farmers.⁸⁰ "Farmers" from the Red Islands district increased their family incomes by working on a seasonal basis at the coal mines in Cape Breton County.⁸¹ The extra income earned from this source ranged from \$50 to as much as \$300 per family.⁸² Extra earnings were reported as well in Loch Lomond and Grand River but in the more commercially oriented farming district, Black River, the reporting of other income was rare.⁸³

The evidence that is available supports the contention that, in general, Richmond County agriculture was able to support most of its farmers at a

⁷⁹ Mary Wood Smith, Diary of Mary Wood Smith of Smithville, Inverness County, (Mabou: Mabou Communications Ltd., 1994), entry dated 14 May 1891, p. 2 and entry dated 31 May 1891, p. 13.

⁸⁰ MacKinnon, p. 141 refers to this phenomena in Guysborough County when gold mines began operating and paying in cash. The miners purchased supplies from local farmers with cash creating spin-offs that reached well beyond the mining communities. The wages generated by the fishermen who worked on American vessels was probably another source of cash in the economy.

⁸¹ 1901 Census, Red Islands, note attached to Schedule 1, p. 1.

⁸² 1901 Census, Red Islands.

⁸³ 1901 Census, Richmond County, Grand River, Loch Lomond, and Black River.

subsistence level throughout the last three decades of the nineteenth century and that some, especially in the Loch Lomond and Black River districts, were commercially orientated by nineteenth century standards.⁸⁴ The declining number of farmers, the increased membership in agricultural societies, and the increase in the use of cash rather than credit, suggests that a rationalization of agriculture was taking place that pushed out those who had settled on marginal lands or who were unable to adapt to the changes taking place. However, it is important not to over-generalize because many farmers on marginal lands were able to adapt by moving to types of production, such as poultry and small fruit, that required a much smaller and less fertile land base. Even in a county where farming was not the central feature of economic life, farms were becoming more commercial.

Sea-Faring

The period of reciprocity in trade with the United States enabled Cape Breton coastal traders to expand their activities, especially in trade with New

⁸⁴ 1871 Census, Black River and Loch Lomond, Schedule 4 and Schedule 5 and Acheson, 1993, p. 19. Using the 1871 Census and Acheson's figures on improved land, 44 per cent of Black River farms could be classed as commercial. In Loch Lomond, a newer settlement, improved acreage did not reach Black River levels until 1881. Robert MacKinnon, Fig. 5.6, includes the Black River district as part of his "farming regions" in 1891.

England. Although the Maritime traders were often ridiculed in New England ports, they brought an "increasing stream of firewood, coal, fish, flour, provisions, grain, and dairy products to Boston and the Essex County ports where the 'bluenose' merchants made their purchase of East- and West-India goods, manufactures, whaling products, and hides."⁸⁵ Many Richmond County merchants and ship owners profited from this trade. In the 1860's events reshaped the potential of the coastal trade. The end of reciprocity meant the introduction of tariffs on Nova Scotian goods, such as coal⁸⁶ and new tariffs on American goods destined for local markets. These tariffs undermined the profitability of the coastal trade.

Two natural disasters in 1870 and 1873 compounded the problems of the 1860's. On September 4, 1870 a gale destroyed the ships and took the lives of a number of Arichat's seaman, as well as one of its most active entrepreneurs: Thomas Lenoir, Jr. In August 1873 a second gale destroyed a large proportion of the floating stock of Richmond County and reportedly took the lives of sixty-eight heads of families.⁸⁷ At the same time there was a decline in freight rates⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Samuel Eliot Morison, The Maritime History of Massachusetts 1783-1860, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), p. 366.

⁸⁶ Marilyn Gerriets, "The Impact of the Reciprocity Treaty in the Nova Scotian Coal Industry," paper presented at the meeting of the Canadian Economics Society, Charlottetown, 1991.

⁸⁷ John P. Parker, Cape Breton Ships and Men, (Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1967), p. 116.

that was caused by an international recession. These factors, coming together, resulted in a rapid decline in coastal trading. The disasters preceded a diversion of local capital away from both coastal shipping and the fisheries that appears to have been caused by an increased realization of the risks involved in the industries. In one year the combined events of a recession and a natural disaster resulted in a decline of one-third in fisheries capital.⁸⁹

As well, the late nineteenth century fishing and coasting industry appears to have been influenced by the law of diminishing returns. In the fisheries, high levels of investment did not ensure higher returns, thanks to marketing problems. In coastal trading slumping freight rates deterred would-be investors since the return was not adequate to compensate for the risk inherent in ocean travel.⁹⁰

Of the three main employers in Richmond County, the coastal trade suffered the worst setbacks. After the 1880s coastal traders did not generally

⁸⁸ Eric W. Sager with Gerald E. Panting, Maritime Capital: The Shipping Industry in Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990, p. 120.

⁸⁹ Based on the Sessional Papers (No. 4), 1874, Appendix P and 1875, vol. 8, Pt. 5, p. 131.

⁹⁰ Eric W. Sager, Lewis R. Fisher, and Rosemary E. Ommer, "Landward and Seaward Opportunities in Canada's Age of Sail," in Lewis R. Fisher and Eric W. Sager, eds., Merchant Shipping and Economic Development in Atlantic Canada: Proceedings of the Fifth Conference of the Atlantic Shipping Project, (St. John's: Maritime History Group, 1982), pp. 18-19 suggests that a similar phenomena was happening in the ocean going-trade.

replace their vessels and they allowed the fleet to decline. However, they did not sell out and at the turn of the century, mariners were still an important element in Richmond County. Although, incomes for the coastal traders were still good in 1901, those involved did not perceive a future in the carrying trade. Rather than invest in new vessels they deposited their profits in banks.⁹¹ Unlike the fishermen, the coastal traders did not suffer the type of poverty that many fishermen did because they had been able to accumulate assets. In fact, 80 per cent of the master mariners who sailed out of Arichat from 1868 to 1923 were also owners of vessels.⁹²

The assets accumulated by families involved in coastal trade provided more options for them. However, two options seemed to have been favoured: migration to New England or persistency. Those who withdrew from the Richmond County trade and migrated appeared to have made it possible for those that remained to maintain a good standard of living as the market for coastal services contracted. With fewer vessels competing for market share, the

⁹¹ Richmond County Probate Records, Arichat, provides many examples of inventories of individuals involved in coastal trade that included bank accounts, for example, file A-197, 1880, Felix Forest, master mariner, had \$870.00 in the bank; A-200, 1880, Robert LaVache, mariner, left \$2300.00 in the bank; and A-268, 1890, Captain Charles Boudrot left \$1960.00 in the bank.

⁹² Richmond County Record, 18 June 1960, a list of captains who sailed out of Arichat compiled by C. V. Herbin, Harbour Master at Arichat in 1923. Out of the 137 names on the list, 108 were of Acadian origin. However, this was not a complete list of captains resident in Richmond County because some sailed out of other ports.

supply adjusted to the demand.

The decision coastal traders made to migrate appears to have been influenced by the impact Confederation had on perceptions of their future. The Confederation debate divided the province between those who thought they could win through western expansion and landward based policies and those who had much to lose from the changing orientation. The coastal traders were already seeing their local sources of credit disappearing as investment moved toward such financial endeavours as railroad construction.⁹³ There was a strong element of politics involved in the decision of many coasters to leave, especially in the early 1870's.⁹⁴

Of all groups in Richmond County, the coastal traders suffered most from the structural changes that had taken place with the closure of markets in the United States. Whole families, most of whom had some assets, moved to New England because trade had made the area familiar to them. It appears that this group was primarily influenced by push mechanisms as their jobs had depended on access to American markets. However, there is some evidence that those who made the move were no more successful, and possibly even less so, than those who remained behind, as many of them eventually ended up as

⁹³ This fact is seen in the tendency for families to place savings in a government savings bank rather than provide money for mortgages.

⁹⁴ This feature was revealed in conversations with Stephen A. White, Centre d'études acadiennes, Moncton, May 1995. His family migrated to New England in this period. Another group moved to Prince Edward Island.

labourers.⁹⁵ It was the transformation of North American trade away from the coast toward the interior that was partly responsible for the decreased viability of the industry. Moving to the United States does not appear to have been a successful strategy for many seafarers who wanted to maintain their way of life.

New Choices

At the same time as old ventures were perceived to be too risky, families with small sums of surplus funds began to seek safer investments and many selected the security of deposits in provincial savings banks and other financial institutions. Even when the potential return was smaller, the added security was important, especially as people aged.⁹⁶ This had a significant impact on the availability of local capital. Richmond County had a ship-building industry which had been particularly viable during the 1850s and 1860s.⁹⁷ By the 1840's, the majority of mortgage money for the construction of vessels was obtained from local sources, but by the 1870's most of this money had to be obtained outside the County.⁹⁸ At the same time, wills and probate inventories suggest that larger

⁹⁵ Stephen A. White, "Another Acadian Before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, 1877, " Les Cahiers de la Société Historique Acadienne VII:2, (1976), p. 82.

⁹⁶ See Chapter on Age and Mortality.

⁹⁷ John P. Parker, Cape Breton Ships and Men, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1967), pp. 98-119.

⁹⁸ Touesnard, p. 148.

and larger sums of money were deposited in bank accounts, especially in the Government savings bank at Halifax.⁹⁹

The growth of lower risk enterprises that were both directly subsidized by government, such as the railways, and indirectly subsidized by government policies, such as the National Policy, made it more difficult and more expensive to finance high risk activities such as the fisheries and coastal trading, especially when they were not backed by government. The changing structure of business and politics resulted in changes that both created hardship and provided opportunities for families who were willing to leave and also for some who were willing to stay.¹⁰⁰ How families were able to take advantage of change was largely dependent on the resources available to them when the changes took place and how they were able to adapt to change.

At the same time as the capital¹⁰¹ underpinnings of the economy were being eroded, Richmond County residents, like other North Americans, were caught firmly in the consumer revolution that had been gathering momentum

⁹⁹ Richmond County Probate Files, Court House, Arichat; Richmond County Wills, PANS, RG 48. Only one out of eleven probate inventories filed in Arichat in the 1870's mentioned bank accounts. In the 1890's eight of the fourteen inventories filed listed bank accounts.

¹⁰⁰ Chapter 6 on "Hierarchy" will deal with this topic in more detail.

¹⁰¹ The meaning of capital here is used in its broadest sense to mean the resources involved in the production and marketing of goods.

since the late eighteenth century.¹⁰² The variety of goods and services available was expanding in Europe and North America faster than the rate of economic growth in many areas. Fewer locations had economies that could expand rapidly enough to support the increased demand and rising expectations. These increased expectations, which could not be realized in areas of slow or stable growth, resulted in large scale relocations of population to "urban" environments where new goods and services could be both produced and consumed less expensively. The new consumerism was especially attractive to the young and it created a spiral of development in many urban centres.

The failure of cash incomes to increase significantly in relation to prices made it attractive for the young of the County to leave for more urbanized centres where the new consumerism was creating opportunities outside fishing, farming, and coasting. These areas were especially attractive to women because they created options for them outside marriage. Since most farm women did not marry until around the age of twenty-five and those in fishing communities until age twenty-three,¹⁰³ they had several adult years at home as dependants. As urban opportunities increased, women left home to earn money

¹⁰² T. H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain': The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present 119 (May 1988), 73-104; Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, J. H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Elizabethan England, (Bloomington, 1982,) chapter 1.

¹⁰³ See Chapter 4.

and enjoy "an adventure" before they settled down as wives and mothers. Betsy Beattie claims that it was the families that sent their daughters out to work to help supply needed money at home for farm and other supplies.¹⁰⁴ Although this was a strategy used by some families, there is little evidence that the phenomena was as general as she claims. As the century progressed, going to the United States became a mark of distinction and, according to Margaret W. Morley, it gave a girl "a right to put on airs and be looked up to." These women came back with ideas and with all sorts of household embellishments.¹⁰⁵ In this way young women often used going away to work in the cities as a means for securing material assets that would elevate their standing in the community. Agnes Gillis of St. Rose, Inverness County, left home in 1905 because she "wanted to see the world." Her family had a two-hundred-acres farm and there was no need for her to go to work but she insisted on going. Christine MacKay Carmichael dreamed of going to Boston and was impressed by young women who told their stories of Boston to her class at school during the 1920s.¹⁰⁶ Decisions made by young people to leave could be attributed to a search for

¹⁰⁴ Betsy Beattie, "'Going Up to Lynn': Single, Maritime-Born Women in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1879-1930," Acadiensis XXII (Autumn 1992), p. 72.

¹⁰⁵ Margaret W. Morley, Down-North and Up Along, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912), p. 217.

¹⁰⁶ Gary Burrill, Away: Maritimers in Massachusetts, Ontario, and Alberta, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), p. 57 and p. 102.

independence, adventure, and esteem, as well as a means of assisting their families.

Richmond County families were forced to adapt to external changes that were rooted in large scale economic changes. However, these families and their individual members were not merely victims of this transition but also agents. Although the options available to some were more limited than others, many developed creative ways of dealing with the new environment. While subsistence levels remained much the same, the standards of competency were changing as new conveniences increased the level at which family and individual needs were satisfied.

Chapter 3

Population: Age, Gender, Family Size and Structure

Families are social groups that are constantly experiencing internal transition. To see how a specific family can change over a thirty year period, consider the McBeath family of Grand River. The head of the family, Farquhar, was born in Scotland in 1818 and probably came to Cape Breton with his brother, who was in Grand River in 1838. In 1843¹ Farquhar married Margaret MacKenzie, also born in Scotland in 1818.² In 1871 they had four of their six children still living at home: Kenneth age 25, Murdoch age 22, Kenneth "og" age 20, and Mary 17.³ The older Kenneth died in 1876 and Kenneth "og" was living elsewhere but another son, Norman, was living with his parents in 1881, along with Murdoch and Mary.⁴ In 1891 Norman, Murdoch and Mary were all absent but Kenneth "og" had returned, bringing with him a wife, and one unnamed son.⁵ By 1901 Farquhar and Margaret were both deceased, the former having died in

¹ St. John's Anglican Church Records, Arichat, 1843.

² Farquhar and Margaret's dates of birth are based on the inscriptions, Grand River Cemetery, Grand River, Richmond County.

³ 1871 Census, Grand River, No. 2/2. On the census Farquhar is listed as 54 and Margaret as 58. It was common for Scottish families to include siblings with the same given names. The word "og" is Gaelic for "younger."

⁴ 1881 Census, Grand River, no. 83.

⁵ 1891 Census, Grand River, no. 5. In 1889 Kenneth married Annie McCuish of Loch Lomond, and their first son, Archibald, was born at Loch Side in the Loch Lomond district on 16 November 1890. PANS, Richmond County Marriage Records, 1889, no. 19; The Scotia Sun, Port Hawkesbury, 15 Jan. 1991, "Archie MacBeth turns 100 years old."

1895 and the latter in 1892. Kenneth and his family had taken over the homestead and had added another son, Frank, born the same year his grandmother died.⁶

The family was a unit that constantly exhibited continuity and change. The fact that a rural community was reaching maturity meant that many options that had been available during the pioneer stage of development were closed. Comparison of the strategies used by Irish migrants in early Ontario to provide for families and those employed by Richmond County rural dwellers, illustrates the importance of local environment. Families documented by Bruce Elliot were able to purchase farms and land for their children and, if land was not available close by, they would move to another nearby community where land was available.⁷ The sale of clergy reserves and other large grants helped make land available after many of the early Ontario settlers were well established. These strategies were not open to Richmond County rural dwellers after the 1850's because, by the time the pioneers were established, adjacent land was also settled. An early settler, John McInnes (ca. 1785-1875), saw his sons Donald and Murdoch develop farms in the back lands, his son Angus remain on the old homestead, and only two of his sons migrate elsewhere. Murdoch, Donald, and Angus had to find other means of assisting their children, many of whom

⁶ 1891 Census, Grand River, no. 40/40.

⁷ Bruce S. Elliott, Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach, (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1988), pp. 196-226.

migrated to the United States and elsewhere.⁸

Parents also had to maintain their own security within a changing environment. Like providing for children, there were elements of continuity and change in the strategies adopted. While it is easy to record the changes in specific families, the best way to determine whether changes were taking place across all families or households in a region is to look at the aggregate population. Age and gender are two important statistics for demographers and social historians since the distribution of people by age and gender provides the context in which families and households are formed and operate.

There are several different ways to determine age structure and each provides a different perspective. In order to establish a profile of the age structure of Richmond County during the period under study, calculations have been made for the average age of all the population, the average age of the residents twenty-one years old and over, the percentage of the population under nine, the average age of household heads, and the percentage of the population in various age groups.

The gender balance within a community can have a major impact on the formation of new families. The overall ratio between men and women is important but more important is the ratio of men to women in various age categories. Section 2 will consider the over-all gender balance as well as the

⁸ Reconstruction of the family history of the MacInnes family of St. George's Channel.

age-stratified gender ratio.

Section 3 will develop a working definition for the concept of family that is consistent with the data available in the census. The size of families in 1871 and 1901 will be calculated to determine whether there were changes in the number of individuals residing in family units.

Section 4 will use an adaptation of Peter Laslett's classification of family structure⁹ in an attempt to measure the composition of families and determine whether this feature was changing over time. These sections will provide a snapshot of the age structure, gender ratio, and household size and structure in the County at the beginning and at the end of the period under study.

THE AGE STRUCTURE

The simplest method of determining changes in age is to compute the average age of the population. Some researchers believe that the average age is distorted by the under-reporting of children on census schedules¹⁰ and prefer

⁹ Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, eds. Household and Family in past time, (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), p. 29.

¹⁰ A general trend that has been found in Census is the under-reporting of children. This problem was identified by using both family reconstruction and the use of later census to estimate under counting. R. Marvin McInnis, "Women, Work and Childbearing: Ontario in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," Histoire sociale -- Social History XXIV: 48 (1991), p. 241, fn. 12; John W. Adams & Alice Bee Kasakoff, "Estimates of Census Under-enumeration Based on Genealogies," Social Science History 15:4 (Winter 1991), 527-543. Although some infants and children were missed in the Richmond County census, no evidence can be found that there was systematic under-counting.

to use figures for the average age of the adult population. The latter statistic also gives a better measure because it excludes the effect of the epidemic diseases most prevalent in childhood. The results of both methods, as shown in Table 3.1, illustrate that the Richmond County population was aging over the period from 1871 to 1901.

Table 3.1

The Average Age of the Population and the average Age of the Adult Population, Richmond County, by Census District 1871 and 1901 (Number of observations in brackets)

	1871		1901	
	Total	21 and Over	Total	21 and Over
Framboise	23 (537)	44 (246)	30 (595)	46 (319)
Loch Lomond	27 (435)	40 (223)	32 (364)	47(218)
Red Islands	26 (775)	40 (399)	28 (813)	47 (406)
Grand River	28 (822)	40 (458)	33 (688)	48 (415)
L'Ardoise	24 (1672)	41 (782)	27 (2143)	44 (1071)
St Peters	24 (992)	38 (490)	28 (1168)	43 (626)
Black River	25 (747)	39 (376)	33 (516)	48 (309)
River Inhabitants	23 (1166)	39 (526)	27 (1343)	45 (670)
River Bourgeois	24 (964)	39 (457)	27 (1124)	44 (567)
D'Ecousse	24 (1455)	40 (716)	27 (1583)	46 (763)
Petit de Grat	25 (2018)	39 (1005)	27 (1481)	48 (762)
Arichat	26 (1058)	41 (554)	28 (456)	47 (318)
West Arichat	24 (1660)	40 (777)	28(733)	47 (489)
Richmond County	25 (14,301)	40 (7009)	28 (13,376)	46 (489)

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules for Richmond County.

The strength of the aging process is shown by an average increase in the age of all the population of three years and in the average age of adults of six

years. In addition, the increase occurred in all census districts, although some showed a stronger ageing trend than others. Black River and Petit de Grat, districts that were as economically and socially different as any in the County, both experienced an average increase in the age of adults of nine years, although the same statistic for the total population was eight years in the former and only two years for the latter. This discrepancy was created by the decline in the proportion of children in the two districts. In Black River, the under twenty-one population declined from almost fifty per cent in 1871 to only forty per cent in 1900, a decline of 10 per cent. The parallel decline in Petit de Grat was only 1.5 per cent.

Table 3.2 provides a comparison of the age of household heads in 1871 and 1901. Since most researchers agree that out-migrants were generally young men and women,¹¹ it might be expected that the average age of family heads would increase over the thirty-year period under study. Although the figures do suggest that the average age of household heads was increasing, that increase was small on a county basis. On the other hand, the increase was more pronounced in some census districts than in others, as Table 3.2 indicates.

¹¹ Alan Brookes, "Out-migration...", p. 33; Patricia Thornton, "The Problem of Out-Migration...", p. 41.

Table 3.2
Number of Families and Mean Age of
Household Heads By Census District 1871 and 1901

	1871		1901	
	N	Mean Age	N	Mean Age
Framboise	84	48	117	52
Loch Lomond	60	56	72	52
Red Islands	119	54	153	48
Grand River	132	50	147	57
L'Ardoise	257	47	394	52
St Peters	158	49	220	54
Black River	101	51	110	53
River Inhabitants	191	47	278	50
River Bourgeois	171	46	236	47
D'Escousse	272	44	325	48
Petit de Grat	389	46	308	47
Arichat	202	48	124	52
West Arichat	298	46	201	50
Richmond County	2434	48	2685	50

Sources: 1871 Census and 1901 Census schedules for Richmond County.

Only two census districts, Red Islands and Loch Lomond, show declines in the average age of household heads. However, overall the average age of this group was not increasing as rapidly as that of the total population or the

adult population. The replacement of older family heads was taking place at only slightly higher ages than at the beginning of the period. Even in communities such as L'Ardoise, where there was an increase in the number of families of more than 50 per cent, family heads were five years older in 1901 than in 1871. This suggests that people may have been either living longer,¹² or maintaining control over the family assets longer.

Since fertility, or the ability and desire to bear children,¹³ was declining over much of North America during this period,¹⁴ it would be useful to know whether this trend was also a factor in Richmond County. One way to determine this is to explore whether there were declines in the proportion of children in the population. Table 3.3 investigates that possibility and shows the change in the proportion of children under ten as a percentage of the total population.

¹² This issue will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

¹³ The literature is surprisingly quiet on a general definition of fertility although in the strictest sense it should be the same as birthrate. However, fertility cannot be equated with birth-rate in most studies because they have used a combination of census data and life tables to produce measures of fertility. This produces figures that reflect a common death rate that may or may not reflect the actual rate. The problems associated with applying this assumption will be discussed further in the section on fertility.

¹⁴ Ellen M. Thomas Gee, "Early Canadian Fertility Transition: components Analysis of Census Data", Canadian Studies in Population 6 (1979), pp. 23-32; Yasukichi Yasabu, Birth Rates of the White Population in the United States, 1800-1880, (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins Press, 1962).

Table 3.3

The Number and Percentage of Children under 10 By Census District 1871 and 1901¹⁵

	1871		1901		A	B
	N	%	N	%		
Framboise	151	28.1	134	22.5	-5.6	-11.3
Loch Lomond	98	22.5	66	18.0	-4.5	-33.7
Red Islands	150	24.5	201	19.6	-4.9	+34.0
Grand River	167	20.3	106	15.4	-4.9	-36.5
L'Ardoise	464	27.8	544	25.3	-2.5	+17.2
St Peters	239	24.1	221	18.9	-5.2	-7.5
Black River	179	24.2	94	18.2	-6.0	-47.5
River Inhabitants	359	30.8	353	26.2	-4.6	-1.7
River Bourgeois	265	27.5	291	25.8	-1.7	+9.8
D'Ecousse	445	30.6	458	28.9	-1.7	+2.9
Petit de Grat	524	26.4	386	25.5	-0.9	-26.3
Arichat	247	23.1	133	22.5	-0.6	-46.2
West Arichat	483	29.1	251	25.2	-3.9	-48.0
Richmond County	3771	26.4	3238	23.7	-2.7	-14.1

*Column A shows the change in the proportion of children under ten years of age as a percentage of the total population of the census district.

¹⁵ 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules for Richmond County. The figures in the charts produced are not identical to the published versions of the Census. Occasionally there have been problems when the Schedules were microfilmed that resulted in the loss of the micro-data or the incorrect classification of data. At times information was omitted from the schedules and it appears that when the "sex" column was left blank it was assumed by the compiler that the individual was male. Also, occasionally the "sex" was incorrectly recorded.

****Column B shows the percentage change in the actual numbers of children under ten in each census district.**

In all districts the proportion of the population under ten years of age was declining. These statistics also indicate that there was a wide variation in the percentage of children from one census district to another, even in 1871, when the figures for those under ten ranged from a low of 20.3 per cent in Grand River to a high of 30.8 per cent in River Inhabitants. It might be expected that cultural differences, such as religion, would influence birth rates. However, one of the highest, as well as one of the lowest figures, were for census districts in which the residents were predominantly Scottish and Protestant, namely Grand River and Framboise. Over the period 1871 to 1901, the main declines were in the predominantly Scottish farming communities. In the fishing communities, most of the decline in the numbers of children under nine could be attributed to the increasing age of family heads.

Column B indicates that there was an overall decline in the actual number of children under 10. However, there was a wide range in the changes taking place in the actual numbers of children from one census district to another. The range of change varied from a high in Red Islands, which reported an increase of 34 per cent, to West Arichat reporting a 48 per cent decline for the same age group. Although children as a proportion of the population declined in all districts, this did not always translate into a decline in the actual number of

children in the district. In some districts such as L'Ardoise, increases in population resulted in more children nine and under in 1901 than in 1871.

Cultural differences may have had an impact on the birth rate over time because census districts with predominantly Roman Catholic populations, although showing a declining presence of children, had considerably larger proportions than census districts that were mainly Protestant. However, a second question arises. Was difference in culture that caused the decline or were there factors operating that influenced the farming districts differently from fishing districts? The available data does not provide an answer to this question since so few Scots were fishermen and French farmers.

Table 3.4 provides an even more graphic picture of the age shift in population and the differences in the strength of that shift from one census district to another.

Table 3.4

**Percentage of the Population under 40 and Over 40
Richmond County 1871 and 1901 By Census District¹⁶**

	1871	1901	1871	1901	CHANGE
	0-39	0-39	40+	40+	(%)
Framboise	81	69	19	31	12
Loch Lomond	76	66	24	34	12
Red Islands	76	75	24	25	1
Grand River	76	60	24	40	16
L'Ardoise	79	73	21	27	6
St Peters	78	72	22	28	6
Black River	79	61	21	39	18
River Inhabitants	80	73	20	27	7
River Bourgeois	80	70	20	30	10
D'Ecousse	80	72	20	28	8
Petit de Grat	79	72	21	28	7
Arichat	74	68	26	32	6
West Arichat	80	69	20	31	11
Richmond County	79	71	21	29	8

Note: The percent change indicates the shift in the population from the under forty age group to the over forty age group.

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules Richmond County.

¹⁶ Compiled from the 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules for Richmond County. The age category represents the median of the overall age categories used and divides the categories into two parts. For a further breakdown of these figures, see Appendix A.

The table above provides a clear indication that the age structure of the population was changing over the period under study and that the population was aging, with eight per cent of the population moving from the under 40 category to the over 40 category.¹⁷ As the population became older, the number of children declined, a result which is not surprising. The question remains as to why the population was aging and why procreation had slowed.

Gender

An important element in the ability of a society to create new families is the ratio of men to women. Historians have noted that during this era, the gender ratios in cities were becoming weighted toward females.¹⁸ This phenomena was largely created by differences in the job market for men and women. Men tended to enter seasonal industries such as the fisheries, lumbering, harvesting, mining, and construction,¹⁹ most of which were carried on

¹⁷ Women generally had their last child when they were in their early forties suggesting the importance of the age shift in the level of the birth rate.

¹⁸ Bettina Bradbury, Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Inc., 1993), p. 52. Bradbury found that the ratio of women to men in Montreal in the last half of the nineteenth century was 113 to 100.

¹⁹ J. I. Little, "Ethnicity, Family Structure, and Seasonal Labour Strategies on Quebec's Appalachian Frontier, 1852-1881," Journal of Family History 17:3 (1991), p. 295; A. A. MacKenzie, "Cape Breton and the Western Harvest Excursions, 1890-1928," in Kenneth Donovan, ed., Cape Breton at 200: Historical Essays in Honour of the Island's Bicentennial 1785-1985, (Sydney, Nova Scotia: University College of Cape Breton Press), p. 71; Del Muiise, "The

in non-urban environments. Women, on the other hand, found more opportunities that were year-round and urban, especially in service occupations and manufacturing.²⁰ Decreased opportunities for urban women to marry could inhibit the formation of families. If the gender ratios in cities were changing, corresponding changes may have been taking place in rural areas, inhibiting the opportunities for rural men to marry and have families. Was Richmond County influenced by these general demographic trends?

There is clear evidence that the gender balance was changing in Richmond County. In 1871 there were 6985 males and 7283 females reported as residing in the County,²¹ providing a ratio of 959 men for every 1000 women. This ratio was 8.5 per cent lower than the Canadian average of 1050 men for every 1000 women.²² By 1901 there were a total of 6839 men to 6676 women or

Making of An Industrial Community: Cape Breton Coal Towns 1867-1900," in Don MacGillivray and Brian Tennyson, ed., Cape Breton historical essays, (Sydney, Cape Breton: University College of Cape Breton, 1985), pp. 82-83.

²⁰ Bradbury, pp. 33-34; Sharon Myers, "'Not to be Ranked as Women': Female Industrial Workers in Turn-of-the-century Halifax," in Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, ed., Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th Century Maritimes, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 1994), p. 162; Betsy Beattie, "'Going up to Lynn': Single, Maritime-Born Women in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1879-1930," Acadiensis XXII (1992), pp. 65-86.

²¹ Census of Canada 1871, Table 1, p. 83.

²² Compiled from M. C. Urquhart, ed., Historical Statistics of Canada, (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1965), Series A 60-74, p. 17.

a ratio of 1024 men to every 1000 women,²³ a figure much closer to the Canadian ratio of 1027 men to every 1000 women.²⁴ Table 3.5 represents the breakdown of males and females by census district for both 1871 and 1901 and the gender ratios represented by this breakdown.

²³ Census of Canada, 1901, Table VII, p. 51.

²⁴ Ibid.

Table 3.5

**Gender and Gender Ratio by Census District,
Richmond County 1871 and 1901.²⁵**

	1871			1901		
	Male	Female	Ratio	Male	Female	Ratio
Framboise	291	247	1178	316	279	1133
Loch Lomond	209	226	925	184	182	1011
Red Islands	375	401	935	407	407	1000
Grand River	393	429	916	360	329	1094
L'Ardoise	815	857	951	1122	1027	1093
St Peters	500	491	1018	500	491	1018
Black River	371	376	987	269	248	1085
River Inhabitants	564	602	937	676	673	1004
River Bourgeois	481	483	996	585	544	1075
D'Ecousse	718	738	973	777	813	956
Petit de Grat	974	1008	966	755	758	996
Arichat	502	556	903	278	313	888
West Arichat	792	869	911	511	534	957
Richmond County	6985	7283	959	6839	6676	1024

In 1871 there was a surplus of women in the County but by 1901 there was a deficit, although the balance between males and females was closer. The gender ratios alone do not provide a sufficient measure of the possibilities for

²⁵ Compiled from the Census of Canada 1871, Table 1, p. 83 and Census of Canada, 1901, Table VII, p. 51.

family formation. Since the age distribution of the population was also changing over the period, this could influence the potential for the formation of new families. Table 3.6 provides a description of the population by gender and age group, as well as gender ratios within age groups.

Table 3.6

The Distribution of the Population of Richmond County,
1871 and 1901 by age category and gender,
and the gender ratio.²⁶

AGE GROUP	1871			1901		
	MALES	FEMALES	RATIO	MALES	FEMALES	RATIO
Under 1	191	199	960	141	141	1000
1-4	735	727	1011	648	635	1020
5-9	947	974	972	824	838	983
10-14	835	817	1022	888	811	1095
15-19	712	786	906	768	650	1182
20-29	1304	1351	965	955	819	1166
30-39	764	870	878	694	685	1013
40-49	553	580	953	612	607	992
50-59	374	443	844	518	587	882
60-69	358	320	1119	505	446	1132
70-79	178	148	1162	224	266	842
80+	50	56	893	88	143	615

In 1871 there was a surplus of males in two of the younger age groups, 1 to 4 and 10 to 14, as well as two of the older age groups 60 to 69 and 70 to 79. Only

²⁶ Based on the 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules for Richmond County. There are minor variations in the figures obtained from the original schedules and the published figures. These results are a product of occasional missing information on the schedules, such as age and gender, and information lost during the microfilming process through the poor quality of the reproduction.

in the older age groups does the difference between the numbers of men and women go above ten per cent and these age groups were not important for the formation of new families because they were beyond child bearing years. In the age groups most important for future family formation, 15 to 29, in 1871 there was a 6 per cent surplus of women. By 1901, however, there was a deficit of women in these age groups that amounted to almost 15 per cent. Not only did the numbers of people in the main child bearing age groups decline but also the imbalance between men and women in these age groups became larger. The evidence supports the idea that by 1901 the potential for the formation of families was declining.

Defining Family

Before proceeding, one requirement must be to develop a working definition of the term "family." In the 1871 "Census Manual for Canada," a family was defined as "one person living alone, or of any number of persons living together under one roof, and having their food provided together."²⁷ On the other hand, households were designated as premises where several families lived but did not have separate entrances to the outside.²⁸ By 1901 the

²⁷ Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Manual Containing "The Census Act," and the Instructions to Officers Employed in the Taking of the First Census of Canada (1871), p. 14.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

definitions of family and household had changed slightly but were no more precise.

In the restricted sense of the term, a family consists of parents and sons and daughters united in a living, and housekeeping community: but in the larger sense it may include other relatives and servants. A household may include all persons in a housekeeping community, whether related by ties of blood or not, but usually with one of their number occupying the position of head.²⁹

The definition of family used in the 1871 census manual approaches the meaning of household used by historians, while the 1901 definition of the "restricted" family corresponds more closely to the definition of nuclear, simple, or conjugal family adopted by researchers. Nonetheless, there was no apparent change in the application of the terms family and household used by the census enumerators and it is probable that the breakdown of the census into families and households conforms to the general understanding of such terms within local environments.

Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, in their introduction to Household and Family in Past Time, define family as a "co-resident domestic group" that is made up of those who "share the same physical space for the purpose of eating, sleeping, taking rest and leisure, growing up, child-rearing, and procreating...."³⁰ They also used a term called "houseful," which consisted of all persons living in

²⁹ Census of Canada, 1901, Vol. 1, "Introduction", p. xvii.

³⁰ Laslett and Wall, p. 24.

the same set of premises. Premises, in this sense, were the accommodation provided by a building or a number of conjoined or continuous buildings.³¹ Laslett and Wall's houseful roughly corresponds to the household of the 1871 Canadian Census and the house as defined by the 1901 Census of Canada.³² The definition of family in the Canadian Census of 1871 was much broader than the Laslett and Wall definition but it appears that most studies have used the two definitions to mean the same thing.

Within these broad definitions of family there can be numerous possible variations. However, both Laslett's definition and the 1901 Census definition could preclude units that acted as functional "families." A unit without genetically related children may not have participated in "procreating" but may have acted in other respects as a family. It could also exclude from the definition household units in which unmarried relatives reared children or units that raised adopted children. For the purposes of this study, the definition of family that will be used will be the same as the one used by the census enumerators for Richmond County in 1871 and 1901. Not only is this choice convenient, but it probably represents a concept of the family that was shared by

³¹ Ibid., p. 36.

³² Census of Canada 1901, p. xvii. "Any structure which provides shelter for a human being is a house, and if it has only one entrance it counts only as one dwelling house, no matter how many families it may shelter; but if there are two front or principal doors leading into separate parts, the structure will be counted as two houses."

the residents themselves, as the census instructions allowed the head of the household to determine who would be included as a member of the family. The interaction between the enumerator and the household head provided a functional definition of the family unit.

Family Size

The population of Richmond County grew 5.98 per cent from 1871 to 1881 but declined 4.77 per cent between 1881 and 1891 and 6.14 per cent between 1891 and 1901. This followed a trend that was taking place in many areas of the Atlantic region. In fact, in 1901 twenty-one of the thirty-eight counties in the Maritimes had fewer inhabitants than they possessed a decade earlier.³³ In spite of a decline of around six per cent in the population of Richmond County from 1871 to 1901, the number of families, as defined in the census, increased by more than ten per cent, making it evident that the average size of families was declining. When the Census is broken down by census districts, one notable feature is that the decline in family size was a general phenomenon.

³³ A. A. Brookes, "The Exodus: Migration From the Maritime Provinces to Boston During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," Ph. D. thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1978, p. 75.

Table 3.7

The Number of Families, Population, and Mean Size of Richmond County Families, by Census District, 1871 and 1901³⁴

District	1871			1901		
	N	Pop	Mean	N	Pop	Mean
Framboise	84	538	6.4	117	595	5.1
Loch Lomond	60	435	7.3	72	366	5.1
Red Islands	119	776	6.5	153	814	5.3
Grand River	132	822	6.2	147	689	4.7
L'Ardoise	257	1672	6.5	394	2149	5.5
St. Peters	158	991	6.3	220	1168	5.3
Black River	101	747	7.4	110	517	4.7
River Inhabitants	191	1166	6.1	278	1349	4.9
River Bourgeois	171	964	5.6	236	1129	4.8
D'Ecousse	272	1456	5.4	325	1590	4.9
Petit de Grat	389	1982	5.1	308	1513	4.9
Arichat	202	1058	5.2	124	591	4.8
West Arichat	298	1661	5.6	201	1045	5.2
Richmond County	2434	142685	5.9	2685	13515	5.0

The overall decline in family size over the period was almost one person per

³⁴ Compiled from the 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules, Richmond County, Census of Canada.

household. The largest variation was in the Black River District, which experienced a decline of an average of almost three individuals per family. The smallest change took place in Petit de Grat, with a loss of about one person per every five families. The figures also indicate a convergence in family size. In 1871 the difference between the districts with the lowest and the highest family sizes, notably Petit de Grat and Black River, was 2.3. By 1901 the largest difference in range was .8 between L'Ardoise and Grand River.

With families across the County becoming smaller and converging toward a mean, it is possible that changes were also taking place in the structure of these families. Any general change in structure could be responsible for the need to define the "restricted" family in the 1901 Census, something that was not considered necessary in 1871. If this was the case it might be expected that families were becoming more nuclear.

Family Structure

In order to deal with the variability of family structure Laslett and Wall set up categories that were broad but provided several variants on the co-resident domestic group. Their main category was the nuclear, simple, or conjugal family, consisting of a married couple with one or more children, natural or adopted, or a widowed person with offspring, and any of the above structures that included servants. An extended family included a conjugal unit with the addition of one or more other relatives. A multiple family contained two or more

conjugal family units connected by kinship or marriage.³⁵ Over time families could pass through all three structures, but most of the studies cited by Laslett and Wall looked at families at one point in time.

Laslett and Wall's classification system was designed to provide a set of general rules for the study of demography. The system is, however, inadequate for providing a framework for the questions that a social historian might want to answer. Laslett's methodology was designed to be used mainly with census data that often did not provide information on relationships within the household.

Combining groups such as childless couples, single parent households, and step-families under nuclear, fails to provide information on these important sub-groups. Even if, as Laslett and Wall suggest, there was never a time or place when the complex family was the universal background to the ordinary lives of ordinary people,³⁶ it is apparent from the following charts that many people, if not most people, did not reside in simple, complete, conjugal households units over their entire life-cycle.

In order to evaluate the structure of Richmond County families, a revised classification system was developed by breaking the Laslett system into more defined units. Using the Laslett classification as the base, however, permits the data to be aggregated into that system for comparison with other studies that

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 29-30.

³⁶ Ibid., p. xv.

have been based on it. Table 8.3 provides a general overview of the major categories for Richmond County, based on the Laslett System.

Table 3.8

**Richmond County Family Structure, 1871 and 1901
(Based on the Laslett Classification System)**

	1871		1901	
	n	%	n	%
Nuclear	1736	72	1828	68
Extended	428	18	579	22
Complex	148	6	95	4
Non-Family	85	3	174	6
Unclassified	22	1	1	0
Total	2419	100	2677	100

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census of Canada Schedules and reconstructed families.

Can family structure be an important indicator of social change over time?

This is a question that requires further investigation. However, to attempt an analysis, a refinement of the Laslett and Wall methodology is required. Steven Ruggles has redefined family structure categories for his research on American families³⁷ but a further refinement is necessary to suit the population under study and the questions asked. What arrangements were made for the care of the

³⁷ Steven Ruggles, "The Transformation of American Family Structure," American Historical Review 99 (1994), pp. 103-128.

aged? Did parents tend to reside with a child or did they maintain separate homes? If married children continued to live with parents, how did they deal with authority: was it transferred from parents to children or did parents maintain control until death, as Philip J Greven, Jr. suggested was the case in colonial Andover, Massachusetts?³⁸ At what stage in the life-cycle were servants employed and what does this tell us about the role of servants in this society?

A revised classification system is required to answer these questions. The revised system divides families into four basic categories, each with sub-categories. The nuclear family is defined according to Laslett and Wall's definition but it is divided into sub-categories: complete nuclear, defined as a husband, wife, and one or more fully related children; incomplete nuclear, defined as a family with one widowed spouse or non-resident spouse; nuclear-step, defined as a family in which one of the parents is the natural parent of at least one child in the household, and the other is not; couples with no other residents; families with servants in any of the above categories and those including an adopted child.³⁹

³⁸ Philip J. Greven, Jr., Four Generations: Population, Land and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 82.

³⁹ The use of the term "adopted" in an historical context is problematic as legal adoption was rarely available and if available was rarely used. Most of these children would be referred today as "foster" children. For the purposes of this study a child was only listed as "adopted" if he or she appeared with the same family in more than one census or that some other record indicated that the child was "adopted" such as parish records. Otherwise, if the child did not

The second category is the extended family. This includes a simple extended family in which there is one or more relatives resident beyond the nuclear family. However, this category can also have a variety of forms. Like the nuclear family, it can be made incomplete by the death of one spouse, it can have resident servants, it can contain an adoptive child, or it can be sibling based. It may also contain other persons besides relatives, such as boarders and lodgers, to become an extended complex household.

A third category is called "non-family," although it is a misnomer. The non-family included two sub-categories: sibling families and single person households. These could both be described as nuclear families with at least two missing elements. This category contains a third sub-category that involves households made up of related individuals who are not siblings or parents or grandparents of anyone else in the household. This would include families made up of combinations such as cousins, or an aunt with a nephew or niece.

The fourth category is a catch-all for families that cannot be placed in one of the above categories. Generally it contains nuclear families that have been complicated by the incidence of boarders and lodgers. It also includes institutions, such as a convent or rectory, where a variety of unrelated individuals resided and had a variety of functions. This would include rectories in which priests often had households that contained a housekeeper, one or

appear in a second census, the family was classified as "complex."

more servants, and a student. A number of factors beyond actual family structure can influence the importance of this category. In 1871, in the thirteen census districts in Richmond County, the proportion of families placed in this category varies from three per cent in Grand River to seventeen per cent in Arichat. Often areas in which records for family reconstruction are the poorest, show the highest proportion in this category and is the result of research problems as much as increased family complexity. However, Arichat, with one of the best sets of both Catholic and Protestant records, in 1871 had the highest proportion of complex living arrangements. The decline of the numbers in this category for 1901 likely results from the inclusion of relationships of all kinds on most census returns.⁴⁰

The analysis of family structure in Richmond County supports Laslett and Wall's general conclusion that the largest proportion of families were nuclear. However, the incidence of complete nuclear families varied from one district⁴¹ to another, as well as in the same district over time. Table 3.9 indicates the proportion of complete nuclear families by census district for the thirteen districts in Richmond County in 1871 and 1901:

⁴⁰ There was a higher rate of complex families for Arichat and West Arichat in 1901. Family reconstruction suggests that part of this complexity was a result of the census taker not indicating most in-law relationships. However, this does not explain most of the difference and in both Arichat and West Arichat there appears to be a much higher incidence of boarders and lodgers than elsewhere.

⁴¹ "District" refers to Census District.

Table 3.9

**Complete Nuclear Families of Richmond County
1871 and 1901 by Census District
(percentage)**

	1871	1901	% change
Framboise	68	34	-34
Loch Lomond	55	26	-29
Red Islands	56	30	-26
Grand River	43	45	+02
L'Ardoise	51	48	-03
St. Peters	56	50	-06
Black River	50	31	-19
River Inhabitants	53	57	-04
River Bourgeois	61	59	-02
D'Ecousse	46	50	+04
Petit de Grat	53	46	-07
Arichat	37	39	+02
West Arichat	43	35	-08
Richmond County	50	44	-06

Table 3.9 reveals two important facts: the complete nuclear family was the most important form of co-resident domestic group but it had declined slightly in incidence in Richmond County during the period under study. However, like most of the other changes recorded, it was not uniform over the County. The largest declines in the incidence of complete nuclear families were in the basically Scottish farming settlements of Framboise, Red Islands, and Black River. The predominantly Acadian regions experienced smaller changes.

Peter Laslett believed that the majority of families tended to be nuclear and the nuclear family dominated society over time.⁴² However, Michael Anderson suggested that if anything, urban families became less nuclear during the period of industrialization because the supply of housing did not advance as rapidly as the need for housing by newly arrived industrial workers.⁴³ Neither suggest the possibility that rural families may have become less nuclear at the same time.

Like nuclear families, the proportion of extended families varied over time and by location. Table 3.10 provides a comparison of extended family households by Richmond County census district for 1871 and 1901.

⁴² Laslett and Wall, Preface to Household and Family in past time, pp. xi-xii.

⁴³ Michael Anderson, "Household structure and the industrial revolution; mid-nineteenth century Preston in comparative perspective," in Laslett and Wall, 1972, p. 228.

Table 3.10

**Extended Families of Richmond County
By Census District, 1871 and 1901
(percentage)**

	1871	1901	% change
Framboise	28	33	+5
Loch Lomond	25	42	+10
Red Islands	13	32	+19
Grand River	23	18	-5
L'Ardoise	30	26	-4
St. Peters	16	14	-2
Black River	28	32	+4
River Inhabitants	17	17	0
River Bourgeois	13	15	+2
D'Ecousse	22	20	-2
Petit de Grat	07	12	+5
Arichat	12	12	0
Little Arichat	17	19	+2
Richmond County	19	22	+3

Table 3.10 indicates again that there was a wide variation in the proportion of extended families and, as would be expected, the same communities that showed a decline in the number of nuclear families showed an increase in the proportion of extended families. Although there was not a large

change in the percentage it is clear that families were not becoming more nuclear and that the changes taking place in other demographic factors, such as age and gender balance, were not having a major impact on family structure.

The high percentage of extended families in farming communities reflects the tendency for farm families to keep their parents within the farm home. This was the legacy of a system whereby parents turned the farm over to one heir on condition he or she look after them for the remainder of their lives. Although the same system was used in fishing communities, it was more common there for parents to maintain residences separate from their married children until they became too ill or weak to care for themselves. As children married they tended to build houses close to their parents or they were given part of the family home. In the latter case both families had separate entrances. The practice is reflected in the census schedules, where two families shared the same dwelling number but were recorded as separate families.⁴⁴

One factor that is also important and that can be isolated through the revised classification is the incidence of incomplete families or single parent families.

⁴⁴ There are many examples of families sharing separate parts of the same dwelling. See for example the 1871 Census for L'Ardoise, household no. 45, families no. 46 and 47; Little Arichat, Div. 2, household no. 12, families no. 12 and 13; and Arichat Div. 2, household no. 90, families no. 105 and 106.

Table 3.11

**Single Parent Families in Richmond County
By Census District, 1871 and 1901
(Percentage)**

	1871	1901
Framboise	15	19
Loch Lomond	10	15
Red Islands	18	19
Grand River	22	22
L'Ardoise	11	18
St. Peters	13	15
Black River	14	17
River Inhabitants	5	11
River Bourgeois	9	7
D'Ecousse	11	3
Petit de Grat	16	10
Arichat	13	8
Little Arichat	12	18
Richmond County	13	11

Table 3.11 shows the incidence of single parent families in the County. Overall slightly more than one in ten families could be classified as single parent. However, statistics do not tell the whole story. Many of the families were headed by men and women who had adult children or by an unmarried son

or daughter who was responsible for the care of an elderly parent.

The nuclear family was clearly the most important classification in determining family structure but the distribution of subgroups suggests that reference to a family as "nuclear" can be misleading. Table 3.12 illustrates one method of establishing sub-groupings of nuclear living arrangements.

Table 3.12

Nuclear families by sub-groupings

	1871		1901	
	n	%	n	%
Complete Nuclear	1217	77	1183	75
Nuclear Adoptive	14	1	49	3
Nuclear Incomplete	244	15	240	15
Nuclear with servant(s)	63	4	33	2
Nuclear step	43	3	69	4
Total	1581	100	1574	99

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census of Canada Schedules, and family reconstructions.

Although the overall percentage of complete nuclear families declined slightly, there were more pronounced changes in two minor categories. The number of adoptive families increased by 250 per cent, while the number of families with servants declined by 48 per cent. As well, the number of families with step-

relationships increased by 60 per cent. Over the period of the study, the percentage of nuclear single parent families remained at about fifteen per cent of all nuclear families.

The increase in adoptive families reflects the growth of the placement of children from orphanages in Halifax and England in rural homes.⁴⁵ Kenneth P. and Flora MacKay of Grand River had an adopted daughter Ada living with them in 1901 and Jacob and Mary A. Marshall of Point Tupper had two adopted children, John Hooper, born in England who came to Nova Scotia in 1895 and Henry Moirley, who was born in Newfoundland.⁴⁶ These children were often used to replace natural children as a source of labour. There was also a tendency for urban families to send children home to live with their rural relatives or friends. This was sometimes used as a strategy for urban families to decrease the cost of feeding and caring for children, at least part of the year. The high death rate in some urban areas also left children orphans and they were brought home to be brought up by rural relatives. Duncan and Annie McRae of the Black River District brought up Duncan's niece and nephew Bertha and Lester Dunleigh. Again, Augustin and Mary Elizabeth Benoit had three grandchildren living with them, who had come to Arichat from the United States

⁴⁵ Kenneth Bagnell, The Little Immigrants: The Orphans Who Came to Canada, (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1980).

⁴⁶ 1901 Census, Grand River, no. 26/26; 1901 Census, Port Malcolm, no. 81/87..

in 1900.⁴⁷

The increase in step-relationships may reflect an increased tendency for widows and widowers to remarry.⁴⁸ Those who had been married usually were well-established, owned their own homes, and had sufficient resources to remarry. It was especially common for a man with children to re-marry in order to provide care for his family.⁴⁹

Servants were not common in Richmond County and determining their role in families is complicated by the instructions to census enumerators. Enumerators were to include anyone in a family if they were working away but were generally considered to reside with the family. Reconstruction of families provided evidence that many of those listed as servants in a family were actually family members. This is complicated even further by the finding that some female lobster factory workers appear to have been designated as servants.⁵⁰ It does appear that female household servants were employed locally on a

⁴⁷ 1901 Census, Black River, no. 27/27; 1901 Census, no. 10/11.

⁴⁸ This topic will be explored further in Chapter 4.

⁴⁹ The propensity for remarriage is discussed further in Chapter 4.

⁵⁰ In the 1881 Census some women had been listed as labourers but the occupation was crossed out and nothing written in its place. This was noted, for example, in the Petit de Grat Census, nos. 141/159, 174/194, 183/203, and 184/204. It can only be assumed that the term "laborer" was not considered appropriate for women. At least one of the women, Marceline Boucher, was listed as a factory hand in 1891 (Arichat East, no. 52) and it is likely that all of those designated "laborer" worked in a factory. Other areas appear to have avoided this problem by referring to women factory workers as servants.

temporary basis, especially when someone was ill and required extra care. It was also common to hire a servant before and after the birth of a child when the mother needed extra help. Peter Ganion of Arichat employed a servant for his wife Minnie when their second child Martha was born⁵¹ and George and Mary Jane Bissett of St. Peter's employed a servant when their daughter Clara was born. It was rare for a servant to remain with a family ten years or more.

One of the main findings is that in Richmond County during the period from 1871 to 1901, only about one-half of the families could be described as complete nuclear families. As well, about one in five had a structure that was extended in some way and they were actually less likely to be nuclear at the end of the period than at the beginning. There were also large changes taking place in the composition of the "co-resident family group" in some census districts. Changes in age, gender, family size, and family structure all support the idea that families in the last three decades of the nineteenth century were in transition, beyond the normal life-cycle changes that affected all households.

Dealing with Transition

The closing of the rural frontier, and migration of young people to new frontiers in the rural and urban centres, resulted in changes in the interaction between children and their parents. Although the movement of families and

⁵¹ 1881 Census, Arichat, family no. 7; 1901, Census, St. Peters, family no. 40.

individuals out of the County took place during its entire history, the rate of movement increased in the late nineteenth century. This meant that, in the period 1871 to 1901, more families were affected by out-migration than had been in the previous seventy years.

Unlike the settlers described by Bruce Elliot, the ability of Richmond County families to provide farms for the next generation was limited by the fact that there was little unoccupied land available. Although the census suggests there were fewer farmers in 1901 than in 1871, there is no evidence that there were fewer farms. The decline in the number of farmers relates to the number of young farmers living on the same farm as their parents. Rather than providing new farms for the next generation, parents often provided sufficient resources to help their off-spring move elsewhere. Before 1871 women were generally provided with a dowry that consisted of a cow, three sheep, and bedding for one bed⁵² but it became more common for fathers to provide their daughters with cash. Donald Finlayson of Grand River left his land to his sons Clement and Alexander but his daughters, Jane and Christie, received \$500 each. Sons Murdoch and Duncan also received monetary inheritances.⁵³ It is difficult to evaluate how farm parents provided for children other than the main heir because they often provided the nominal sum of 20 cents or one dollar for

⁵² Richmond County Wills, Bk. A, p. 482.

⁵³ Ibid., Bk. E.1, pp. 465-467.

married children and children who had already left home.⁵⁴ Non-farm families tended to divide their estates among all the heirs. Simon LeBlanc of West Arichat divided his financial assets equally between his wife, two sons, three daughters, and the widow of his other son.⁵⁵

During the pioneer period, especially before 1850, parents often had more than one child vying for control of the family property or settled on a farm nearby. The security of the aging population became more of an issue as the young were drawn to cities. As opportunities for expansion in agriculture, trades, and coastal trading declined and opportunities in industry increased, it became more important for family heads to ensure that at least some member or members of the family remained to care for them during illness and in old age. Several strategies had been developed over the years by household heads to ensure that they were cared for and did not suffer a decline in living standards as they aged.

One of the most common procedures was the transfer of the family property to a son or some other person in exchange for maintenance.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ See for example, Ibid., Bk. E.1, pp. 236-247, will of John McLean, Sporting Mountain, dated 6 Feb. 1883.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Bk. E. 1, pp. 430-431.

⁵⁶ Bruce S. Elliott, Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach, (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1988), pp. 211-212; David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 54-57. Gagan referred to this as the "Canadian System" but it was found

Although these contracts were used in all regions of Richmond County, they were far more common in farming communities than in those based on the sea, suggesting that farms were a more valuable tool for maintaining security than the fisheries. Maintenance contracts were designed so that at least one heir would be responsible for the care of his or her parents, and any unmarried siblings, in exchange for title to the family property. Kenneth McAskill of Loch Lomond deeded his property to his son, James, in 1872, provided he "afford him and his wife and children (or family) a maintenance...."⁵⁷ Catherine Murray of Oban transferred her property to her grandson, John Angus Murray, for "future support, maintenance, and keep as in a certain bond of agreement."⁵⁸ In 1901 Catherine was living with her daughter-in-law Sarah Murray, John Angus' widowed mother, and her family.⁵⁹

Other property owners sold their property to the next generation for a specified sum. However, in these cases as well the two generations usually continued to live together. Margaret McInnes of The Points transferred her property to her son-in-law, Donald MacLeod, in 1871 for \$100 but she continued to live with his family, even after the death of her daughter. Eventually, when

throughout North America.

⁵⁷ Richmond County Deeds, Bk. P, p. 346.

⁵⁸ Richmond County Deeds, Bk. D.1, PANS mfm 18688, p. 55.

⁵⁹ 1901 Census St. Peter's, p. 21, no. 198/199.

her son-in-law left to work in the United States, she again became responsible for the family property as well as her grandson.⁶⁰ Edmund Arnold Sr. of Arichat sold land to his son William, of Gloucester, for \$130 and to his son John, of Arichat, for \$40 but son Thomas and daughters Johanna, Mary, and Margaret, paid only the nominal sum of \$1.00 for their inheritance.⁶¹

While many property owners were willing to relinquish their estates to the next generation while they were still alive, others preferred to wait until they died. By devolving an estate by will the owner could control his assets and provide more security for himself. The use of a will to transfer property could be more risky than transferring the property before death because it undermined the security of potential heirs. If the older generation were living longer, it would mean that the next generation would not only have to wait longer for their inheritance but would have to face the possibility that their father or mother would change their mind about who would inherit. With no security of tenure children were less likely to wait patiently for their inheritance and more likely to seek work elsewhere. John Matheson of L'Archeveque maintained ownership of his considerable holdings until his death in 1880 but managed to keep his family

⁶⁰ Richmond County Deeds, Bk. P, p. 133; 1881 Census, St. Peter's, family no. 125; 1891 Census, St. Peter's, no. 192. She cannot be located in the 1901 Census but it is possible that she was missed as she lived close to the edge of the St. Peter's district. According to her nephew the late Hughie MacInnes (1897-1988) of Dundee, Richmond County he could remember visiting her.

⁶¹ Ibid., Bk. T, pp. 1-4.

around him by allotting them farms of their own.⁶² John McLean of Sporting Mountain risked being left alone in old age as he only provided his remaining son Alexander with his property through a will.⁶³ Some of his other children were already established in Aroostook County, Maine. Allan Morrison was unable to entice his son Peter back home by promising to will him land if he agreed to return within two years from the date of the will.⁶⁴

One strategy that had previously been the reserve of only the wealthiest members of the County became far more prevalent, particularly during the last two decades of the century. This strategy involved saving money through the use of bank accounts.⁶⁵ The growth of government savings banks appears to have been largely responsible for this trend, as banking facilities were no longer the preserve of the commercial elite. The ability to deposit money in an account meant that some families were becoming less dependent on their heirs for support in old age. William Malcolm, a merchant at River Inhabitants, died in 1890 leaving his widow \$4000 in the savings banks of the Dominion of Canada,

⁶² Richmond County Deeds, Bk. Z, pp. 13-17; Richmond County Wills, Bk. E.1, p. 331.

⁶³ Richmond County Wills, Bk. E.1, p. 236.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Will Bk. D, p. 173; file A-145, probate office Arichat.

⁶⁵ There are also stories in local folklore of families who hid their savings in their houses. According to Ross MackKay of Grand River one family found money stuffed in nooks all over the house after their parents died in the early 1900s.

\$2500 in the Merchants Bank of Halifax at Port Hawkesbury, and an unspecified sum with one of his suppliers, Reuben J. Hart of Halifax. He also left considerable property to his sons.⁶⁶

The McBeath family was illustrative of the transitions that many Richmond County families were undergoing. Farquhar and Margaret both lived into their mid-seventies. They moved through the stages of heading their own nuclear family, to being part of an extended family dependent on their son. Farquhar and Margaret had married when they were about twenty-five years old and immediately settled on their own farm. Kenneth, their son and heir, did not marry until he was thirty-nine and spent the first two years of his married life possibly living with his wife's family at Loch Lomond before returning home to stay with his parents. Uncertain about his prospects, Kenneth delayed marriage. The deferred marriage was possibly also responsible for the fact that Kenneth and Annie, who was about thirty when she married, only had two children, compared to his parents' six. This family illustrates the adaptation required by rural families as the resource base reached its maximum development based on contemporary technology. This was not a situation unique to Richmond County. Especially along the Eastern section of North America other rural communities, such as Chelsea, Vermont and Canning, Nova Scotia, were facing the same problems.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Bk. E.1, pp. 250-254.

The ageing of the population helped shape the structure of households as more families contained more than two generations. As well, it appears that the families remained extended longer than they had in the past, in part because people appear to have lived longer. At the same time family size decreased, as young people moved away to find work elsewhere and marriages were delayed. The widening gender gap also created a situation in which the potential for the formation of new families was inhibited. In the next chapter we will look at marriage, birth and death to see whether an analysis of these milestones in the life cycle can provide a deeper understanding of the changes that were taking place in Richmond County families.

Chapter 4

Marriage, Birth, and Death

G rard Bouchard identified five objectives of parents in new rural areas of Quebec: "to provide for their own security in old age, to ensure that the family property remained intact, to guarantee that the family would survive, to establish farms for as many of their children as possible, and to provide the most desirable careers or best possible standards of living for their children."¹ These objectives were similar to those of Richmond County farmers, fishermen and seamen but the fourth objective, to provide farms for as many offspring as possible, was no longer viable for most farmers and had never been a major goal of the latter two groups. The objective for fishermen and seamen was generally to leave their offspring some property on which to build a house, a vessel or a share in a boat, and other resources that would help them provide for themselves and their families.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the rapidly changing industrial structure resulted in a rural to urban migration.² This was a general trend throughout North America and particularly in the earliest settled regions of the north western United States and eastern Canada. Although most research concentrates on the impact of the closing land base in farming regions, the protectionism that grew out of industrial growth closed market opportunities

¹ G rard Bouchard, "Family Reproduction in New Rural Areas: Outline of a North American Model," Canadian Historical Review LXXV: 4 (1994), p. 477.

² Nancy Landale, "Opportunity, Movement, and Marriage: U. S. Farm Sons at the Turn of the Century," Journal of Family History 14 (1989), p. 365.

for those employed in sea-going trades and placed Canadian fishermen and seamen in much the same position as farmers.

In chapter 3 the changing strategies of parents in old rural areas for meeting four out of five of Bouchard's objectives were discussed. This chapter will focus on how areas with mature development influenced the second objective: to guarantee that the family would survive through procreation. Without available land, farmers knew that they could not provide farms for the next generation and fishermen knew that ownership of a home, a vessel or boat, and other equipment for fishing, could not ensure a good livelihood as access to markets declined. How did this affect the formation of new families?

Nancy S. Landale postulated that, in rural areas, wives and children once had been assets as their labour contributed to the viability of the family enterprise. But wage labour made them liabilities, especially after labour laws prevented children from taking part in industrial work.³ She found that during this period the marriage patterns of rural farm dwellers did not change but those who left the farms were less likely to marry or delayed marriage.⁴ These delays were an important factor in fertility decline. It is estimated that for each 2.5 year increase in the age of marriage, one less child would be born.⁵ However, central

³ Landsdale, p. 369.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 381-382.

⁵ N. F. R. Crafts and N. J. Ireland, "A Simulation of the Impact of Changes in Age at Marriage Before and During the Advent of Industrialization in England,"

to the discussion of marriage and fertility is the effect of mortality on the ability of a population to reproduce itself.⁶

In the previous chapter, census schedules were central to the discussion of age, gender, family size, and family structure. However, they provide snapshots taken at ten year intervals. While yielding information on the changes that took place over the period, they provide little information on mechanics of these changes. This chapter will focus on the three main events in the formation and the disintegration of families: marriage, birth, and death. Several methodologies have been developed for making inferences about marriage and birth from census schedules but, because they attempt to use these snapshots to reconstruct what happened between census, they have the potential of being misleading. On the other hand, family reconstruction can provide information on what was happening in the intervening years.

It is important to define the meaning of family as the term is used in this chapter. In order to place some limits on the family unit, the term conjugal family will be used to mean a family consisting of a married couple, with or without children. The term "conjugal" is used to prevent confusion with the term nuclear that was used in the discussion on family structure because of the other variations of nuclear families used in the Laslett definition. Conjugal families

Population Studies 30:3 (1976), pp. 495-496.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 495-496.

appear within extended and complex households and therefore, are not confined

¹ Ibid., pp. 495-496.to the nuclear family structure.

In order to evaluate the life cycle of a conjugal family, definite limits are required. For the purposes of this study the conjugal family was created at the time of marriage and ended at the death of both the parties or the marriage or death of the last unmarried child. When a son or daughter married they ceased to be part of the conjugal unit and formed part of another unit. By using this definition, specific limits have been put on the duration of the family, while placing each individual within a conjugal unit. Each family, by this definition, would have a definite life span but the duration would vary greatly. A couple of examples can illustrate this variability. The Abraham Fougere family of River Bourgeois provides an illustration of what might be classed as one of average duration.

Figure 4.1

Abraham Fougere (1838-1924)
 married in 1863
 Marguerite Cordeau (1837-1920)

children

Marie	(1864-)	married in 1884 to Eugene Digout
Marguerite	(1866-1964)	married in 1888 to Edmund Landry
Charles	(1871-)	married in 1899 to Adelina LeBlanc
Marin	(1873-)	married in 1900 to Sarah Boudreau
André	(1875-1876)	
André	(1877-1884)	
Melanie	(1882-1884)	

The Abraham and Marguerite Fougere conjugal family came into being in 1863 and ended in 1924, when Abraham died. The duration of the family was sixty-one years. During this period this conjugal unit contributed to the formation of four new families. Naturally, the duration of many of the conjugal units in this study goes beyond the 1871 to 1901 period.

Figure 4.2

Donald Urquhart (1841-1876)
 married in 1873
 Margaret MacKenzie (1855-1898)

children

Barbara Ann (1874-1898)
 Dolena Florence (1875-) married in 1905 to Eli Hubert

The Donald Urquhart family had a duration of only thirty-two years and its disintegration started only three years after it was formed, with the death of Donald. It further disintegrated in 1879 when Margaret remarried but the final termination did not take place until the marriage of Dolena, in 1905. Although this family had disintegrated as a co-resident group by 1879, when Margaret remarried and each of her daughters were sent to live with a different set of grandparents, it survived as a conjugal unit until Dolena's marriage. Throughout this chapter family formation will refer to the conjugal unit as described above.

This chapter has three purposes. The first purpose is to provide a measure of the changes taking place in the formation, development, and dispersion of Richmond County families through marriage, birth, and death. The second purpose will be to evaluate the methodologies used for measuring marriage and fertility from census data. The third purpose will be to determine whether using the two methods together can provide insights into social change that cannot be developed by using a single method.

Marriage

In nineteenth century Richmond County marriage was the initial event in family formation. However, the decision to marry was not a simple process and often it had little to do with the notion of marriage that was found in the romance novels of the period. From the available anecdotal material it appears that while the decision to marry was generally left to the couple, there were often outside pressures that undermined freedom of choice. Religion, political persuasion, social position, duty, and economics were often central elements that influenced ones choice of a marriage partner.

When Maria Goyetche married she had been only "going out with" her husband for two months. She was not convinced that marriage was the correct choice and she considered becoming a nun:

...if I had been a nun, I had no responsibility. It would save me a

lot of trouble. And raising a family is a big responsibility. A painful one.⁷

According to Maria, she did not have to choose her husband - he chose her.

It's not that I wanted to get married. He was in a hurry. He didn't want to wait.... I should have let him wait. He was in a hurry because he wanted help for his mother. I had to take care of the old.⁸

When she finally agreed to marry she asked the permission of her mother, father, grandfather, and godfather, as was the custom.⁹ In her mind her decision to marry was influenced by many factors that went beyond personal choice. Maria believed that her husband's purpose in marrying was to help meet his obligation to care for his elderly parents.

There are also traditions of arranged marriages, especially among the Scottish Presbyterians. One of the most widely known was the attempt by the Smiths of the Crammond Islands to marry their daughter, Mary, to John Johnstone of Lake Ainslie. Mary had already made her choice of a husband, Angus Ross, but he was slow in proposing and her parents gave up hope that he would marry her. They arranged a wedding with Johnstone but during the pre-wedding preparations, Mary disappeared and it was soon learned that she had eloped with Ross to Arichat, where they could be married. This left Johnstone

⁷ Cape Breton's Magazine 44, p. 50.

⁸ Ibid., p. 51.

⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

humiliated and without a bride. However, it did not take long for one of the wedding guests, John MacKenzie, to offer his daughter Hennie to Johnstone. When she agreed, the second couple left for Arichat to be married. According to one story the two couples greeted as they met on the ice of the Bras d'Or Lakes: one newly married, the other on their way to their wedding.¹⁰

This was not the only story that was passed down regarding arranged marriages. When Cassie Bell Campbell of The Points married Alexander J. Smith of Grand River in 1900, she was extremely homesick. To cheer her up her parents arranged a marriage between her sister Flora, and Alexander's brother Charles.¹¹ The marriage between Murdoch MacLeod to his second wife Christy McMillan was also arranged and the bride, thirty-seven years younger than her husband, according to her descendants was not a willing bride.¹²

¹⁰ There are several slightly different versions of this story. This is an abbreviated version of the one related by the late Margaret (Palmer) MacPhail of Marble Mountain. There were also versions of the story printed in a newspaper and at least one collection of Cape Breton short stories. Angus Ross and Mary Smith were married at Arichat on 3 March 1846, and John Johnstone and Hannah Mackenzie were married on 4 March 1846. The two marriages are numbers 152 and 153 in St. John's Anglican Church Records, Arichat. See Claribel Gesner, Cape Breton Vignettes, Windsor, Nova Scotia: Lancelot Press, 1974), pp. 57-59. An unidentified newspaper clipping in possession of George MacRae, Dundee, N. S. also contained a version of the story.

¹¹ Story related by Roy Campbell, nephew of Cassie Bell and Flora Campbell.

¹² Story related by Annabel (Morrison) Butts, granddaughter of Murdoch and Christy (McMillan) Macleod.

The incidence of such arranged marriages appears to have been low and the survival of the stories surrounding them suggests that they were remarkable for their time. What is more difficult to find and what was probably more common, was the pressure to marry within one's religious, ethnic, and social group. This is illustrated in particular by the tendency to marry within one religious group. In a sample of couples, married between 1871 and 1900, ninety-five per cent married someone within their own religious denomination.¹³ The other five per cent of marriages was divided between two per cent Catholic\Protestant marriages and three per cent in which the partners were from different Protestant denominations.¹⁴

Ethnicity also influenced marriage choices. Eighty-two percent of Richmond County marriages were contracted between those of the same ethnic origin.¹⁵ The most common ethnically mixed marriages were Irish/French (5.3

¹³ This is based on a sample of 1686 marriages for which information was available on religion.

¹⁴ Although there are no statistics to support the idea that inter-denominational marriages were more frequent before 1871, in the period before the arrival of the first Protestant clergy in the 1820's and 1830's there appears to have been numerous inter-denominational marriages. The families formed from these marriages tended to become Roman Catholic. Entries located in the Anglican church records in Halifax, Sydney, and Guysborough suggests that families with surnames such as Thomas, Linden, King, Proctor, Wincey, Upton, Beaver, and Lafford were originally Protestant.

¹⁵ This is based on a sample of 1692 marriages for which origin could be located.

per cent), Scottish/French (3.4 per cent), Scottish/English (2.3 per cent), and Scottish/Irish (1.3 per cent). However, by far the most common pattern of marriage choice was to marry someone of the same ethnic origin. Many of the cross-ethnic marriages were descendants of early non-French families formed when an immigrant married a local woman of French descent. These families, such as the McDonald family of D'Escousse, the Thomas family of the L'Ardoise district, and the Clory's of D'Ecousse and West Arichat, married others in their community. These families, although having an ancestor of non-French origin, by the 1870's were thoroughly integrated into the Acadian culture and many did not even recognise the fact they were not "French."¹⁶

The function of social status in the choice of marriage partners was weaker than the impact of religion and ethnicity. When the ranking system outlined in Chapter 6 was applied, only about one-third of men and women married someone within their social ranking. However, three-quarters of marriages occurred between partners in the same rank or within one rank of each other. The group most likely to marry within their own status group were those in the top ranking, in which 46 per cent of men and 48 per cent of women married someone in the same rank. In the five rank system it was rare for marriages to take place between rank 1 and rank 5. Only 2.6 per cent of men

¹⁶ This is illustrated in the propensity of descendants with these surnames gave their origin as "French." See, for example, 1871 Census, Little Arichat, Div. 2, no. 24/29, and D'Ecousse, Div. 1, No. 79.

and 6.4 per cent of women in the top ranked families married someone from a family in the bottom strata.

There was also a pattern to the timing of the ceremony. In the Roman Catholic communities, which were dependent on the sea for their livelihood, most marriages took place in January and February. A similar pattern was found in farming communities of all denominations but the pattern was not as rigid as in the predominantly Acadian fishing communities.

Since the first event in the establishment of a family was marriage, the patterns identified above suggest that there were constraints on the free formation of families. However, these may not have been the only constraints. There are a number of other methods of looking at marriage and each one can tell a different story. The main question that needs consideration is did the potential for family formation change over the period 1871 to 1901 and can information about marriage tell us something about that potential?

Each method of describing marriage patterns provides a slightly different viewpoint: the potential for marrying over time is measured by the proportion of the population ever married, a measure of marriage in the past; the potential for marriage in the future is reflected in the marriage market; the age at first marriage addresses the timing of family formation; and the possibilities for remarrying after the death of a spouse takes into consideration the potential for the formation of step-families.

Marriage Structure

Table 4.1 provides an age profile of married and widowed men and women in each age group in 1871 and 1901.

Table 4.1

Percentage of Men and Women, By Age Group, Married and Widowed, Richmond County, 1871 and 1901

Age Group	Women		Men	
	1871	1901	1871	1901
under 20	.7	1.3	.2	0.0
20 - 29	20.7	13.7	12.5	7.3
30 - 39	24.9	20.5	25.3	19.7
40 - 49	19.1	19.8	22.0	21.6
50 - 59	15.7	18.2	15.9	19.7
60 - 69	11.5	13.8	14.8	19.5
70 - 79	5.5	8.1	7.2	8.7
over 80	1.9	4.6	2.2	3.5
Total (rounded)	100	100	100	100

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules, Richmond County, Nova Scotia.

The figures in Table 4.1 reveal how the increasing age structure of the population is reflected in the age structure of married people. The proportion of the population in the 20 to 39 age groups, the most important in family formation

and development, declined by 11 per cent for men and 6 per cent for women. However, the changing proportion in each age category only shows the relative change in the proportion of people in each category, not the actual numbers. With a six per cent decline in population, it is possible that the actual numbers of ever married men and women declined as well. Table 4.2 explores that possibility.

Table 4.2

Number of Men and Women, By Age Group, Married and Widowed, Richmond County, 1871 and 1901

Age Group	Women		Men	
	1871	1901	1871	1901
under 20	18	34	4	0
20 - 29	527	373	282	175
30 - 39	635	556	572	475
40 - 49	488	539	498	520
50 - 59	400	496	359	473
60 - 69	293	375	336	470
70 - 79	139	219	164	209
over 80	49	126	49	84
Total	2549	2718	2264	2406

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules, Richmond County, Nova Scotia.

This chart reveals that there was actually an increase of slightly more than six per cent in the numbers of people ever married. On the other hand, there was an overall decrease of more than 19 per cent in the number of married persons in the 20 to 39 age group. The number of ever married women declined by 20 per cent and of men declined 18 per cent, in the age group in which family formation and growth generally takes place.

The question now arises as to whether this was a county-wide phenomenon or were there particular districts in the County that were more responsible for the decline than others. Table 3 reports the number of and women by Census married men District.

Table 4.3

**Numbers Married by Gender, Richmond County, 1871
and 1901, By Census District**

Census District	Women		Men	
	1871	1901	1871	1901
Framboise	83	114	73	105
Loch Lomond	66	72	61	57
Red Islands	111	153	108	133
Grand River	141	140	112	111
L'Ardoise	307	401	272	384
St. Peters	164	204	139	184
Black River	108	104	101	85
River Inhabitants	201	270	184	251
River Bourgeois	179	243	165	229
D'Escousse	294	353	258	304
Petit de Grat	366	319	346	284
Arichat	206	129	167	100
West Arichat	323	216	278	179

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules, Richmond County.

L'Ardoise recorded an overall increase in people ever-married of 206 or 35 per cent. However, the district of Black River lost over 9 per cent, Petit de Grat 15 per cent, West Arichat 34 percent, and Arichat almost 39 per cent. The numbers ever married in Grand River, in this age group, remained almost static.

These numbers suggest that there were major variations throughout the County. Even more significant are the changes in the number of ever married people in the crucial child bearing ages, 20 to 39. Table 4 shows the change in both numbers and percentage in this age group by census district.

Table 4.4

Number, Direction, and Percentage of Change in
the Incidence of Ever Married Males and Females,
Aged 20 to 39, Richmond County, 1871 to 1901

Census District	Women number	percent	Men number	percent
Framboise	- 2	- 5.4	2	9.5
Loch Lomond	3	16.7	- 3	-21.4
Red Islands	18	66.7	9	50.0
Grand River	-29	-55.8	-25	-73.5
L'Ardoise	- 3	- 1.9	- 2	-1.9
St. Peters	- 4	- 6.1	-11	-25.0
Black River	-14	-31.1	-14	-48.3
River Inhabitants	3	2.9	9	13.4
River Bourgeois	- 4	- 4.5	-5	- 7.0
D'Escousse	-14	- 9.2	-25	-19.7
Petit de Grat	-61	-33.3	-28	-19.9
Arichat	-33	-41.3	-14	-26.8
West Arichat	-93	-60.0	-50	-38.8
Richmond County	-233	-20.1	-157	-18.4

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules, Richmond County.

Only Red Islands and River Inhabitants showed overall positive growth in the number of married people between the ages of 20 and 39. Small changes in the incident of widows and widowers, as well as the age differential between men and women, caused minor changes in the gender breakdowns of the districts. What is most striking in this analysis is that there was a real decline in the number of married women in the child bearing age group. However, the declines of married women in the 20 to 39 age group in the Acadian communities of Arichat, West Arichat, and Petit de Grat, is particularly striking. Only the Scottish, Catholic, farming district of Red Islands showed a significant gain in the number of married people in the main child-bearing age group. These changes could be influenced by the marriage market, or the potential for marriage.

The Marriage Market

If we consider marriage as a market in which people freely try to find a marriage partner, than we use a supply and demand methodology. If we assume that most individuals wished to locate a suitable partner of the opposite sex within a certain age range, then the "product" becomes the members of the opposite sex in roughly the same age groupings.¹⁷

¹⁷ Landale, p. 373, uses a similar method to determine potential for marriage.

The propensity to marry measures the likelihood of someone participating in the marriage market. To measure changes in the propensity to marry, a statistic that measures the proportions of the population unmarried in the age groups 20 to 24, 25 to 29, and 45 to 49 can be used.¹⁸ Using these age groupings provides an indication of how many are unmarried in the prime marrying period and in the period in which most married women reached the stage of their lives when they had completed families. Table 5 shows the change in the propensity to marry for men and women in Richmond County from 1871 to 1901 by indicating the percentage that remained single in the specified age groups.

¹⁸ Ellen Margaret Thomas Gee, "Fertility and Marriage Patterns in Canada: 1851-1971," Ph. D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, June, 1978, pp. 166-168 and Ellen M. Thomas Gee, "Marriage in nineteenth-century Canada," Review of Canadian Sociology and Anthropology 19:3 (1982), pp. 314-315.

Table 4.5

Proportion of the Population Single by Age Group,
Richmond County, 1871 and 1901

Age Group	Men		Women	
	1871	1901	1871	1901
20-24	94	92	72	67
25-29	61	66	48	37
45-49	7	12	12	9

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules, Richmond County.

Table 4.5 indicates that few men married in their early twenties, and more than ninety per cent were still single under age 24 in both 1871 and 1901. Women were more likely to marry before age 25 but over the thirty years of the study, the proportion single at age 24 had declined from almost three-quarters to two-thirds of all women in that age category. As well, by 1901 the number of single women in the 25 to 29 year age group had declined from almost one-half of to one-third of the total. However, by the time men and women reached the 45 to 49 age group, most were married. In summary, young women were more likely to marry before age 30 in 1901 than they had been in 1871.

This methodology has one obvious flaw. Those who were in the 45 to 49 age group made their decision to marry about twenty years earlier than those who were in their twenties at the time of the census. As a result, it only tells us

that most people in their early forties in a specific year had married. It is difficult to compare the two figures because conditions may have been considerably different twenty-years earlier. While the figures provide information about the situation in 1871 and 1901, it actually provides us with no information as to why such changes were taking place.

In general, the figures based on this measure suggest that, over the thirty years covered by this study, the proportion of unmarried women in each age category declined, indicating that the propensity for women to marry in each age category increased. The propensity for men, in the same age groups, to marry decreased slightly in same period. These changes could well be caused by changes in the marriage market, such as an increase or a decline in the availability of possible partners: a change in supply or demand. In 1871 overall there were 6985 males to 7283 females in the County, providing a ratio of 95 men to 100 women. By 1901 the ratio was 99 men to 100 women, indicating that while the marriage market for men was declining, they still had an advantage. This in itself does not explain the significant increase in the propensity of women to marry.

A more exacting measure is a comparison of the ratio of men to women in the prime "courting" ages of 20 to 29, as in table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Gender Ratio of Men to Women for ages 20 to 24 and
25 to 29, Richmond County, 1871 and 1901

Ages	1871	1901
20-24	99	125
25-29	104	103

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules, Richmond County. Figures represent the number of men per 100 women.

Table 4.6 indicates that the ratio of men to women in the prime marrying age groups had changed significantly over thirty years. In the 20 to 24 age category in 1871 there were 99 men to 100 women, a relatively equal ratio. By 1901 the ratio was 125 men to 100 women. These figures could be distorted by the propensity of men to marry women younger than themselves. According to Peter Ward the average age at marriage in nineteenth century English Canada varied from 24.3 to 26.9 for men and from 21.4 to 23.4 for women.¹⁹ This provided a three year spread in the average difference between men and women at the time of marriage.

The availability of spouses not only depended on the numbers of individuals of the opposite sex in the society but also on the marital status of

¹⁹ Peter Ward, Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), Appendix to Chapter 3, p. 181.

those individuals at any one point in time. If there was an increase in the age spread between wives and husbands this could also distort the overall marriage market. Table 7 showed a further refinement of the marriage market.

Table 4.7

Gender Ratio for Single Men compared to Single Women Ages 20 to 24 and 25 to 29, 1871 and 1901

Age Groups	1871	1901
20-24	123	171
25-29	107	182

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules, Richmond County. The figures represent the number of men per 100 women.

Table 4.7 reveals that the marriage market had changed dramatically over thirty years. For single women the range of choice of potential husbands was wider than for men in the same age group in 1871 but by 1901 the choices had increased substantially for women. On the other hand, men faced major competition for wives and by the time they reached their late twenties, their chances of finding a marriage partner in their own county, within their own age group, was only about 59 per cent. Meanwhile, the reverse situation was developing in urban areas.²⁰

²⁰ Ward, p. 56 found that in Toronto single women outnumbered single men in the same age group by 10 to 15 per cent with the female surplus growing over time.

The reason for the change in the gender balance is suggested in the Bras d'Or Gazette, a local newspaper, in 1896. It reported that the "exodus from our county continues unabated" and then listed sixteen names. A gender breakdown of these names reveals that twelve of the sixteen were women, two were men, and the gender of two could not be determined. The article suggested that the list represented only about one-third of the actual number that had left the county in the same week.²¹ This migration in the fall was far different from the migration of young men to the fishing grounds with the Gloucester fishing fleet that generally occurred in May.²² These men usually returned in the fall but only a small number of women returned in the spring.²³

Age At First Marriage

Did the change in the availability of spouses influence the age at first marriage? If men were having difficulty finding spouses of a suitable age, did they increasingly look for brides outside their preferred age groups? In Richmond County the average age at first marriage for women was 23.8 years and for men 27.2 years, making the average age difference between brides and

²¹ Bras d'Or Gazette, 30 Sept. 1896.

²² Ibid., 6 May 1896.

²³ Ibid., 30 May 1900 reported the arrival from Boston of two women and one man.

grooms for first marriages in Richmond County slightly higher than in Ontario, at 3.4 years. Table 4.6 provides a comparison of the age at first marriage for men and women for ten year intervals from 1871 to 1900.

Table 4.8

Age at First Marriage for Richmond County Men and Women, 1871 to 1900

	Men		Women	
	n	average age	n	average age
1871-1880	357	26.7	403	24.0
1881-1890	111	28.5	127	23.7
1891-1900	117	27.5	128	23.4

Sources: Richmond County Marriages; Arichat Catholic Church Records.

In the first decade of the period the age differential between men and women was 2.7 years. It increased to over four years for the last two decades of the nineteenth century. However, there appear to be no major fluctuations in the age of first marriage over the thirty year period, and the averages in the first of decade were only .8 years higher for men and .6 years lower for women. It does reveal, however, that in general men were marrying slightly younger women at the end of the period.

One notable feature of Table 4.8 is the number of marriages available for the 1871 to 1881 period, in contrast to the next two decades. A dispute between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the provincial officials resulted in most

Catholic clergy refusing to register marriages with the province. The result was a drop in the number of marriages registered, especially between 1880 and 1900. Therefore the only record for most of the Catholic marriages was parish registers. Unfortunately, there are gaps in several of these registers and in most cases, the parish records did not contain the age of the parties. All marriages performed in the County could not be reconstructed from the church records and other sources because of the amount of time required. However, the civil registration was supplemented by reconstructed records for the Parish of Arichat.

It is possible that the actual number of marriages performed in the County also declined. Two parishes that did not exhibit disruption in the records between 1871 and 1901 suggest that the average number of marriages performed per year did not decline until the last five years of the period. The combined total for these two parishes in the decade 1871 to 1881 was 362 marriages; in the 1880s there were 401 and during the 1890s there were 310.²⁴ Most of this decline took place between 1895 and 1900.

Although there were major changes in gender ratios in the ages most critical to family formation, there were no large variations in the age at first marriage. At the same time as the propensity for men to marry declined slightly,

²⁴ Notre Dame de L'Assomption Catholic Church Records, Arichat and St. Hyacinth Catholic Church Records, D'Escousse for 1871 to 1901.

the propensity of women to marry increased. These apparent contradictions in the various measures underline the difficulties in applying common methodologies to populations in transition.

Widowhood and Remarriage

In 1871 there were 480 widows in the County, compared to 169 widowers, and in 1901 there were 552 widows to 238 widowers. The ratio of widows to widowers was almost three to one in 1871 but in some communities, such as West Arichat, the ratio was over five to one. Two factors could have contributed to this high ratio: the lower life-expectancy of men because of the risks involved in their work and the propensity of widowers to remarry and select younger wives. Although there was no clear division between farming and fishing communities in the incidence of widowhood, the lowest ratios were in the farming communities of Red Islands and Black River.

There is no evidence to support the contention that women outlived their husbands. As the following section on mortality indicates, there was little difference in the life expectancy of men and women. While many men died in work related accidents, particularly drowning, it appears that a similar proportion of young women died from complications of child birth.

The main reason why there were far more widows than widowers was the propensity of widowers to remarry and select brides that were much younger

than themselves and who had not been previously married. In a sample derived from 266 remarriages, 219 of the partners were widowers and 69 were widows. In this sample of second or subsequent marriages, 183 men married spinsters. On average these men were about 40 years old and married women who were 29. Widows who married bachelors also tended to select husbands younger than themselves. The 24 women who married single men averaged 32.5 years of age and selected husbands that were on average about 28.

Only sixteen per cent of remarriages were between widows and widowers. In these marriages the average age of the groom was 46 and the average age of the bride 39, indicating that widowers who remarried widows were older but selected widows who were younger than their previous wives.

Table 4.9

Remarriage by age Group and Gender
Richmond County 1871 to 1900

Age group	Men	Women
20 to 29	25	18
30 to 39	71	16
40 to 49	76	25
50 to 59	28	8
60 and over	19	2
Total	219	69

Sources: PANS, RG 32, Series B and WB, Richmond County Marriages and reconstructed marriages based on Notre Dame de L'Assomption Catholic Church Records, Arichat.

For widows under 50 the chances were good that they would remarry after the death of their spouse. Only 14.5 per cent of widows over fifty and 21.5 per cent of men in the same age category remarried.

In summary, only thirty-five per cent of the widows married bachelors but three-quarters of the widowers married spinsters. These figures alone explain most of the difference in the ratio between widows and widowers that was found in the census schedules. However, fewer widows remarried than widowers, resulting in the ratio of widows to widowers in the County being at about three to one.

Birth and Fertility

In determining the birth rate and fertility of a population, demographers have used a variety of methods, based on census information. One of the main problems with the literature on this topic is that often the same terms have been used to describe mathematically different concepts. As well, numerous assumptions have been used to "correct" census figures for under-reporting of children and for mortality. This makes it difficult to compare the results from different studies.²⁵ However, since the main purpose of this study is to compare

²⁵ Ellen Margaret Thomas Gee, "Fertility and Marriage Patterns in Canada:

the same population over time, the simplest definitions for the concepts have been adopted.

The first measure is sometimes called the crude birth rate, which can be calculated by dividing the total population in a given year by the number of births in that year. In general, it has been impossible to obtain accurate birth records for large populations in the nineteenth century because the quality of records is not adequate. Therefore, census data has been used to calculate what is sometimes referred to as a birth ratio.²⁶ The problem associated with the under-enumeration of infants has complicated the process.²⁷ To compensate for this under-reporting, a methodology was developed that aggregated children of several ages, generally either children under 4 or children under ten years of age. This methodology is highly sensitive to child mortality as it measures child

1851-1971," Ph. D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, June, 1978, pp. 25-30; Tamara K. Hareven and Maris A. Vinovskis, "Patterns of childbearing in Late Nineteenth-Century America: The Determinants of Marital Fertility in Five Massachusetts Towns in 1880," in Tamara K. Hareven and Maris A. Vinovskis, ed., Family and Population in Nineteenth-Century America (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 1978, pp. 85-125; Lorne Tepperman, "Ethnic Variations in Marriage and Fertility: Canada, 1871," The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology II: 4 (1974), pp. 327-328; Yasukichi Yasuba, Birth Rates of the White Population in the United States, 1800-1880, (Baltimore: the John Hopkins Press, 1962).

²⁶ Some researchers do use the term birth rate to describe these ratios. For Example Gee in her thesis uses the term to describe birth rates from the census after using several methods for correcting for under-reporting, pp. 37-38. Gee uses the number of children under four in her study.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 23.

survival rather than the actual birth rate. As a result, demographers have often used mortality tables to correct for deaths but these tables are based on specific populations in England and the United States²⁸ and there is no evidence to support the contention that they are applicable to other populations.²⁹

under counting because children are often enumerated with grandparents or other relatives, as well as with their own families. There is also no attempt to make assumptions about mortality. A simple procedure was used for computing the crude birth ratio: the number of children under ten divided by the total population multiplied by 1000, providing an estimate of the number of children under ten years of age per 1000 population. This procedure revealed a decline in the ratio of children from 264, in 1871, to 243 in 1901, or about 8 per cent. Table 4.9 summarises the crude birth ratio for Richmond County, broken down by Census District. In this study no attempt has been made to correct for problems of census under-reporting, basically because there is no evidence of systematic under-reporting. In fact, there is a more apparent double counting of children than

²⁸ Ibid., 1978, p. 22.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 22; Tepperman, p. 327.

Table 4.10

Crude Birth Ratio for Richmond County,
By Census District, 1871 and 1901

District	1871	1901
Framboise	281	225
Loch Lomond	225	180
Red Islands	213	244
Grand River	203	154
L'Ardoise	278	253
St. Peters	241	189
Black River	242	182
River Inhabitants	308	263
River Bourgeois	275	260
D'Écousse	291	252
Petit de Grat	355	250
Arichat	234	233
West Arichat	306	281
Richmond County	264	243

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules for Richmond County.

What is evident from Table 4.9 is that the crude birth ratio was declining across the County with one exception, the Red Islands District, which had an increase in its ratio of 15 per cent. The decline in the ratio for other districts

varied from .4 per cent in Arichat to almost 30 per cent in Petit de Grat.

While the crude birth ratio provides some data on the nature and direction of a certain type of demographic change, using them alone can cause misinterpretations. Earlier it was determined that changes were taking place in the gender ratio of the population, especially in the family formation age groups, and that the population as a whole was ageing, factors that could impact the crude birth ratio.

A second commonly used ratio was developed to help reduce the types of bias associated with the crude birth ratio.³⁰ This measure is often referred to as the "refined fertility ratio" and it is computed by dividing the number of children under ten by the total number of women aged 15 to 49 and multiplying by 1000 to give the number of children per 1000 women in the specified age groups. The results of this calculation is summarised in Table 4.10

³⁰ Most demographic researchers, such as Gee, use their "corrected" estimates and divide them by ten to establish a yearly birth ratio. However, the simplified version was used because of concerns about the underlying assumptions of the methodology.

Table 4.11

**Fertility Ratio for Richmond County 1871 and 1901
By Census District**

District	1871	1901
Framboise	937	825
Loch Lomond	807	779
Red Islands	953	979
Grand River	810	930
L'Ardoise	1348	1155
St. Peters	1335	1212
Black River	735	1087
River Inhabitants	1290	1487
River Bourgeois	1073	1413
D'Ecousse	1172	1274
Petit de Grat	849	1000
Arichat	1105	1262
West Arichat	1021	1160
Richmond County	1052	1263

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules for Richmond County.

In nine of the thirteen census districts there were increases in the refined fertility ratio and an overall increase in Richmond County of 20 per cent. The

explanation for the apparent contradiction between this ratio and the crude birth ratio can be found in the changing gender ratio in the County. By 1901 the number of women in the age 15 to 49 age group declined more than the number of children in the under 10 age group.

The third ratio, which is an even more refined measure of fertility, is often called the "marital fertility ratio." In this measure the denominator becomes the number of married women in the age 15 to 44 age group. This ratio provides a measure of the number of children under ten in a population per married woman age 15 to 44. Table 4.12 gives the marital fertility ratio for each census district and for Richmond County as a whole.

Table 4.12

**Marital Fertility Ratio, Richmond County, 1871 and 1901
By Census District**

District	1871	1901
Framboise	2.6	2.9
Loch Lomond	2.5	2.4
Red Islands	3.5	2.8
Grand River	3.8	2.4
L'Ardoise	3.1	2.7
St. Peters	2.8	2.8
Black River	3.4	2.7
River Inhabitants	2.6	2.6
River Bourgeois	2.2	2.7
D'Ecousse	2.8	2.8
Petit de Grat	2.3	2.3
Arichat	2.8	2.9
West Arichat	2.4	2.5
Richmond County	2.7	2.7

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules for Richmond County.

Again the results are inconsistent with the other measures. On a county wide basis there was no change in the marital fertility ratio. Does an increase in the refined fertility rate, at the same time as the marital fertility rate remained stable,

suggest that the rate of illegitimacy was increasing? While this interpretation is possible, there appears to be another explanation. The 1901 Census schedules indicate that there were numbers of children living with grandparents and other relatives. Grandmothers generally would be too old to be included in the 15 to 49 age group. As well, many of these children lived with unmarried relatives, such as aunts. This factor could potentially create a misleading interpretation of the ratios. The underlying causes of this situation will be dealt with further in the following chapter on persistency and out-migration. In summary, the crude birth rate declined, the refined fertility ratio increased, and the marital fertility ratio remained the same. This underlines the importance of not relying on one measure of change.

The inconsistencies in the direction of the changes in the ratios make their usefulness in determining the actual rate of births suspect. The importance that has been attributed to the declining birth rate in the literature on family history makes it necessary to try to develop another method of establishing what was happening to the size of conjugal families in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. However, because the life-cycle of the conjugal family is generally much longer than the thirty years covered by this study, it is not practical to develop a method of measuring the number of children ever born to all the families in the database. However, a very rough measure of possible fertility control can be established by comparing a sample of the population that

married before 1871 with a sample that married in the period after 1871 and had completed families by 1901, and a third sample of families that were completed after 1901.

The selection of the families for each population could not be at random because of gaps in the records. In order to be sure that most, if not all, live births to a particular family were recorded, a number of criteria were set up. First, the date of marriage of the couple had to be known. Secondly, the family had to be resident in the County over its life-cycle or until the last member of the family was born. Third, the couple had to have only one marriage, unless one marriage lasted for a sufficient number of years to produce a completed family.³¹ Fourth, the family was considered to be completed when the mother reached the age of 45. Finally, the records on which the reconstruction was based had to be apparently complete.³²

³¹ There were a few cases when a wife died shortly after marriage and the husband remarried and had a completed family from his second wife or when the couple already had a completed family when the wife died. These were included as separate completed families. In one case a man married and had a family. His wife died in her late forties and he remarried a woman in her twenties who continued to have children until she was close to 45. Each of these families were included as separate complete families.

³² For example, if it appears that a family resided elsewhere over the period of the study, that family was not included because all children ever born to the couple could not be located. The families residence outside the County could often be determined by their absence in one or more census, the birth of children outside the province, or the birth of several children for whom no birth or baptism records could be located.

The sample of families selected for this analysis was taken from the three districts with the most complete parish records: Petit de Grat, River Bourgeois, and L'Ardoise. This provided a sample of 355 families formed between 1841 and 1871, some 226 families started in the period 1871 to 1900 and 49 families formed after 1871 but not completed until after 1900. The average number of children per family started before 1871 was 7.3 and, for the period 1871 to 1900, the average declined to 6.8. This would represent a decline of one child for every two families or a decline of 6.8 percent in family size. However, when the figures are broken down by census intervals, most of this decline can be attributed to the period from 1871 to 1880.

Table 4.13

Average Family size, Richmond County, 1841-1900

Interval	number of families	Average size
1841-1850	109	6.93
1851-1860	98	7.72
1861-1870	148	7.32
1871-1880	128	6.20
1881-1890	59	7.46
1891-1900	39	7.69

Source: Database of Richmond County Families 1871-1901.

The figures in Table 4.13 reveal that there was a 15 per cent decline in the birth rate of the sample families for those couples married in the decade 1871 to 1880 or a decline of 1.12 births per family. However, the couples married in the last decade of the century had families that were almost identical in size to those married in the 1851 to 1860 decade. This decline in the birth rate between 1871 and 1881 took place in spite of the fact that there was no major change in the age at first marriage. For age of marriage to have been the only factor in determining the decline in births, the increase in the age at first marriage for women would have to be at least nine months to one year. In actual fact the decline was only about four months. The decline is also not influenced by mortality as the measure included births only.

It is likely that the decline in the family size for people married between 1871 and 1880 was directly related to the economic restructuring that was taking place. The actual mechanism of that change is more difficult to assess but the fact that in 1871 almost one-half the women between 25 and 29 were still unmarried suggests that the decline in the birth-rate could be directly related to a delay in marriage. However, the age at first marriage did not change for women in proportion to the decline in the birth-rate. It may be that a group of women was passed over for marriage as men, who had delayed marriage during the post-Confederation period of uncertainty, selected younger brides. Table 4.8

supports this conclusion as the age difference between brides and grooms was increasing. The group of older unmarried women may have become the first wave of female out-migrants.

Mortality

The problems with establishing mortality rates has resulted in the reluctance of historians and researchers from other disciplines to deal with the issue.³³ Does the fact that the average age of the population was increasing mainly reflect the age bias created by migration or were people actually living longer? The problem with examining this question is that death statistics have not been well kept.

In Richmond County, as in other areas, the poor quality of death records for many of the districts has made it difficult to establish any reliable statistics for the entire County. However, it was felt that an attempt to establish some form of mortality records was justified because this period was often characterised as one of general economic decline in the Maritime region. During periods of economic crisis, life-span tends to decline.

³³ Yasukichi Yasuba, Birth Rates of the White Population in the United States, 1800-1860, in chapter 3 attempted to deal with the issue of mortality but concluded that "... it would be hazardous to place much confidence in the numerical values of death rates." However, while death rates cannot provide good comparative statistics from one location to another, they can provide some valuable information in indicating change over time in locations where the records are fairly consistent.

As well, during the late nineteenth century a diphtheria epidemic swept across Western Europe and North America. How important was this epidemic in the County and was it sufficiently widespread to affect the age structure of the population? Since the majority of deaths occurred in children born in the first fifteen years of the period under study, the high child mortality rates could have resulted in fewer adults between the ages of fifteen and thirty in 1901. This factor alone could account for the changes in the age structure of communities. Tuberculosis was also considered to be a major killer of young adults and it is alleged that the death rate from this disease was abnormally high in the Maritimes.³⁴ If this was the case, it also had the potential to skew the age structure of the County.

Although complete death statistics are not extant, the most complete records are available for several Roman Catholic parishes. As well, a civil registration of deaths was in effect from 1871 to the spring of 1877. St. John's Anglican Church records in Arichat contain some death records but in many cases the quality of the records is so poor that they are virtually useless. Most Presbyterian and Methodist parishes did not keep death records until the 1890's

³⁴ As early as 1860-61 the Census reported a higher per capita rate of death from "consumption" in Nova Scotia than in Upper Canada. Report of the Board of Statistics, 1860-1861, Nova Scotia, p. 14. The interpretation of the term "consumption" is not clear and it appears to have referred to any disease of the lungs. While historians have sometimes used "consumption" as synonymous with "tuberculosis," that is not generally accurate.

and later. This has made it necessary to reconstruct the age structure of Protestant decedents based on cemetery inscriptions. This method of establishing mortality is questionable because of the social bias created by the fact that only the more affluent could afford grave stones. This factor would be consistent over time but might distort the average age at death. The figures provided, therefore, represent the change over time within a specific social group, rather than the population at large.

The Roman Catholic parishes of L'Ardoise, River Bourgeois, Arichat, and D'Escousse provide 2470 usable death records for residents over one year of age between January 1, 1871 and December 31, 1900. Using five year intervals, the average age of descendants were computed. The results are summarised in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14

**Average Age at Death for Decedents Aged one year and Over
for the Roman Catholic Parishes of L'Ardoise,
River Bourgeois, Arichat, and D'Ecousse, 1871-1900**

Years	Average Age at Death
1871-1875	36.1
1876-1880	30.6
1881-1885	32.8
1886-1890	38.2
1891-1895	42.2
1896-1900	45.1

Sources: The Parish Records of L'Ardoise, River Bourgeois, Arichat, and D'Ecousse Roman Catholic Parishes.

The increase in the average age for the population, as measured by the census, in the four parishes between 1871 and 1901 was three years, but the increase in the average age of decedents in the same parishes in the same period was nine years. This suggests that people were living longer at the end than at the beginning of the period. The decline in the average age at death in the period 1876 to 1885 is probably a direct result of the increased rate of death among children in the one to nine year age group, as a result of diphtheria. The diphtheria epidemics peaked in different years in each of the parishes ranging

from 1875 to 1881.³⁵ Since most of the children who died in these epidemics would have been in the 20 to 29 age group in 1901, it would be expected that there would be a decline in this age group. The census figures indicate that there was a decline in this age group from about 19 per cent of the population, in 1871, to about 14 per cent of the population, in 1901. However, this is the same age group that has been identified as being likely to emigrate.

Averages, however, can hide significant variations in the data. Major problems, such as the diphtheria epidemics, may lower the average age of death but they do not provide significant information on the overall age structure of decedents. Another way of analysing these statistics is to examine the proportion of the decedents in each age group. By comparing deaths in a series of age groups in the first five years of the period with those in the last five year of the period, it is possible to get a more detailed picture of the age structure, as in Table 4.15.

³⁵ An earlier epidemic in 1861 appears to have affected only the communities of Arichat and West Arichat.

Table 4.15

**Structure of Deaths in the Roman Catholic Parishes
of L'Ardoise, River Bourgeois, Arichat, and
D'Ecousse ,1871-1875 and 1896-1900**

Age Group	1871-1875	1896-1900
	Percentage	Percentage
under 1	29.6	24.2
1 - 9	17.8	16.3
10 - 19	9.1	5.5
20 - 29	8.6	7.8
30 - 39	5.2	4.5
40 - 49	5.0	5.5
50 - 59	5.0	4.0
60 - 69	5.8	8.0
70 - 79	8.0	8.8
80 & over	6.0	15.4

The change in the age structure of those who died suggests that people were living longer at the end of the period than at the beginning. The actual number of decedents over eighty increased from 32, in the period 1871-1875, to 89 in the period 1896-1900, while the number of deaths in the under one age group fell from 159, in the first period, to 140 in the second period. Although the average age of decedents increased during the period, the actual death rate per 1000 increased from 15 in the first period, to 17 in the last period, reflecting the

ageing of the population.³⁶

Of all the groups it is most difficult to collect accurate data on infant mortality. Most Roman Catholic parishes recorded children who died in infancy. The majority of babies who were born alive, even if they lived for only a few seconds, received some sort of baptism. Such baptisms were often performed by the mid-wife, generally referred to as the "sage femme" in Acadian records, or sometimes even by the father of the child or some other relative if a priest was not available. These baptisms "sous condition" were recognised as valid in the church and usually recorded in church records with the regular baptisms, or with the burial record if the child died.

These parish records appear to provide a fairly complete guide to infant mortality among practising Catholics and there is no evidence that any significant number of Catholics were non-practising. It is important to remember that the Catholic districts were mainly based on fishing and it is possible that different rates of infant mortality were the norm in farming communities which were primarily Protestant. The records used to reconstruct mortality rates, other than the four Catholic parishes, undoubtedly under-recorded infant deaths. Table 6 suggests that by the turn of the century infant mortality was declining. However, any decline in infant mortality was directly related to the decline in

³⁶ These rough death rates are calculated from the average number of deaths per year from the church registers and the population of the census districts as reported in the 1871 and 1901 published census reports.

numbers of births, because the death rate in this age group was almost the same in the two periods at 130 and 131 per 1000 of population.³⁷ The death rate for all children under four declined from 54 per 1000 to 48 per 1000.³⁸

Demographic and cultural features of the Acadian population could have had a significant impact on the data collected. Without a source of information comparable to the Roman Catholic parish records, an attempt was made to collect a database of Protestant deaths from cemetery inscriptions. Table 4.16 summarised the results based on this database.

³⁷ This rough death rate is based on the ratio of actual births and deaths reported in the Roman Catholic parish records for L'Ardoise, River Bourgeois, Arichat, and D'Ecousse.

³⁸ G. S. L. Tucker, "A Note on the Reliability of Fertility Ratios," Australian Economic History Review, XIV:2 (Sept. 1974), 160-167. Tucker reports rates ranging from a low of 52.8 per 1000 for females between 1891-1900, to a high of 68.6 per 1000 males between 1871-80.

Table 4.16**Average Age of Protestant Decedents From Cemetery
Inscriptions, 1871-1900**

Years	Number	Average age
1871-1875	13	50.7
1876-1880	57	37.6
1881-1885	61	48.2
1886-1890	59	45.1
1891-1895	92	46.2
1896-1900	89	52.5

Like the Roman Catholic records, the Protestant Cemetery inscriptions show a drop in the average age of decedents during the diphtheria epidemics of the late 1870's. However, the drop in average age was much greater and the average age was slower to increase to 1871-75 levels.³⁹ Overall the average age at death was higher than in the Catholic Parishes, but this could be caused by a bias from using cemetery inscriptions.⁴⁰

To provide a further check into the reliability of the figures based on cemetery inscriptions, the provincial death registers were used which are only

³⁹ The small number of inscriptions obtained for the 1871 to 1875 period may be mainly responsible for the high average age obtained.

⁴⁰ It is difficult to establish a comparable database for Roman Catholic cemetery inscriptions because Catholics were less likely to provide grave markers.

available for the period 1871 to 1877. The results for the average age of decedents were surprisingly similar, in spite of the fact that the death register provided a much larger number of observations than the cemetery inscriptions for the period 1871 to 1875.

Table 4.17

**Average Age at Death For Protestant Decedents
from the Richmond County Death Register,
1871-1875 and 1876-1877**

Years	Number	Average Age
1871-1875	155	51.4
1876-1877	84	37.2

Source: PANS, RG 32, Series WB and B, Richmond County Death Register and Death Returns, 1871-1877.

In order to determine whether the difference in the average age was a bias in the source rather than a real difference in life expectancy, the average age for Roman Catholic decedents on Isle Madame was computed from the Provincial Death Registers as well. Results indicated that Isle Madame Catholics died at an average age of 33.1 years, between 1871 and 1875, and at an average age of 34.2, in the period 1876-1877, figures that are within four years of those provided by the church records, although the civil records tend to be less complete.

What the available data indicate is that in general the residents of Richmond County increased their life expectancy over the period under study.

While those in the farming communities had a longer life expectancy throughout the period, their rate of improvement was fairly slow. However, by the turn of the century those in the fishing districts had increased their life expectancy by about nine years.

These results are in line with trends in Europe, Quebec, and New Zealand, where it was found that improvements in the rate of mortality took place first in the age groups 0 to 5 and 30 to 80.⁴¹ The figures also indicate that child mortality was lower in the Richmond County fishing communities than that in England and Wales in comparable periods.

Transitions in Marriage, Fertility, and Mortality

A comparison of marriage, birth, and mortality over the thirty years covered by this study reveals that changes were taking place in the formation, development, and disintegration of families. Men and women continued to marry at about the same age but the selection of marriage partners, already narrowed by religious, ethnic, and social considerations, for men in particular, became more limited. At the same time the population was ageing. In 1871 the bulk of married women, 45.6 per cent, were in the 20 to 39 age group. By 1901 the proportion in that age group had declined to 34.2 per cent. A similar trend was

⁴¹ Odin W. Anderson, "Age-Specific Mortality in Selected Western European Countries with Particular Emphasis on the Nineteenth Century," Bulletin of the History of Medicine XXIX (1955), pp. 239-253.

taking place in the male population in the same age category, which had shrunk from 37.8 per cent of married men to 27 per cent. Married couples in Richmond County in 1901 were older than they had been in 1871 and, because of the increasing longevity of parents, the transfer of assets from one generation to another was delayed for many families.

Traditional methods of determining fertility proved to be of little value because demographic changes undermined the assumptions on which they were based. There were more children in the County in 1901 who were not residing with their conjugal family than in 1871, making it appear that marital fertility had not declined over the period. Data derived from a sample of reconstructed families reveals there was a decline in marital fertility for couples married during the period from 1871 to 1880. However, the rate returned to former levels for couples married later in the century.

The methods used to measure mortality also indicate a change in the average life span of Richmond County residents. Not only was the population ageing but people, at least in the Acadian communities, were also living longer, on average by about nine years. As well the likelihood of children surviving into adulthood increased. In the first five years of the period, 56.5 per cent of the deaths were for those under 20 years of age. In the last five years of the period, the same age group accounted for 46 per cent of the deaths.

As a result of these changes, by the turn of the century families were smaller, they contained more older people, they were more complex in their structure, there were more young men than young women, and the actual number of marriages taking place in the County was beginning to decline. The following chapter will examine the dynamics that helped create this situation, through migration.

The migration pattern did not affect the propensity to marry of those who remained in the County and their age at first marriage remained the same over the period of the study. This result is the same as that postulated by Nancy Landale.⁴² Without a comparable sample of those who moved away, unlike Landale, we have no data on their marriage patterns. Persisters continued to marry at the same rate and age throughout the period and, except for a period from 1871 to 1881, they continued to have the same number of children. The reason there were fewer children was that there were fewer families headed by parents in child bearing years, a factor influenced by the increased life-span. The decrease in family size was not a function of a decline in marital fertility. The main reason for the decline was the fact that more families had adult children who were moving elsewhere.

The impact of industrial growth, the pull of cities, and the decline of expansion in the local economy did not influence family strategies of persisters

⁴² Landale, p. 382.

in the long term. The fact that opportunities were available elsewhere, and that the young of the County could take advantage of these opportunities did not have a negative impact on family planning. The majority of the population were unconcerned by the lack of nearby opportunities for their offspring because they perceived opportunities, for the continuity of the family to exist in other locations. They continued to marry at about the same age, they had the same number of children, but they lived longer, meaning that to achieve stability there had to be fewer young couples. The evidence suggests that most rural families in late nineteenth century Richmond County had more cosmopolitan views than is suggested by the comments of members of the local elites, comments that will be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Persistency

In 1834 Charles Stewart was born in Scotland. In 1840 he emigrated to Nova Scotia with his parents, John Stewart and Mary (MacLeod) Stewart. The family settled in the seaside community of Framboise, Richmond County, where John Stewart took up farming. When Charles grew up he did not follow his father's occupation but instead became a seaman and later a master mariner.

In 1859 Charles married Jane MacDonald in the neighbouring community of Grand River. They lived at Framboise for a time, where two of their children were born: John about 1860 and Isabella about 1862. By 1866 Charles and Jane were living in Cow Bay (now Port Morien), Cape Breton County, and three more children were born there: Mary Flora born in 1866, Angus D. born in 1871, and Charlie born in 1874. By 1876 Charles and his family were back in Richmond County but this time living in Fourchu where four more sons were born: Donald William in 1876, David L. in 1877, John James in 1879, and Duncan Angus in 1881. Jane died in the early 1880's and Charles remarried in 1886. When he married Annie MacDonald of Mira he was again living at Cow Bay. However, in 1891 Charles and his family were back in Richmond County, this time living in St. Peters, where Charles died about 1902.¹

¹ 1860-61 Census, Richmond County, Polling District no. 13, abstract 1, no.

The movements of Charles Stewart and his family provide an excellent example of persistence coupled with mobility. The dispersal of his family reveals a further extension of this trend. When Charles' son Donald William died in St. Peters in 1925, both his stepmother Annie and brother David were living in St. Peters. His siblings John, Angus, and probably Isabella, who had married John McCallum in Halifax in 1888, were dead. Charlie was living in Bay of Islands, now Corner Brook, Newfoundland. John James was in Seattle, Washington and Duncan Angus in Mobile, Alabama. A sister, probably Mary Flora, was Mrs. P. J. Maynard of Boston.²

The patterns of mobility evident in the Stewart family were not unusual. Many families showed tendencies toward both persistency and mobility. The attempted reconstruction of over 2, 500 families reveals that families were a dynamic element: an element of continuity and change. The stress placed on the "exodus" of young people from the Atlantic region reflects the attitudes mainly of local "elites" concerned, for various reasons, with the migration to

32; 1871 Census, Cow Bay, Div. 2, No. 46/50; 1881 Census Fourchu, family no. 3; Micro Churches: Marion Bridge, baptisms 22 Nov. 1885; Presbyterian Witness, Sat., 9 Oct. 1886: Cape Breton County Birth Register, mfm 16510 and 16511, 1866, p. 17, no. 305, 1871, p. 130, no 137, 1874, p. 221, no 235; Cape Breton County Marriage Register, 1886, p. 198, no. 72; St. Peters United Church Communion Roll; Inscriptions, St. Peters United Church Cemetery; 1891 Census, St. Peters, family no. 226; 1901 Census, St. Peters, family no. 40.

² Obituary of Donald William Stewart, provided by A. Ross MacKay, Bedford, N. S.; PANS, RG 32, Halifax County Marriages, 1888, no. 197.

cities. In 1872 the Acadian Recorder expressed its concern about rural depopulation and the tendency of large numbers of young men and women from the country to flock into town.³ The editor of the Bras d'Or Gazette remarked in 1896 and 1897 on the exodus from Richmond County.⁴ Although families were concerned about the lack of opportunities for the young closer to home, they seemed more ambivalent about the impact of out-migration than the elites. A commentator from River Bourgeois in the Bras d'Or Gazette may have illustrated the attitude to young people leaving for Boston better than newspaper editors: "Many of our young men and some young women left this spring to try their luck in and around the 'Hub.' It is too bad that our industrious people must leave their homes, and even their country, to earn a living."⁵ The ambivalence of the population was probably largely a reflection of their history. They were descended from Scots and Irish, some of whom were still alive, who had left their homes across the ocean in search of a new life. Acadians, whose ancestors been subjected to several migrations, were also aware that it was not always possible to stay in one place. On the other hand, it is not surprising that

³ Acadian Recorder, 11 April and 8 October 1872, quoted in Alan A. Brookes, "Migration from the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900: Some Preliminary Considerations," Acadiensis 2 (1976), p. 33.

⁴ Bras d'Or Gazette, 30 September 1896 and 26 May 1897.

⁵ Bras d'Or Gazette, 26 May 1897, "River Bourgeois Notes."

newspaper publishers would see such a migration as being essentially negative since it threatened their viability and their readership. The movement of the Bras d'Or Gazette to Sydney in 1901 to become the Sydney Daily Post,⁶ at the same time as the development of the steel industry in that city, is equally unsurprising.

The continuity of families in Richmond County suggests that the concentration on out-migration does not reveal the whole story of Richmond County family history. Persistency is a measure of the permanency of residence of either individuals or families in a particular geographical location. Several different methods have been used to measure persistency but a common measure is family persistency or the persistency of adult males, or heads of households, over a certain period, generally ten years.

The main source used for determining persistency has been census schedules, but city directories, and genealogies have been employed as well. The outcome of research is strongly influenced by the choice of sources and methodology. Stephen Thernstrom used Boston city directories to determine the persistence of adult male workers in Boston between 1880 and 1890 and found a rate of 64 per cent.⁷ This rate was much higher than those reported in a series

⁶ Ibid., 27 March 1901.

⁷ Stephen Thernstrom, The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), p.

of studies, for periods between 1800 and 1935, covering other areas in the United States. In these studies, ten year persistency rates varied from 21 per cent in Grant County, Wisconsin between 1885 and 1895, to 59 per cent in East Central Kansas between 1870 and 1880⁸. Thernstrom suggested that once frontier conditions were no longer the main developmental feature of an area, rates of persistence increased.⁹ This would account for the high rate of persistence in Boston compared with the rates in areas of North America further west, where most of the studies of persistence were concentrated.

The results of Canadian studies echo those in the United States. In his analysis of the city of Hamilton, Ontario, Michael Katz, using computer generated linkages, found a persistence rate of between 35 and 40 per cent over ten years, depending on the method of treating deaths.¹⁰ He was able to locate only 31.3 per cent of the males and 28 per cent of the females, as well as only 44 per cent of household heads, for the decade from 1851 to 1861.¹¹ David

221.

⁸ Thernstrom, Table 9.2, p. 226.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 226-227, fn. 1.

¹⁰ Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 119.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 123.

Gagan, in research on rural Peel County, Ontario, found that between 1851 and 1861, sixty per cent of adult family heads had left the County and between 1861 and 1871 only one-third of family heads persisted.¹² Only twenty-five per cent of Peel County families were persisters over the twenty year period.¹³

While persistency has been a common topic for study in North America, studies of Maritime Canada have tended to concentrate on out-migration or mobility, rather than persistency. This may reflect the negativism that has been a major feature of Maritime historiography. While the rural-urban shift in population concentration caused widespread movements of population across North America, the fact that the growth of Maritime city economies was too slow to absorb all those wishing to enter the urban environment, meant that overall provincial statistics showed very slow population growth and even population declines. Without cities that were able to capture the people who were leaving rural areas, out-migration has often been depicted as a problem specific to Atlantic Canada.

The most extensive work on migration to the New England area was undertaken by Alan Brookes. In his study of Canning, Kings County, Nova

¹² David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 95.

¹³ Loc. cit.

Scotia, Brookes¹⁴ not only examined out-migration from the Annapolis Valley in the period prior to 1881, but also the general out-migration from the Maritime region. In most of the Maritimes he found that the population continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century until 1881, although the rate of growth declined. After 1881 several counties in the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island suffered absolute losses in population. In Nova Scotia between 1881 and 1891, eight out of its eighteen counties lost population, while between 1891 and 1901, eleven of the counties had population declines, although the province as a whole showed a small growth of two per cent. In the latter period Richmond County suffered a population loss of slightly more than six per cent.¹⁵ It is probably unfortunate that Brookes used the term "exodus," which has the connotation of a rapid and massive movement of population. The concentration on exodus has resulted in many of the other significant themes of Brookes' thesis being largely ignored.

¹⁴ A. A. Brookes, "The Exodus: Migration From the Maritime Provinces to Boston During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century" Ph.D. thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1978; "Family, Youth, and Leaving Home in Late-Nineteenth-Century Rural Nova Scotia: Canning and the Exodus, 1868-1893," in Joy Parr ed., Childhood and Family in Canadian History, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 93-108.

¹⁵ Brookes, 1978, Table 4, p. 75; Department of Trade and Commerce and Dominion Bureau of Statistics, The Maritime Provinces in Their Relation to the National Economy of Canada, (Ottawa, 1948), Table 9, p. 11.

A second, more theoretical look at out-migration, is Patricia Thornton's application of the economic theories of out-migration, which she found were not always consistent. Some economists argued that out-migration was a result of economic decline and other argued that it caused economic decline.¹⁶ Thornton used census records to suggest that migration from the Maritime provinces was not caused primarily by economic decline but from the pull factors operating elsewhere, which created age-selective out-migration.¹⁷ On the other hand, she suggests that Newfoundland may have been influenced more by push factors that created less age selectivity in migration patterns.¹⁸

While most scholars have concentrated on out-migration as a fact of life in the Maritimes during the late nineteenth century, little attention has been paid to persistency. The relationship between persistency and out-migration may suggest whether Richmond County demography was influenced more by push mechanisms or pull mechanisms. However, the Richmond County experience seems to indicate that there is a dichotomy between persistency and out-migration that is not easily explained. In fact, despite out-migration, the

¹⁶ Patricia A. Thornton, "The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921: A New Look," in P. A. Buckner and David Frank, ed., The Acadiensis Reader: Volume Two, pp. 34-35.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 42-44.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 42.

communities studied reveal rates of persistency and stability that were some of the highest in North America. How can high levels of out-migration be combined with high levels of persistency? The explanation seems to involve a complex relationship between culture, life-cycle, and economics that help create such a push-pull phenomena.

There are numerous ways to deal with the question of persistency. One method is to determine the numbers of families that still remain in a community over a period of time, generally a ten year period. Because this study covers a period of thirty years, a modified version of the ten-year method was used to account for the fact that over thirty years a large number of heads of households died.¹⁹ Family reconstruction made it possible to determine whether at least one member of a family remained in a community after thirty years, even if both the head of the household and spouse were dead and if they had only female offspring. This method of determining persistency generally has not been attempted by other researchers but Richmond County records indicate that land often passed through a daughter, even when she had brothers. Alexander Murchison of Grand River left most of his property to his daughter, Margaret,

¹⁹ The average age of household heads varied from 46 to 56 in 1871, making the average age of those same individuals, if living, thirty years later 76 to 86. The death rate among household heads over the period has been estimated as over thirty per cent.

who transferred part of it to her brother Hector.²⁰ When land passed through the female line, the daughter often never received control. It was transferred directly by her parents to her husband, as in the case of Flora Hill of St. George's Channel, who married John Urquhart. Although it cannot be proven that the family members who were located in subsequent records were living on the same property as their parents, their positions in the census suggests that, if they were not on the same land, they must have been living close by. Research on deed transfers indicates that very little land was sold outside the family, providing further support for the prevalence of persistency. Even families who left the area seemed reluctant to dispose of the family property. They possibly found security in owning a home to which they could return if they did not succeed in their new location.

²⁰ Richmond County Deeds, Bk. D.1, p. 432.

Table 5.1

Family persistence by census district,
Richmond County 1871-1901
(Percent of families with at least one
member resident in the community)

	1881	1891	1901
Framboise	90	83	76
Loch Lomond	95	90	83
Red Islands	90	78	70
Grand River	89	85	74
L'Ardoise	91	82	73
St. Peters	83	68	59
Black River	90	85	74
River Inhabitants	85	80	68
River Bourgeois	89	84	74
D'Ecousse	81	71	59
Petit de Grat	76	54	41
Arichat	70	48	32
Little Arichat	72	50	36
Richmond County	83	69	58

The variability of family persistency rates across the County suggests that the rates of persistency and migration were not uniform within this small geographical area. Because these are minimum estimates of family persistence,

the high level of persistency in all areas except Arichat, Petit de Grat, and Little Arichat, suggests that the County had a large population that showed long term stability. The persistency of Arichat families is higher over thirty years than the figures generated just for ten year intervals in several other North American studies. However, it is important to recognize that many families, like that of Charles Stewart, revealed short term migration as well as long term persistency.

Many studies use the presence of family heads over a ten-year interval to measure persistence. In order to make some comparisons with these studies, their ten year rates are depicted in Table 5.2

Table 5.2

Percentage of Family Heads Persistent by District,
Richmond County 1871-1881, 1881-1891, 1891-1901
(Figures in brackets are corrected for known deaths)

	1871-1881	1881-1891	1891-1901
Framboise	75 (86)	69 (84)	72 (83)
Loch Lomond	68 (82)	75 (89)	61 (86)
Red Islands	73 (89)	65 (76)	65 (74)
Grand River	68 (85)	75 (87)	74 (90)
L'Ardoise	75 (86)	71 (85)	74 (85)
St. Peters	71 (82)	64 (85)	72 (79)
Black River	68 (88)	66 (82)	65 (81)
River Inhabitants	75 (85)	74 (84)	68 (78)
River Bourgeois	73 (88)	68 (82)	70 (81)
D'Ecousse	66 (82)	71 (83)	60 (80)
Petit de Grat	58 (74)	55 (83)	66 (70)
Arichat	51 (68)	54 (77)	55 (77)
Little Arichat	60 (71)	54 (70)	62 (72)
Richmond County	66 (80)	65 (80)	68 (80)

Source: Computed from the Canadian Census for 1871, 1881, 1891, and 1901.

The figures in Table 5.2 show that four-fifths of family heads were persistent over ten years or died within that decade.

The one-fifth who could not be located in the following census were a varied group. Between fourteen and seventeen per cent of them were sixty-five

or over, making it likely that many of them had died before the next census, although no records of their deaths were located. Household heads who were unmarried men or women made up between eleven and thirteen per cent. Another nine to sixteen per cent were married or widowed women under 65. The largest group of non-persisters were married or widowed men, not surprising as they made up the majority of family heads. Between fifty-six and sixty-one per cent of non-persisters belonged to that group. However, even for this group the actual rate of removal, based on the available data, would be only average one per cent a year and all of these families were replaced by the development of new families. At this rate of loss, even if no families were replaced, it would have taken almost a century for all families to leave.

One feature illustrated by the variations in persistence across the County is that certain districts were far more likely to lose whole families than others. This can be explained by correlating persistency with occupation of the heads of household over the thirty years of the study. The highest persistency rates in the County, 78 per cent, were for those families that combined farming and fishing. Farming families had a rate of 71 per cent and fishing families a rate of 63 per cent. Only 47 per cent of master mariners and 41 per cent of seamen remained in the County over thirty years along with 43 per cent of merchants.

Household heads with certain occupations were more likely to leave

Richmond County than others. The persistency rate for families headed by shoemakers was only 31 per cent, for carpenters 33 per cent, and coopers 35 per cent. The small numbers of families headed by blacksmiths, butchers, government employees, tailors, and lawyers makes it impossible to draw any conclusions about their persistency. Thirteen out of twenty-one blacksmiths, three out of three butchers, four out of seven government employees, three out of six tailors, and two out of three lawyers were persistent and those who left were replaced by others. When a family was headed by someone with a specialized occupation or trade such as wheelwright, mechanical engineer, mason, stage driver, or stage proprietor, the family showed high levels of persistence.

Occupation had a major influence on the decision whether a family would migrate or remain behind. However, with reconstructed families, it is possible to say something about other non-persisters in groups that were less likely to migrate, such as families headed by farmers and fishermen. For example, in the farming region of Grand River, representatives of thirty-three out of one-hundred and thirty-two families, or about twenty-five per cent, cannot be identified in the 1901 Census. A break-down of these non-persistent families indicates that all members of seven or about 21 per cent, were probably deceased but no records were found of their deaths. Four families or about 12 per cent, were probably

missed by the census enumerator, because other records suggest a continued residence in the district. Five of the families (15 per cent) had migrated to other districts in the County. Known out-migrants made up 27 per cent of the group and the destiny of the remaining one-quarter of the families is unknown.

At least for this community, half of those listed as non-persistent, could actually have been included as persistent on a long term basis but participated in a short term migration.²¹ The other one-half are either definitely or probably out-migrants. This provides a very small sample of out-migrants and a wide variation among the types of non-persistence found. A few examples illustrate the difficulty in generalizing about farm families that migrated out of the County. In 1871 family no. 6 in Grand River contained a widow and her son. The widow died before the 1891 Census, but her son married in Boston in 1889. Family no. 24 in 1871 contained a father, mother, and three children: Murdoch, John, and Catherine. By 1881, Murdoch was no longer at home, and he died in 1908 in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Later in 1881 the father died in Grand River. The family disappeared before the 1891 Census was taken but death records of the

²¹ Those listed as probably missed in the Census have been located in other records as being present in the area after 1901. It has been generally accepted that at least 10 per cent were missed in each census, and this figure is within that estimate. Those families that had probably died out in the area, but for whom death records could not be found, were families in which members would have been over sixty-five in 1901. It is possible that members of these families migrated to live with children elsewhere.

mother, as well as Catherine and John, were found in North Sydney, N.S.²² Family no. 70 in 1871 contained a husband and wife and seven children: Peggy Ann, Kenneth, Christy, Murdoch, Donald, Ann Mary, and Jessie. The parents, as well as Kenneth, died in Grand River between 1872 and 1894. By 1901 the family had disappeared from the census and the inscriptions on their grave stone in the local cemetery indicate that at least two of them died in the United States: Peggy Ann in New Haven, Connecticut in 1890, and Donald in Augusta, California in 1892. What these cases illustrate is the complexity of the out-migration process that affected whole families and the difficulty in generating models of out-migration. Rarely did entire farm families leave as a unit. As a result, it is not as difficult a task as might be expected to trace large numbers of out-migrants, because they maintained connections to persistent families.²³

²² This detailed analysis of Grand River would have been impossible without the extensive research of A. Ross MacKay of Bedford, N. S. and formerly of Grand River, and his willingness to share his information.

²³ One excellent source of such information is local newspapers that were published mainly after the turn of the century. Deaths of relatives in far flung areas of the world were commonly reported and the social columns that were sent in from rural communities often contained extensive information on the locations of people, especially those who returned home for visits. In fact, there were even sometimes columns sent in from communities in the U. S. that had a large numbers of local migrants and excerpts from Boston newspapers concerning former residents. See for example, The Richmond County Record, 13 Nov. 1948, "News from Everett, Mass.," Ibid., 25 Feb. 1950: a biography of Charles F. Martell of Medford, Mass., formerly of D'Ecousse; 27 Nov. 1948: an excerpt from the Boston Times, concerning Daniel Fougere who had celebrated his 88th birthday while visiting his daughter.

One conclusion that can be drawn from the Grand River examples is that this type of family migration may be a relic of earlier decisions made by individual family members to migrate and not the result of a "family" decision, as is evident in the three Isle Madame census districts that were most influenced by family migration.

Family heads and families tended to be highly persistent, no matter what method is used to compute the figures. The rates of persistency for Richmond County are similar to those found in Chelsea, Vermont during the last half of the nineteenth century, where Hal Barron found that two-thirds of the household heads and three-fourths of the farm operators did not leave the township.²⁴ The studies of longer settled regions suggest that persistency increased as a settlement matured.

Individual Persistency

While family persistency was high in most census districts, individual persistency was much lower. Although many families still had representatives in the County in 1901, few could report that all their members remained.

²⁴ Barron, p. 80. Barron's figures cover a fifty-year period.

Table 5.3

**Individual Persistence by Census District
1871 to 1901**

Percent of the population present
in 1871 and still present in 1901
(correction for deaths in brackets)

Framboise	26(40)
Loch Lomond	34(50)
Red Islands	24(35)
Grand River	29(41)
L'Ardoise	33(52)
St Peters	24(33)
Black River	24(41)
River Inhabitants	25(38)
River Bourgeois	33(54)
D'Ecousse	27(46)
Petit de Grat	17(34)
Arichat	11(30)
Little Arichat	13(30)
Richmond County	23(40)

Source: Database of reconstructed families.

The changing age structure of the population and the high persistency of linear families clearly suggests that the out-migration which took place was largely a migration of young individuals. The fact that the migration was mainly a migration of young people is further supported by another test. The place of death was located for 3146 people who appeared in the 1871 Census for Richmond County. The average age in 1871 of the 2804 people who died in

Richmond County was 17 years older than that of a sample of 342 people who died elsewhere. Regardless of the fact that some migrants brought their aged parents to live with them, and many of these older people died in the United States and elsewhere, the average age of those who migrated was 18 in 1871 and the average age of those who persisted was 35.

A second possible distinction that could be made between persisters and non-persisters is ethnic origin. However, there is no evidence that ethnicity was a major factor shaping whether people left or stayed. Between 1871 and 1891 there is little difference between the persistency of residents of the Acadian, Catholic, fishing district of L'Ardoise and the Scottish, Presbyterian, farming district of Grand River. In fact, between 1871 and 1881 overall persistency for L'Ardoise was 68 per cent and persistency for Grand River 69 per cent. When recorded deaths are taken into consideration, the rates rose to 75 per cent for L'Ardoise and 77 per cent for Grand River. As well, thirty-three per cent of those recorded in the 1871 Census in L'Ardoise were also recorded in the 1901 Census, while the figure for Grand River was 23 per cent, indicating higher individual persistence in L'Ardoise. However, in the Presbyterian farming district of Loch Lomond, the persistency rate to 1901 was almost the same as that of L'Ardoise.

When corrections are made for those who are known to have died in the

County in the thirty years between 1871 and 1901, persistency rates increase across the County, with a range from 8 per cent in St. Peter's to 21 per cent in River Bourgeois. On a county basis, persistency rates increased by 17 per cent when the figures are corrected for known deaths. Since districts with the poorest records show the lowest levels of deaths, it is likely that the affect of mortality is under-represented.

In studies done in the United States, the most common rates of persistency over a ten year period range from twenty-one to thirty per cent.²⁵ A study of Dayton township, Iowa showed a rate between 1860 and 1870, of thirty-four per cent and between 1860 and 1880, of twenty per cent.²⁶ A thirty year persistency rate that approaches one-quarter of the population (two-fifths when corrected for deaths) is high and, coupled with a ten year family persistency rate of 80 per cent, suggests that pull mechanisms were stronger than push mechanisms. Push mechanisms were created, not by an area reaching the limit of settlement potential but rather by a decline in the ability of an area to sustain its population at the existing level and with the existing standard of living. The evidence suggests that Richmond County did not reach that level in the late

²⁵ James C. Malin, "The Turnover of Farm Population in Kansas," Kansas Historical Quarterly, Wisconsin Magazine of History, 46 (1962) 16-20.

²⁶ Rodney O. Davies, "Prairie Emporium: Clarence, Iowa, 1860-80," Mid-America 51, (1969), 130-139.

nineteenth century because out-migration, caused by the pull of young people to the cities of New England and elsewhere, operated as a safety valve, allowing persisters to maintain their living standards and gradually improve them.

Although out-migration influenced all census districts, only four of the thirteen had fewer families in 1901 than in 1871.

Table 5.4

Number and Percentage change in the number of Richmond County Families by Census District from 1871 to 1901

	1871	1901	% Change
Framboise	84	117	30.8
Loch Lomond	60	72	20.0
Red Islands	158	153	- 3.2
Grand River	132	147	11.4
L'Ardoise	257	394	53.3
St. Peters	158	220	39.2
Black River	101	110	8.9
River Inhabitants	191	278	45.6
River Bourgeois	171	237	38.6
D'Ecousse	271	325	20.0
Petit de Grat	389	308	- 20.8
Arichat	202	124	- 38.6
West Arichat	289	201	- 32.6
Richmond County	2472	2686	8.7

Sources: 1871 and 1901 Census Schedules for Richmond County.

If there was no replacement of lost families, it would be expected that every area in the County would have suffered a decline in the actual number of families. This was not the case in nine of the thirteen census districts. Replacement

families filled the places left by migrants and most of these areas showed increases. However, the size of the increase varied from 9 per cent in Black River to 53 per cent in L'Ardoise. In the four districts that experienced declines the range varied, from 3 per cent in Red Islands to 39 per cent in Arichat.

In most districts family replacement more than compensated for the families that were lost through out-migration and death. These replacements generally took place through the formation of new families from existing families and natural increase. Although there was migration into the County, by 1871 it was not an important element in population change. The migration that did take place into the County was usually comprised of single individuals who married into resident families.

The reason that out-migration became such an issue for the nineteenth century may not be that migration was so high for the last three decades of the nineteenth century, but that there was little in-migration to counter the effects of out-migration. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century Richmond County entered a stage of maturity characterized by a decline in population and slow growth in the number of families.

The Concept of the Home-Place

In order to explain the persistency in farming communities in Richmond

County from 1871 to 1901 there are two other elements that require explanation.

The first is the concept of the stem family. A stem family is one in which parents pass their property to one child and his or her family and both generations share the property for at least some period of time. This family form passes through the structures of nuclear, extended, and back to nuclear over time. One child remains at home, marries and takes over the family residence and enterprise. This child looks after his parents, and sometimes unmarried siblings, while becoming the primary heir. The second concept can be labelled the "home-place."²⁷ This relates to the stem family, because the home or property is central to a stem family system. In rural areas the home-place generally combined a place to live along with some type of economic activity.

In Richmond County farming communities the stem family system was clearly the main operating system for transferring property. One son or daughter was either designated as the heir, or more commonly, gradually came to be considered the primary heir both by his parents and siblings. The method of transferring ownership and authority from one generation to the other varied from family to family. It was common, however, for the youngest child to become

²⁷ This term was developed during a discussion with Eilidh M. Garrett of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, Cambridge, England, during a Conference at the University of Guelph, Guelph Ontario, March 5-7, 1993. Subsequent reading has found the same term used by Bruce S. Elliott, in Irish Migrants in the Canadas, p. 196.

the heir. When the older children married they had little option but to leave home because grants were restricted to between 100 and 200 acres. Most farmers could not subdivide the homestead and provide a suitable living for more than one family.²⁸ They had to purchase their own farms, enter a trade, or move to some other area where they could earn a livelihood. Since women continued to have children into their forties, and generally their husbands were older, by the time the youngest child was of legal age the parents were ready to retire. At that stage it was not unusual for them to turn the homestead, as well as the care of any remaining members of the family, over to one of their children.

In the years before 1851 it was usually possible for the older members of the family to find ungranted land on which to settle, either in their own area or in one of the newer communities nearby. By 1871 there was very little ungranted land available.²⁹ Particularly after 1881 long-distance migration became the main option for young people seeking to establish their own farms. This movement made the home-place an important psychological concept. For the people who were forced into long distance migration, it represented a feeling of

²⁸ To be economically viable it has been estimated that a farmer needed forty acres of improved land. See T. W. Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture on the Eve of Confederation: A Reassessment", p. 26. Only a few Richmond grants had such large tracts of land suitable for improvement.

²⁹ In Richmond County land grants continued to be issued throughout the last three decades of the nineteenth century but most of these grants were for scrub land or were not easily accessible.

security that was difficult to achieve, especially in the early years away from home. Often this created nostalgia and an idealization of their former home society. Emma Bissett Sampson, who lived at various times in D'Escousse and Newton, Massachusetts had mixed feelings about urban life. Although she enjoyed being able to work to earn income to help support the family, attend the theatre, and acquire the newest fashions in Newton, she missed the strong community spirit and security central to life in D'Escousse. She also missed the things that no urban lady would do, like picking berries, hunting with her father, and fishing.³⁰ The perception of the home-place helped migrants cope with the insecurity of movement because they could hold on to the belief that they could return; it represented security.

Others may have been relieved that they no longer had the responsibility for maintaining a lifestyle that they did not like or which did not meet their own perceptions of competency. These migrants tended to develop a negative perception of their place of origin. The stories of "stuck-up" family members who came from the "Boston States" abound in Cape Breton folklore.³¹ For most,

³⁰ Emma Bissett Sampson, "Out of the Dark," unpublished manuscript in possession of Thomas Giammo, Silver Spring, Maryland, (Publication pending), pp. 50-52.

³¹ Examples of such stories can be found in the recordings of Cape Breton comedians Hughie MacKenzie and Allan MacDougall, "Out Home with Hughie and Allan," Liberty Records, 1967 and "Out Home Again with Hughie and Allan," United Artists Records, Inc.

however, there were probably mixed emotions that pulled them back to their childhood homes whenever possible but also drew them away to their new homes.

For those who remained the "home-place" could be seen as an opportunity or a burden. They may have found that their choices were far more limited than those of their brothers and sisters. The various rules and values that underlay long established communities might have made them feel stifled. Others may have accepted the responsibility of the home-place with relief, as it meant they could maintain a familiar and secure way of life. Reactions to staying on the home-place and on leaving the area entirely, were varied. Some quickly grabbed at a chance to return and settle, either on the home-place or nearby.

In the fishing communities the nature of work required a slightly different pattern. While in agricultural areas the farm and farm home were central to the home-place, in fishing communities a small plot of land, a boat, and fishing gear were more important. During the period under study it was less important to form a clear lineage linked to a specific piece of real estate, because often several children were settled nearby. A son could easily build a small house on a corner of his father's land and establish his own separate household. In some cases the parents split the house into two sections, giving one half to a son or daughter

and living in the other half themselves.

In both farming and fishing communities it was not unusual for a daughter and her family to become the caretaker of the home-place. In fact, there was a good chance in both communities that parents would move in with a daughter, or that a daughter and her husband would move in with them. In many instances parents appear to have preferred to live with a daughter and son-in-law rather than with a son and daughter-in-law, resulting in more fishing than farm properties passing through the female line. However, of all properties or "home-places" in Richmond County, approximately one-quarter to one-third passed through a female line.

It is difficult to find details about the mixed feelings precipitated by migration in the late 1800's but if continuity prevailed into the early twentieth century,³² the case of the Bissett family is probably not unusual. Alfred Bissett was born in 1848³³ and became a seaman. In 1873 he married a young widow, Erma Maquet,³⁴ who had two children from her previous marriage to Desiré

³² Gary Burrill, Away: Maritimers in Massachusetts, Ontario, Alberta, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), provides numerous examples of the mixed emotions generated by migration.

³³ It is not clear where Alfred was born. His marriage record gives his place of birth as River Bourgeois but his descendants believe he was born in Halifax and went to live with his uncle in River Bourgeois as a child.

³⁴ PANS, RG 32, Series WB, Richmond County Marriages, 1873, no. 57.

Sampson. Sometime in the 1880's Alfred and Erma went to Massachusetts, leaving their family in D'Ecousse with her mother. Erma returned home because she missed the children she had left behind but in 1890 her husband instructed her to take the children and go to the United States to live. Erma was reluctant to go because she had not liked it there during her previous stay.³⁵ However, her children from her first marriage, as well as two of her five children from Alfred Bissett, were already living in New England and she decided to join them. Alfred had started a painting business and had secured a large house for the family in Newton, Massachusetts. His son Walter was working with him while his step-daughter, Elizabeth Sampson and his daughter Mary, worked in a nearby woollen mill. The oldest in the family, Victor Sampson, was a seaman.³⁶ While in Newton Alfred continued in the painting business and ran a boarding house but in 1895 he became homesick and moved back to D'Ecousse with his wife and two youngest children. Although the youngest daughter Emma was delighted with returning to D'Ecousse, her mother found it difficult to get along without the conveniences they had in Newton, such as running water. They built a new house but before long the money they had brought with them ran out and

³⁵ Sampson, p. 18. Part of Erma's dislike of Boston may have resulted from the fact that her first husband died there in 1870 of "wounds." 1871 Census, D'Ecousse, Div. 2, "Deaths in the last twelve months," no. 7.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

Alfred decided to sell the house and move the family back to Newton. All left except Emma's twin sister Almena ,who stayed with her grandmother.³⁷

Although Alfred was an orphan and did not have ties to a specific "home," his psychological attachment to the Richmond County area drew him back, as it had his wife a few years earlier. A seaman in the coastal trade, he believed the end of reciprocity had moved his work to the United States and he felt forced to move there, since it was against American law to hire non-residents.³⁸ However, life was not easy in New England either, as work at sea declined, and Alfred tried a number of jobs. Over a period of twenty years he ran a boarding house, operated a painting business, fished, and went seal hunting, while putting his young children to work.³⁹ Emma was only thirteen when she got a job in the woollen mills where her older sisters worked. Because she was under age, her parents had to sign a release exempting the company from liability if she got hurt. She laboured from 6:30 in the morning to 6:00 p.m. for \$2.60 per week,

³⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

³⁸ It has been already demonstrated that this was done regardless of the law. Emma Sampson suggested that masters often hired non-resident crew as long as the vessel did not call at an American port. Therefore, fishing vessels could go to ports such as D'Escousse, take on a crew at lower wages than in the US, and return them there after the fishing season without ever entering an American port. Ibid., p. 46.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 20-21, p. 75.

most which she turned over to her parents.⁴⁰ It is hardly surprising that Emma commented that "life in Descousse was much better than when we lived in Newton...."⁴¹

Reasons For Out-Migration

While the best documented change that took place over the period under study was out-migration, coupled with population stagnation and actual declines in many communities, little research has been done on what was happening within families that participated in this migration. It has been hypothesized that out-migration was preceded by a decline in living standards. However, there is no evidence that there was a general decline in the standard of living in the area under study and available evidence actually suggests a gradual improvement in living standards.

There were four basic food items that were purchased by most families over the entire period under study: tea, flour, sugar, and molasses. All these items showed a decline in price with tea, flour, and sugar in the 1890's costing one-half of what they did in the 1870's. Tea prices declined from about .70 to about .35 per pound, flour from about \$10.00 to \$5.00 per barrel, sugar from

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 52.

about .125 to about .06 per pound, and molasses from .70 to .50 a gallon. The price trends for goods produced varied more, but the trend downward was less pronounced. Butter, the most important trade item for the farmers of the region, declined from about an average of .17 a pound in the 1870's to as low as .13 in the 1890's. In the 1870s the average price of cod per quintal was \$4.16 while in the 1890's it had declined to about \$3.75. Mackerel also showed a decline from about \$7.19 per barrel to about \$5.75 but herring rose from \$3.66 a barrel to \$4.00. Declines in the price of cod and mackerel were at least partially offset by the production and processing of new species such as lobster, and the growth in sales of fresh fish.⁴²

Other than food, the most common purchase for Richmond County consumers was clothing. In the 1870's it has been estimated that from one-third to one-quarter of family income was spent on clothing. However, because the type of clothing purchased changed over the period it is difficult to estimate actual changes in prices. In fact, textile prices are the most difficult to compare over time because of variability of type and grade of material. In the 1870's

⁴² This analysis is based on a number of sources but particularly several collections of business account books including the Archibald Finlayson Ledger, Grand River, 1881 to 1891, PANS; John MacInnes Ledgers and Day Books, 1891-1901, West Bay, Marble Mountain Museum, Marble Mountain, Inverness County; the D. N. MacLeod Ledger, L'Ardoise, 1871-1877, Nicholas Denys Museum, 80-2-4, St. Peter's, Richmond County; James Macintosh Ledger, 1897-1901, Princeville and West Bay Road, Inverness County, in the possession of

virtually all clothing was made at home or in the local area by tailors and seamstresses. By 1900 much of the clothing, particularly men's clothing, was purchased ready-made.⁴³

Apart from the items mentioned above, changes in consumption are difficult to measure. As communities matured from pioneer societies to established communities, consumption patterns changed. For example, in the early part of the century purchases of pots and dishes were a common item in country ledgers, but by the latter decades of the century most of these purchases appear to be only for replacement purposes. As a result, local stores appear to have stocked fewer dishes than they had previously and even when families wanted to upgrade or replace their sets, they were not readily available. These changes appear to reflect a maturing of settlement rather than any change in living standards. As well, the advent of mail order catalogues may have influenced the variety of stock carried by local merchants. The out-migration of youth appears to have created a cycle that impacted on all elements in the society. With few new households being established,⁴⁴ and most families

Peter Gillis, St. George's Channel, Richmond County.

⁴³ This is based on the available Business ledgers located for Richmond County and other parts of Nova Scotia. Women tended to purchase materials and make their own clothing throughout the period.

⁴⁴ Although the numbers of families increased from 1871 to 1901 the actual number of "new" families only averaged seven per year.

inheriting the goods of the former generation, merchants could no longer afford to provide a wide selection of products.⁴⁵

Not only did the items purchased show a change over the period but the method of payment also changed. In the 1870's most people paid for their purchases with produce but by the 1890's cash had become the prevalent commodity of exchange.⁴⁶

Changes had also taken place in how people held their wealth. While in the 1870's real estate was the most common form of wealth, by the 1890's bank accounts were taking over from real estate as the most common form of wealth holding. The estate inventories of two of Richmond County's most wealthy men provide a good illustration of the changes that were occurring. When George E. Jean died in 1873, seventy-six per cent of his wealth was held in real estate. When William Urquhart died in 1900, ninety-six per cent of his wealth was held in bank accounts and only 2.5 per cent was held in real estate. These changes were not confined to the elite. While in the 1870's it was rare for a small estate inventory to include a bank account, by the 1890's such accounts were not

⁴⁵ There is impressionistic evidence that the end of reciprocity made it difficult for merchants to procure consumer goods. The decline in coastal trading makes this a logical conclusion.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of this issue.

unusual.⁴⁷

These innovations reflected overall changes in the organization of the Richmond County economy. In the 1870's real estate had been used as the basis for exchange in farming communities and future catches, as well as real estate, played the same role in fishing communities. Families were able to get credit for every day purchases primarily on the basis of their land holdings. The increased availability of cash changed the requirement for large scale credit and made real estate less important. The development of a cash rather than a credit economy benefited those who were able to procure cash and it appears that the majority of families had at least some cash income.⁴⁸ However, the very poor, who had little or no cash income and were still forced to rely on credit, suffered continued impoverishment.

If there is no evidence of a general decline in living standards, why did out-migration so much dominate social change in the late nineteenth century?

⁴⁷ The eleven inventories located for Richmond County in the 1870's, valued at \$72.82 to \$9, 157.14) included only one with a bank account. During the 1880's bank accounts became more common and in the 1890's eight out of fourteen, valued at \$151.53 to \$72, 500, had bank accounts.

⁴⁸ The sources of cash income were varied. Men who worked in the off-shore fisheries generally received cash, as did others who worked away. Even working away for a short time could provide sufficient cash to move from credit dependency. The increase of government jobs, as well as the growth of small local industries such a lobster processing also introduced cash. Fish bounties, which only given to the more affluent fishermen, were an additional source of cash.

Although those in certain categories of employment, such as coastal trading, experienced structural changes in the economy that pushed them out of the region, it also appears that the increasing expectations of individuals that resulted in the development of pull mechanisms also played a major role in promoting migration.

The Operation of Push and Pull Factors

The differences in the migration patterns of families in the Arichat, Petit de Grat, and West Arichat districts from the migration patterns in the rest of the County appear to be related to push rather than pull factors. According to Dr. C. A. Herbin, a local physician and amateur historian, by the middle of the nineteenth century Arichat had entered a prosperous era that lasted to about the mid-1870's.

The shores of the harbor echoed to the sounds of hammer, saw, adze and caulking mallet; piers were busy with vessels outfitting, loading or discharging cargoes. Scarcely a day passed that vessels did not arrive from or leave for foreign ports. Arichat was indeed a busy port, reaching its peak of activity about 1875.⁴⁹

Herbin suggested that there were five factors that contributed to Arichat's decline after 1875. To him the most important was the introduction of steam as a method of navigation, meaning that cargoes were no longer at the mercy of

⁴⁹ Richmond County Record, 3 Sept. 1960, p. 1, col. 1.

favourable or unfavourable winds. A second factor was the opening of the St. Peter's Canal in 1869, resulting in vessels being able to go directly to Sydney through the Bras d'Or Lakes without making Arichat a stopping place before sailing around the island, as in the past. The third factor was the imposition by the United States of import, excise and customs duties on coal and fish exported by Canada. The fourth factor suggested by Herbin was a financial panic that struck the Maritimes in the middle 1870's, when most of the ship builders and ship owners nearly went bankrupt. The fifth factor was the loss of several large and small vessels in the August Gale of 24 August 1873. An additional factor in Arichat's decline, but one taking place later, was the migration of Isle Madame fishermen to the United States, particularly to Gloucester and Portland, attracted to these ports by the prospect of better wages.⁵⁰

Based on available information it is difficult to evaluate the impact of the factors mentioned by Herbin but it does appear that a series of events coming together created a push phenomenon in this particular part of Richmond County.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 10 Sept. 1960, p. 1, col. 1 & 2. Herbin's ideas may have been strongly influenced by John P. Parker's comments in Cape Breton Ships and Men, p. 116. Although Parker's book was not published until 1967, Herbin refers to it in his articles. However, Parker does not date the decline of Arichat to the post 1875 period. As mentioned earlier, Emma Sampson, described how the American captains hired Canadian hands at a lower rate. By moving to the U. S. these seamen and fishermen could get the same wages as Americans but it is not evident that they were better off as the cost of living in New England was higher.

Over-expansion in the coastal shipping industry, an increasing reliance on outside capital,⁵¹ a loss of capital in several natural disasters, the end of reciprocity and the resulting decline in coal sales to New England,⁵² all undermined the ability of those involved in ship building and the coastal trade to maintain their economic position.

Although Herbin places the decline in Arichat as coming after 1875, there is evidence that problems had been developing well before that year. Court records reveal a credit crunch about 1867, when a few large Halifax suppliers withdrew their credit from some of the largest merchants in the County.⁵³ Local supplies of pine were exhausted by the 1860s, increasing the construction costs of vessels. Some families were so strongly opposed to Confederation that they had moved to Prince Edward Island and this migration continued to 1873, when that colony joined the union.⁵⁴ The August Gale of 1873 may have been the final "straw" in a series of problems facing the coastal trade that resulted in

⁵¹ Touesnard, p. 148.

⁵² Phillip A. Buckner, "The 1870's: Political Integration," in E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muise, The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993, pp. 60-61.

⁵³ P.A.N.S., Micro Places: Richmond County Court Records, mfm 13338, pp. 256-344.

⁵⁴ At least twenty families have been located in the 1881 Census Schedules for Prince Edward Island that moved there in the period 1867 to 1873. Most of these families were in Petit de Grat in the 1860's.

"[p]essimism about ship owning" becoming a "self-fulfilling prophecy."⁵⁵ The same statement may be appropriate for the attitude toward Confederation.

Pull factors seemed to have been paramount in areas of the County other than Arichat, West Arichat, and Petit de Grat. These factors were more related to the increased expectations of Richmond County households that resulted from more than one source. Three reasons seem to have been most significant. During the period of reciprocity with the United States, certain families increased their wealth and standard of living through participation in the carrying trade and access to American markets, particularly in New England. They increased their standing in the community and acted as role models for others. In these small, close-knit communities these successes provided tangible examples of upward mobility and provided hope for economic and social achievement.

The level of literacy in the County, especially among the younger residents, rose significantly after the introduction of free education in the 1860s. This increased literacy built expectations as it introduced young people to new ideas and different lifestyles. Literacy brought to the young books, magazines, and catalogues that heightened ambitions for material success.

At the same time as the expectations of these young people were increasing industrialization, especially in New England cities, as providing not

⁵⁵ Sager and Panting, p. 162.

only new employment possibilities but also jobs that paid in cash. The fact that people were paid in cash provided far more discretion in their choice of purchases. The higher costs of living for food and lodging encountered abroad often offset the advantages of cash payment, making sacrifices in nutrition necessary in order to pay for the goods and services that were in fashion in the cities. When these men and women returned home with stories of new experiences and alluring purchases, they impressed those who had remained at home, especially the young. This enlarged the pull of the cities among those left behind.⁵⁶

The operation of pull factors was as complex as that of push factors and not politically neutral. Economic determinists tend to discount politics as a factor in economic development. However, borders are barriers that cannot be ignored and the operation of these barriers was seldom simplistic. The end of the reciprocity treaty of 1854 with the United States and the establishment of Canada in 1867 caused a restructuring of the economy. It virtually closed American markets to local produce as duties made them non-competitive with American goods. Fish that had formerly depended on international markets was

⁵⁶ Emma Sampson's memoirs deal with all of these issues. There were types of entertainment available that were unknown back home, such as the theatre, symphony concerts, and the circus. Magazines and family networks helped the poor obtain the latest fashions and articles that they did not have a home. However, it often required great sacrifices to secure these items. The city

forced onto local markets that were insufficiently large to absorb them. Meanwhile, American companies invested heavily in new technology and were not only able to capture the protected home market but were also successful in convincing the government in Ottawa to provide them access to Canadian fish stocks. Americans were permitted to fish Canadian stocks with American boats and equipment for the American market, effectively narrowing the opportunities for Canadian fishermen, coastal traders, and eventually farmers who were largely dependent on the coastal traders for access to markets.

The only alternative for many of those who engaged in ocean going pursuits was either to ship with American vessels or move south. Thus an unusual scenario developed, as American companies with American vessels were catching Canadian fish stocks using Canadian labour, for the American market. Eventually much of this Canadian labour force moved south. Even this is a simplistic explanation of the migration process. Fishermen and farm sons did not move south initially. Many worked on American vessels or in other seasonal occupations in New England, returning home when unemployed.

What may actually have drawn the men, especially farm men, to settle in the U. S. was the fact that the women were going there. In the early stages of female migration the women entered family service but as the education level of

increased the perceived needs of its residents.

Richmond County women increased, they moved into factory, clerical, and social service occupations. These were full time jobs. Although many of these women expected their stay in the American cities to be of temporary duration, intending eventually to return home to marry, the migration of women to the cities upset the gender ratios in some communities, particularly for those in the 20 to 30 age group. Even men who had remained in the home-place often had to go to the city to find a wife. Duncan McRae, who went to Boston and brought back a former neighbour, Annie McInnes, as his bride, claimed that he was not sufficiently good looking to get a local wife and had to go far to find one.⁵⁷

The tendency for young women to migrate to the city is illustrated by what is probably an extreme case: the situation in Grand River. Grand River was a farming community with strong ties to the fishery. Even those whose main occupation was given as farmer, often used income from fishing to purchase items such as tobacco and tea.⁵⁸ Although persistency was high, out-migration was one of the most notable features of social change between 1871 and 1901 and much of this migration was led by the women. By 1901 there were sixty-four

⁵⁷ It was not uncommon for couples that lived most of their lives in Richmond County, to have married in the United States and elsewhere. One such couple was Kenneth Ross and Bessie MacLean who married in the Scotch Presbyterian Church, Boston (now Needham Presbyterian Church) in 1888 and lived in the St. Peters district. The Duncan McRae story was recounted by Phil MacInnes, St. Georges Channel.

⁵⁸ Entries in the Alexander Finlayson Ledger illustrate this point.

men in the 20 to 29 age group in Grand River and only thirty-one women in the same age group,⁵⁹ providing a ratio of 2.06 men to one woman.

Although Grand River was an extreme example, the farming areas of the County all exhibited a gender imbalance in the 20 to 29 age group and the same process was taking place in many fishing communities. The available evidence suggests that it was the pull of the cities rather than any push phenomenon that determined the level of out-migration in most of the County. The pull of the cities took place before any noticeable decline took place in living standards. The freeing of demands on local resources made it possible for a gradual increase to occur in the incomes of those who stayed behind.⁶⁰ Generally, in the initial stages of out-migration, both those who left and those who stayed behind appear to have benefited economically from the migration.

The most significant aspect of the application of push-pull theory to migration in Richmond County is that it may be more useful when it is applied to attitudes rather than to actual events. The out-migration appears to have taken

⁵⁹ Figures based on the 1901 Census of Canada.

⁶⁰ Although production in farming was down slightly, the number of farmers had declined a great deal. This means that the production per farmer had increased dramatically, in some cases doubling. For overall incomes to have declined, the price would have had to have fallen almost one hundred per cent, something that did not happen. Although fishing incomes fell after 1871, a decline in the number of fishermen had resulted in their incomes beginning to rise by 1901. See Chapter 3.

place before any major changes took place in living standards, but it was the perception of how certain changes might affect families that was a central element in decisions to migrate. The fact that they withdrew their capital and their abilities based on that perception created a self-fulfilling prophecy. In a similar manner, the perceptions of young people that new experiences were possible outside the region, especially in New England, pulled them away.

Persistency and out-migration was not a simple process. The concept of "exodus" has distorted some of the main features of the process of population movements. It suggests that entire families were packing up their belongings and leaving an area. This phenomena did not take place in most districts in Richmond County. The process of migration, especially in farming and fishing families, often took place over many years, and in most cases at least one member of the family was left behind. The movement of families dependent on the coastal trade may have been more like an exodus, since whole families migrated together, but even the migration of these families took place over a considerable period of time.

Persistency and migration were complicated aspects of social change. High persistency in nineteenth century Richmond County was combined with high levels of out-migration. This apparent contradiction appears partly related to using family reconstruction and census records together, providing a higher

level of linkage than many other studies which depended solely on one source. Nevertheless, the results are similar to the only generally comparable study located, that of Chelsea, Vermont.

Central to persistency and out-migration were the perceptions of the residents of the County regarding social and economic mobility, adventure, consumerism, the impact of Confederation and structural changes in the economy, and their ability to adjust to change. The fact that migration took place before the impact of structural changes was clearly evident indicates the importance of perception in decision making. The decision to emigrate was based on the growing assumption, especially among young people, that staying would not fulfil expectations. Persistence was based on the belief that expectations could be met at home. The movement from one location to another was not a simple process, and both individuals and families, when they had the resources, often tested different locations in an effort to find the best place to make their home. Many did not have the resources to relocate, others did not chose to do so, but like the Stewart family, most people appear to have exhibited some form of mobility over their life cycle.

Chapter 6

Hierarchy

When Zephirin Boudrot died in 1882 he had an estate valued at only \$151.75, of which \$124.00 was either cash in the bank or on hand. His total material possessions consisted of two boats, six old herring nets, four sheep, five chairs, one looking glass, one table, crockery ware, and a cupboard.¹ Helaire Poirier died in 1875, leaving his widow two chains of land, a dwelling house, a small stove, one small vessel called a "pink," some household furniture valued at \$20.00, a horse, a cow, fifteen sheep, one cart, one sleigh, and some harness. His total estate was valued at \$471.² The following year George Lafford died, leaving an estate valued at \$2362.75. His personal property included, among other things, a sofa, six cane chairs, two rocking chairs, fifteen other chairs, five tables, two clocks, three looking glasses, two bureaus, a feather bed, one cooking stove and three parlour stoves. His other property included five horses, three cows, four sheep and a pig, two coaches, four wagons, a double riding sleigh, and \$1475.00 in real estate.

¹ Richmond County Probate Records, Arichat, N.S. file A-205, estate of "Ferong" Boudroit, Petit de Grat, 2 September 1882, inventory files 5 January 1884.

² Richmond County Probate Records, Arichat, N. S., file A-162, inventory dated 22 December 1876.

The level of inequality represented by Zephirin Boudrot, Helaire Poirier, and George Lafford suggest differences in their life-styles and their ability to attain some level of security for themselves and their families. Zephirin Boudrot had difficulty providing security for himself and his family, given his lack of a home, few belongings, and little money. Helaire Poirier had no money but was able to leave his wife a home, a small piece of land, some household effects, and a small vessel. George Lafford left a well-furnished house, some cash, land, part of which was rented, and other property that could have been used to earn income or sold. He was not wealthy but he left his widow comfortably provided for.³

Status or ranking within the social structure depends on a complex mix of elements, such as wealth, occupation, ethnic origin, religion, community involvement, and respectability. "Rank" was as much a subjective as an objective criteria. In Richmond County there was no simple social organization as depicted by Robert Swierenga⁴ but rather a series of ranking systems based

³ George's widow, the former Elizabeth Philpott, appears to have rented or sold her property and moved back to Port Hawkesbury where she was born and still had family. She died and was buried there in 1897. PANS, RG 32, Inverness County Marriages, 1872, no. 58; Inscription, Prince Street Anglican Cemetery, Port Hawkesbury.

⁴ Robert F. Swierenga, "Theoretical Perspectives on the New Rural History: From Environmentalism to Modernization," Agricultural History 56 (1982), p. 496.

on institutions and geographical divisions, such as community, church, school, post office, and polling district, besides those based on ethnic origin, economic status, and religion. Notions of social position were more often focused on a specific community of interest than on the County. The County was a somewhat artificial political construct but had its own structure built upon local politics. Rural society was simple only "when viewed through the wrong end of a telescope."

The study of social structure and inequality has been influenced by the value systems of scholars who deal with these issues. John Porter, in The Vertical Mosaic, claimed that one of the most persistent images that Canadians had of their society was that it had no classes.⁵ Porter, however, raised what could be a more important issue:

When a society's writers, journalists, editors, and other image-creators are a relatively small and closely linked group, and have more or less the same social background, the images they produce can, because they are consistent, appear to be much more true to life than if their group were larger, less cohesive, and more heterogeneous in composition.

Porter could have just as easily included historians and sociologists in his list of image makers. Since Porter could see inequality in Canada in the 1950s and 1960s, he postulated that the image of equality was based on a rural,

⁵ John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in

agricultural producing society. According to Porter, a rural, agricultural, primary producing society "is a much less differentiated society than one which has highly concentrated industries in large cities. Equality in the rural society may be much more apparent than real, but the rural environment has been for Canada an important source of the image of equality."⁶

When we attempt to describe the social or economic structure of a society we often employ criteria that fit our own sense of what is important in establishing status. The following discussion uses assessed wealth, land ownership, literacy, occupation, income, and house size to recreate the social and economic structure of Richmond County. But these were not the only elements that made up status. If local tradition can be relied on, a few highly respected and successful families did not receive high standing in the scale, using the above criterion. The most obvious reason for this is that there were no records available for financial assets. On the other hand, most of those who did reach a high level on the scale were influential families in the County, although not always held in high esteem. Establishing stratification in a nineteenth century population is a difficult and imprecise exercise and in the final analysis any economic classification system used is the invention of the process for

Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 3.

⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

collection and interpretation of data.

Background

Most of the studies on hierarchy in the Maritimes have focused on the early years of settlement and on urban areas. Studies by Debra McNabb and Rusty Bittermann look at agricultural regions of Nova Scotia, where there was a uniformity of occupation. Thus, land ownership and production were suitable measures for achieving some measure of inequality.⁷ Urban studies have often used occupation to measure the social standing of individuals and trace economic mobility.⁸

However, when the geographical area under study is diverse economically but with large numbers of people claiming the same occupation, sources for establishing some measure of hierarchy are more difficult to locate. In communities dependent on ocean directed activities, land ownership is not an adequate measure of social or economic status, nor is production, because many of the most affluent were not producers but "service" personnel, who

⁷ Rusty Bittermann, "Middle River: The Social Structure of Agriculture in a Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton Community," M. A. Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1987; Debra Anne McNabb, "Land and Families in Horton Township, N. S., 1760-1830," M. A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1986.

⁸ Stephen Thernstrom, The Other Bostonians, provides one of the best examples of the use of occupation to measure social mobility.

provided a brokerage function between the producers and other parts of the distribution network.⁹ Even many fisherman were really labourers who never reported fish production because they were employed by American and other companies.¹⁰

Many of the most affluent members of the County were merchants and traders who purchased fish and farm produce in return for both household and producer goods. These merchants and traders seldom reported production, as they were "service" oriented. However, even the designation "merchant" or "trader" did not always denote a more affluent group of people, since many were only small shopkeepers or peddlers. Using occupation alone is an inadequate method for determining status.

The only source before 1901 that provides adequate information on hierarchy and includes a wide cross-section of the population is assessment rolls.¹¹ However, no assessment rolls were located for the period 1871 to 1901.

⁹ David Sutherland, "Halifax Merchants and the Pursuit of Development, 1783-1850" Canadian Historical Review LIX:1 (1978), p. 3 found that Halifax merchants played a similar function.

¹⁰ This fact is clearly established by the reports in local newspapers. See for example, the Antigonish Aurora, 24 May 1884 under "River Bourgeois" notes; The Bras d'Or Gazette, 6 May 1896, "local and general."

¹¹ Some researchers have used Probate Records for the study of inequality. See for example, F. K. Siddiq, "The Inequality of Wealth and its Distribution in a Life-Cycle Farmwork," Ph.D. Dissertation, Dalhousie University, Halifax, 1986. However, probate records have far more limitations than assessments because

Municipalities across Nova Scotia sent copies of their 1862 assessments to the provincial government.¹² By using these records we can get some idea of economic stratification across Richmond County.

While assessment rolls provide the best available source of economic information, they have limitations. The assessed values were seldom accurate. For example, the provincial regulations governing municipal assessment gave breaks to certain groups. The Act provided that all "personal chattels of every kind and description be assessed at their actual cash value." However, every merchant, trader or dealer, manufacturer, tradesman or mechanic was to be assessed only on the "average stock of goods on hand" and that average was to be "the mean between the highest and lowest amount of goods on hand at any time during the year, and to be estimated at cost price." Ships afloat, as well as ships under construction, whether in the Province or elsewhere, were to be taxed at one-half their value.¹³ If property was occupied by someone other than the owner of the property, and if the occupier was resident for more than one year, the occupier, not the owner, was assessed. This ensured that the wealth

they cover such a small proportion of the population in any one year. In Richmond County from 1871 to 1901, there are only about two hundred probate files and only about one in ten was an inventoried estate.

¹² These records are available at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia in RG 34-320 (A.1).

¹³ The Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia, fourth series, 1873, pp. 125-127.

of the most affluent in the County was persistently under-stated. Nonetheless, assessment figures help establish the position of a family or individual in the economic hierarchy of the County, even if they are less than precise.

The vague wording of the act also made interpretation of what should be assessed difficult. Officials, dealing with as many as two or three hundred households, were generally given less than a week to complete their calculations for, a period that did not provide adequate time for making detailed evaluations. Politics influenced how a person might be rated and often ability to pay was factored into assessment ratings. Thus Dougall Boyle, a local school teacher, wondered in his diary entry of 3 December 1878 why he was assessed \$250 for property he had purchased in October, when the previous owner, Jeffery Landry, had never been assessed for more than \$130.¹⁴ Some assessors reported values only in £5 increments; others reported values to the nearest £.¹⁵ Appeals were common because of the deficiencies in the system.¹⁶

¹⁴ Dougall Boyle Papers, Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton, MG 12, 17, Vol. 1. Boyle Diary, 3 Dec. 1878.

¹⁵ Compare, for example, the assessment rolls for the Township of Maitland, District 3, and for the Township of Lennox, District 2, PANS, RG 34-320 (A.1).

¹⁶ Minutes of the Court of Sessions and Municipal Council at Arichat, Beaton Institute, MG 14, 74. See for example the meetings of 13 Jan. 1871, 3 May 1881. In the 1890's these appeals were considered by a committee and not reported in the minutes.

Regardless of the problems involved in the use of assessments, they are one of the best sources available for an analysis of economic stratification. The 1862 assessment roll provides a clear picture of inequality across the County, as is detailed in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Richmond County Assessed Wealth by District, 1862 (\$)

	number	average	median	top 10%
Framboise	94	186.24	106	41.6
Loch Lomond	83	294.44	320	25.5
Red Islands	85	234.44	188	32.3
Grand River	166	305.16	264	27.4
L'Ardoise	282	191.60	96	44.4
St. Peters	94	284.88	136	52.4
Black River	124	344.76	25	31.0
River	149	198.00	80	38.6
River	187	186.52	120	42.0
D'Ecousse	251	267.20	160	44.0
Petit de Grat	175	184.20	80	47.5
Arichat	457	722.20	200	60.8
West Arichat	316	446.48	189	50.0
Richmond	2380	298.69		

Source: Computed from the Richmond County Assessment Roll, 1862, PANS, RG2-320 (A.1).

The average assessed wealth varied from \$184.20 in Petit de Grat to \$722.20 in the adjacent district of Arichat. The figures reveal a wide range of inequality, within districts as well as across districts. Arichat's wealthiest top ten per cent held sixty one per cent of the taxable wealth but the percentage varied across the County, with the top ten per cent holding only 25.5 per cent in Loch Lomond.

The differences between the median and average or mean assessed wealth also provide a picture of wealth inequality. Arichat's average wealth was more than three times its median wealth. In agricultural communities inequality was much lower. While in Arichat the difference between the mean and median value was 261 per cent, in Grand River the difference was only 13.5 per cent and in Loch Lomond the median value was actually higher than the mean.¹⁷ Although all areas revealed stratification, areas in which population was more highly concentrated showed more inequality than the more thinly populated areas. Areas of older settlement in general showed higher degrees of stratification than the newer settled areas. The range of assessed wealth was also much larger in some districts than others.

¹⁷ This unusual result was created by the fact that eligible rate payers who owned land generally had high assessments and those who owned property outnumbered those who did not by about four to one.

Table 6.2**The Range of Wealth, Richmond County 1862 (\$)**

	Minimum	Maximum
Framboise	0	2880
Loch Lomond	0	1160
Red Islands	0	1336
Grand River	0	2344
L'Ardoise	0	4280
St. Peters	0	3556
Black River	0	2652
River Inhabitants	0	1280
River Bourgeois	0	3600
D'Ecousse	0	3460
Petit de Grat	0	3092
Arichat	0	17600
West Arichat	0	4280

In almost every district, the bottom twenty per cent held no assessed wealth. Very few women were included in the assessment rolls since the law gave control of their wealth to their fathers or husbands and only a few wealthy widows and single women had sufficient wealth to be taxed. The figures must be

used with caution because the measure of inequality they represent is probably much lower than reality because of the regulations affecting assessments and the fact that financial assets were not included. However, they do provide some evidence that the wealth of the County was unevenly distributed.

Although assessment lists are not available for the County for the years between 1871 and 1901, the total values of taxes assessed are available for most years. The amount increased almost 62 per cent over the period, from an average of \$8, 258.91 between 1871 and 1875, to \$13, 361.13 for the period 1896 to 1901.¹⁸ The subjective nature of ratings and the problems of establishing fair values were magnified by the changing economic situation throughout the period. Although there was no identifiable land market¹⁹ in the County as a whole, real estate that changed ownership in Arichat sold for much more in the 1850's and 1860's than it did in the 1871 to 1901 period. In its 1885 session the municipal council decided that economic changes within the County had to be reflected in the assessments. As a result, the revised assessment of 1886 took into consideration the reallocation of wealth within the County, with

¹⁸ Averages for the other five year periods were \$9, 546.41 for 1876-80; \$9, 215.33 for 1881-85; \$11,099.91 for 1886-90; and \$12,470.38 for 1891-95. Figures are based on BI, MG 14,74. Figures for 1881-85 are based on 1881, 1882, and 1885 as those for 1883 and 1884 were missing.

¹⁹ The greatest proportion of the transactions in the registry of deed relate to intra-family transfers of property, mortgages, and judgments.

Isle Madame's share declining by \$33,102, while the mainland's increased by \$14,087.²⁰ This increase was absorbed primarily by the districts of West Bay (Black River), River Bourgeois, St. Peters, Red Islands, L'Ardoise and Framboise. The largest decreases took place in Arichat (Districts 1 and 2) and West Arichat.

In order to make this reassessment palatable to the areas absorbing the increases, the overall tax rate was lowered and the total tax bill declined from \$9446.24 in 1883 to \$8,840.34 in 1886. Nonetheless the result was that St. Peters' taxes increased by 6.8 per cent, while the taxes of Arichat District 2 fell by 24 per cent.

Stratification in 1862 and 1871

Employing the 1862 assessments and eliminating those who were not identifiable in the 1871 Census, five families, all of whom resided in Arichat, emerge on top.²¹ What is surprising is the background of the five most affluent families: four were of Irish origin, and none were of Channel Island origin. As

²⁰ This reassessment appears to relate totally to the value of land. Land values in Arichat declined but the reassessment suggests that they increased in the remainder of the County, especially in districts such as St. Peters and Black River. Most land in these areas exchanged hands through family transfers (often for a dollar) and deeds did not reflect actual values.

²⁵ A number of families with high assessments in 1862 were no longer resident in the County by 1871, either because the family died out or left the County.

well, three of the five families were Roman Catholic and only one was Anglican.

John Ballam topped of the scale when the 1862 assessments were used to determine economic status. He had been born about 1794 in Curan, Ireland where his father, William, was a medical doctor.²² In 1820 Ballam was listed as a "publican" in Halifax where he and his wife, the former Jane Jones, had their son James baptized.²³ By 1822 the Ballams were residing in Arichat, where John had set up as a merchant.²⁴ By the 1850's Ballam had established a second home and business at Black River, cared for by some of his children.²⁵ It is likely that John's constant run-ins with local authorities,²⁶ when he blocked roads and violated other municipal regulations, precluded his appointment to the Commission of the Peace but two of his offspring received commissions. Son

²² PANS, RG 32, Series B, Richmond County Death Returns, 1876.

²³ St. George's Anglican Church Records, Halifax, 1820, baptism no. 178.

²⁴ St. George's Anglican Church Records, Sydney, baptism no. 652, a daughter, "Mary Jane" was baptised at Arichat 29 Sept. 1822. A land petition in 1831 indicates that John Ballam purchased land in Arichat 11 years before where he has built a wharf and "conducts an expanding business," PANS, RG 20, Calendar of Cape Breton Land Papers, no. 3293.

²⁵ PANS, RG 20, Series E, petition no. 2523.

²⁶ PANS, RG 48, Richmond County Minutes of the Grand Jury. As a regular foreman of the Grand Jury he was often responsible for recommending action that was against the interests of the serving justices.

James (1820-1864), a merchant at Petit de Grat,²⁷ was appointed J. P. on 5 October 1859²⁸ and another son, William (ca.1823-1881),²⁹ was a merchant, J.P.,³⁰ and postmaster at Arichat.³¹ John Ballam, Sr, died in Arichat in 1876.³²

The next highest family, based on assessed property, was headed by Thomas Fennelly (ca.1811-1869), a native of Ireland, the son of Daniel and Anastasia (Rice) Fennelly. In 1845 Fenelly married Catherine Tyrell, daughter of John and Mary (Nicholsson) Tyrell of Arichat.³³ In 1862 the Tyrell family was in the first percentile of the economic scale.

The third in Richmond County's economic elite was Edmund Phelan, also of Irish Catholic origin. He first appeared in the 1838 Census, where his

²⁷ The Presbyterian Witness, 13 Aug. 1864; PANS, MG 1, Vol. 544, Reel 2, Lodge Collection, Chandler Family.

²⁸ Royal Gazette, 1859, p. 316; PANS, RG 34-320, Series J, Vol. 1, Return of the Commission of the Peace, Richmond, 1863.

²⁹ St. John's Anglican Church Records, Arichat, burial no. 296.

³⁰ PANS, RG 34-320, Series J, Vol. 1, Return of the Commission of the Peace, Richmond, 1863. William G. was sworn in as a Justice of the Peace on 18 Sept. 1863.

³¹ 1871 Census, Arichat, Div. 1, family no. 53.

³² St. John's Anglican Church Records, Arichat, burial no. 263.

³³ Notre Dame de L'Assomption Catholic Church Records, Arichat, 1845, md.. 45. Catherine Tyrell was the aunt of Mary Tyrell who married Dougall Boyle, mentioned earlier.

occupation was recorded as a shoemaker.³⁴ Some time later Phelan became involved in trade, possibly as a fish buyer and shop keeper, and by the time of his death in 1862 he was listed as a merchant.³⁵ Phelan also had connections to other families with high economic status through his wife, the former Honora Sweeney (ca.1804-1893), daughter of John and Ellen Sweeney of County Cork. Her brother Jeremiah (ca.1806-1873) was a merchant at Arichat and her sister, Catherine Barry (ca.1795-1869), wife of David Barry (ca. 1787-1854), was a wealthy widow when she died.³⁶

Among the notables the Phelans were followed by William Frehill (ca. 1783-1866). Frehill, born in Middle County Cork, Ireland,³⁷ like Phelan was a shoemaker at Arichat in 1838.³⁸ He and his wife, the former Ellen Shea (ca. 1788-1890),³⁹ spent some time in St. John's, Newfoundland before coming to

³⁴ 1838 Census, Cape Breton, District 125; PANS, Richmond County Probate Records, Bk. D, p. 106 and p. 440, A-110; Richmond County Death Records, PANS, RG 32, Series B, and Series WB, 1868-69, no. 48; Richmond County Probate; Vital Statistics from Nova Scotia Newspapers, 1852-1854, no. 2728.

³⁵ PANS, Richmond County Probate Records, Bk. D, p. 106.

³⁶ PANS, Richmond County Probate Records, Bk. D, p. 106, p. 440, and p. 338; Richmond County Death Records, PANS, RG 32, Series B, and Series WB, 1868-69, no. 48; Vital Statistics from Newspapers, 1852-1854, no. 2728.

³⁷ PANS, RG 32, Series WB, Richmond County Deaths, 1865-66, no. 15.

³⁸ 1838 Census, Cape Breton, District 125.

³⁹ Notre Dame de L'Assomption Catholic Church Records, Arichat, 1890, burial

Arichat, between 1824 and 1829.⁴⁰ Frehill, like Phelan, was recorded as a merchant by the time of his death.⁴¹ Although Frehill did not become a J.P., his son John was appointed to the Commission in 1859.⁴²

The last of the top five, and the only one not of Irish background, was Hypolite Marraud (ca. 1789-1866) the son of Joseph and Marie (Babin) Marraud, a family of French and Acadian origins.⁴³ He was a shipwright and owner and built several vessels, including the "H. M." of 326 tons, launched at Arichat in 1852⁴⁴ and the "Lady Mulgrave" of 168 tons, built in 1857.⁴⁵ Marraud was appointed to the Commission of the Peace on 28 November 1848 but he

no. 34.

⁴⁰ This is based on the ages and places of birth of his children as reported in the census.

⁴¹ Richmond County Probate Records, Will of William Frehill, Bk. D, pp. 245-248, A-122.

⁴² Royal Gazette, 1859, p. 125. John Frehill was appointed J. P. on 15 April 1859.

⁴³ Stephen A. White, "Another Acadian Before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, 1877," Les Cahiers de la Société Historique Acadienne VII:2 (1876), pp. 80-83. John P. Parker, Cape Breton Ships and Men, p. 99 claims that Hypolite Marraud came to Cape Breton from Jersey, but there is no other evidence that he was connected to the Channel Islands.

⁴⁴ PANS, Miss "S", Shipping Registers, Reel 14512, 1852, no. 28.

⁴⁵ The Richmond County Record, 16 Jan. 1960, p. 1.

remained unsworn, although his name was still on the list in 1863.⁴⁶ Marmaud died in 1866 but his widow, the former Marie-Barbe LeBlanc, daughter of Augustin and Ann (Bellefontaine) LeBlanc, appeared in the 1871 Census, dying shortly after the Census was taken.⁴⁷

These biographical sketches suggest that the economic elite of 1862 was elderly. Four of the five soon died, leaving their families to inherit. The estates of these household heads were distributed among their heirs by 1871, making it appear that there was a decline in the economic status of their families. However, the process was simply the result of the natural devolution of property from father to children. Thomas Fennelly suffered a financial setback before 1871, which is illustrated by the foreclosure of a \$3690.00 mortgage.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, using the 1862 assessment data alone does not produce an adequate portrayal of the economic hierarchy present in Richmond County by 1871.

The 1871 Census schedules provide mainly data related to the production of goods. There is no estimate of the value of property or of income. The

⁴⁶ PANS, RG 34-320, Series J, Vol. 1.

⁴⁷ 1871 Census, Arichat, Div. 2, no. 53/59; PANS, RG 32, Series WB, Richmond County Deaths, 1871, no. 32; Stephen A. White, "Les Fondateurs de la Paroisse d'Arichat, Cap-Breton," Les Cahiers 23:1 (1992), p. 10, no. 6.

⁴⁸ PANS, Richmond County Supreme Court Records, mfm 13338, p. 229.

schedules do indicate the amount of land owned and occupied, boats and vessels owned, livestock and other items related to the production of "independent producers."

In the farming communities the amount of land owned often determined the economic viability of the property which was dependent on both the value of the cleared land and woodland. In the sea-going communities land was also important because it was needed on which to build a house, for woodland to produce fuel, and as space for growing at least some of the products used by the household, as well as for maintaining some livestock.

The next most important commodity for families who lived in these communities was a vessel. A vessel had several possible uses, such as fishing and coastal trading. Even when the market for fish was poor, a vessel could help ensure at least a supply of some form of protein for the family by providing fish for family consumption, if not for sale. Vessel ownership was essential for fishermen and coastal traders who wanted to maintain any degree of independence from wage labour.

Literacy also had the potential of being an important element in economic success. Families headed by literate individuals were less likely to be exploited by unscrupulous or sloppy merchants, because an ability to read provided them with an important tool in dealing with the court system. The courts generally

favoured the merchant in debt cases and if the defendant could not provide adequate documentation that a debt had been paid, the merchant would recover the debt as well as costs. Moreover, literate individuals were more likely to get government appointments, such as Justice of the Peace. Many appointments were for positions later awarded to professionals, such as the laying out and negotiating the right-of-way for roads.⁴⁹

By correlating the 1862 assessments with the 1871 Census families, and using land ownership, occupation, vessel ownership, and literacy as supplementary variables, some measure of economic stratification can be achieved. Although the assessments appear to be the most useful for determining rank, the lapse of nine years between the assessments and the census makes it important to use the 1871 Census as well. A rating system was developed based on the 1862 assessments, along with land ownership, occupation, vessel ownership, and literacy. Although several other variables could be added to the classification system, such as improved land, production, number of livestock, boat ownership, and fathoms of nets owned, inclusion of these variables would increase the problems of analysis.

Two of the five members of the elite, based on the 1862 assessments,

⁴⁹ BI, MG 14, 74(b), Bk. 2, Richmond County Municipal Records provides several examples of the type of paying appointments available. Examples are found in the minutes for 15 Jan. 1891, p. 103 and 20 Jan. 1891, pp. 125-126.

were also in the top five in 1871: the Ballam and Phelan families. All five elite families in 1871 were headed by men between the ages of 31 and 68 and all except James Phelan were over 50, suggesting that most of them, like the 1862 elite, were nearing the stage when their resources would be devolved to the next generation. None of these families had made major recent gains in economic status because all rated highly on the 1862 assessment rolls.⁵⁰

In 1871 Donald Matheson (1816-1887) ended in second place behind John Ballam. He was born at Plockton, Loch Alsh, Scotland, the son of Kenneth and Isabella (MacKay) Matheson and came to Grand River with his family in 1821.⁵¹ In 1847⁵² he married Maria Sophia Bissett (1828-1910), the daughter of George Edward Bissett, Esq. and his wife Martha Bissett. He was appointed

⁵⁰ A possible problem with this system is that the method requires a high rating on the 1862 assessments to be included in the top five. Therefore, it is possible that families that made larger gains in economic status would not appear in the top five. However, a family that experienced losses or divided its assets would decline. As well, families that did make substantial improvements in economic status might not appear in the top five but the incremental nature of wealth accumulation suggests that few families with low ratings would move so rapidly up the scale. The only exception here appears to be when one family inherited the total assets of its of its forebearer or forebearers, something that was rare in the most affluent families.

⁵¹ Information provided by A. Ross MacKay, Bedford, N.S. and 1871 Census, L'Ardoise, family no. 77.

⁵² St. John's Anglican Church Records, Arichat, marriages, no. 169.

Justice of Peace in 1863.⁵³ George and Marie settled in L'Ardoise where Donald became a merchant and vessel owner⁵⁴ but Donald's alliance with the affluent Bissett family did not prevent him from encountering financial difficulties and by 1871 most of his assets were tied up in litigation.⁵⁵ After the failure of his business the family moved to Port Hastings, where he died.

William Crichton (ca. 1802-1883)⁵⁶ had been born in Scotland⁵⁷ and emigrated to Pictou County, Nova Scotia with his family. In 1830 he married Martha Hatton⁵⁸ and shortly thereafter set up a business at West Arichat and was appointed Justice of the Peace.⁵⁹ Martha Hatton was the daughter of Robert Hatton, a lawyer who had emigrated from Ireland and settled in Pictou about 1813⁶⁰ and a sister of Henry Hatton, who was a merchant, ship-builder,

⁵³ PANS, RG 34-320, Series J, Vol. 1.

⁵⁴ Donald Matheson and Henry Bissett owned a two-masted schooner, "Florence E. Matheson," of 109.04 tons and Matheson was the sole owner of the "Euxine" a two-masted schooner of 51.19 tons. Richmond Record, 9 April 1960 and 30 April 1960.

⁵⁵ PANS, Richmond County Deeds, Bk. p. 128, p. 137.

⁵⁶ North Sydney Herald, 23 May 1883, p. 3.

⁵⁷ 1871 Census, Little Arichat, Div. 1, family no. 131/141.

⁵⁸ St. James Anglican Church Records, Pictou.

⁵⁹ Nova Scotia Royal Gazette, 9 Mar. 1831. Crichton was appointed J. P. for the Southern District of Cape Breton, 2 March 1831.

and member of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly for Pictou Township from 1836 to 1843.⁶¹ Based on the 1862 assessment rolls, William Crichton was in the top one per cent in assessed wealth.

Very little is known about the early life or the fate of William Bowen, fourth on the elite list, but he lived in Guysborough County during the 1850's. He had been born in Ireland about 1816⁶² and was in Arichat by 1862, when he appears in the assessment rolls for that year. He married Bridget Hearn and all their children were born in Nova Scotia. Bowen was sole owner of a two-masted schooner, the "William Bowen," of 146.82 tons, which he registered at Arichat in 1865.⁶³ He was listed as a merchant at Arichat in 1871. One son, John Alfred, married and remained in Arichat, although the remainder of the family left before 1881.⁶⁴

These brief biographies, coupled with the biographies of those who

⁶⁰ Rev. George Patterson, A History of the County of Pictou Nova Scotia, (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1972), p. 309.

⁶¹ Shirley B. Elliott, The Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia, 1758-1983, (Halifax; Province of Nova Scotia, 1984), p. 92.

⁶² 1871 Census, Arichat Div. 2, family no. 42.

⁶³ Richmond Record, 9 April 1960. This vessel was lost in 1870.

⁶⁴ The Bowen family is still prominent in Arichat in 1995 with a grandson Amedee "Red" Bowen employed as Registrar of Deeds and Probate. Another grandson, Hilary Bowen, was jailer at Arichat for many years.

appeared on the top of the 1862 assessment scale, suggest that both methods are useful for determining economic stratification and membership in the local hierarchy. Combining the 1862 assessments with variables from the 1871 Census allows families, who would not be adequately rated because of deficiencies in census data, to receive some standing in the County.

The 1871 classification resulted in the division of families into a rough hierarchy based on total points. The maximum points achieved was 88 and families were divided into five categories, based on the number of points they were allotted.

Table 6.3**Economic Structure of Richmond County 1871**

Strata	Rating Points	number of families	Average assessed wealth	Average acres owned
1	36-88	6	\$6028	385
2	27-35	30	3084	208
3	19-26	71	1568	241
4	10-18	724	456	150
5	0- 9	1602	90	56

This method provides an illustration of how a very small number of affluent families dominated Richmond County in 1871. With such large differences in the numbers in each category, the data was reworked to provide a five-tiered structure based roughly on quintiles.⁶⁵ The reworked data demonstrates again that the top rank was much more affluent than the four bottom ranks.

⁶⁵ The distribution was first divided into deciles but scores overlapped deciles. When analyzing mobility this factor created a problem. Therefore, families that had obtained scores that were the same as scores obtained for a person or persons in an upper decile were reassigned to that decile. The data of two such revised deciles was combined to provide rough quintiles.

Table 6.4**Distribution of Richmond County Families by Quintile, 1871**

Rank	number of	Average assessment	Average acreage	percent of rank families owning land
1	491	\$2565	183	96.9
2	470	280	113	97.0
3	564	232	57	89.4
4	492	115	37	78.3
5	380	77	29	41.3

The major contrast was between the top percentile, or top one per cent, and the bottom percentile.

The elite group consisted of thirteen merchants, seven master mariners, a miller, a farmer, a fisherman, and a carpenter.⁶⁶ Three had no given occupations. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven families were headed by married men, two were single, two were widowers, and two were widows. The religious affiliation of eighteen was Roman Catholic, four were Anglican, four were Presbyterian, and one was a Methodist. In ethnic origin thirteen were French, five Scottish, four English, four Irish, and one a native of the Channel Islands. By

⁶⁶ The fact that someone with a low status occupation such as fisherman could rise to the top of the structure illustrates the advantages of this system over one based on occupation alone. The so-called fisherman was Josiah Hooper, a fish merchant and buyer who at one time served as M.L.A. for Richmond County.

1871 the hegemony of the Channel Islanders had disappeared. Ten of the elite group lived in Arichat, and five each resided in Petit de Grat and West Arichat. The remainder were scattered throughout the County.

Those in the bottom percentile provide a vivid contrast. None of the twenty-four family heads in this strata had a census defined occupation. Sixteen were widows or widowers and eighteen of the poorest families were headed by women. Three of the men who headed families were under age 30, another was 83, and the last was a 58 year-old widower. Like the top group those of French origin predominated, accounting for a total of eighteen. There were two English, one African, one Channel Islander, one Dutchman, and one Scot heading poor families. Twenty-two of the families were Roman Catholic. Twenty, or 83 per cent of the poor families lived in the same districts as the most affluent.

Comparing the top and bottom elements tends to accentuate inequality. Those clustered in the middle ranks, had a lot in common. While the average assessment of rank 1 was \$2285 higher than that of rank 2, the difference between 2 and 3 was only \$58. About 97 per cent of families in ranks 1 and 2 held some real estate. Rank 1 held an average of 70 acres more than 2. Eighty-nine per cent of rank 3 and 78 per cent of rank 4, but only 41 per cent of rank 5, owned some land.

Analysis by ethnic origin reveals that 74 per cent of the English placed no

lower than the middle rank. On the other hand, 79 per cent of the French fell in the last three rankings. Seventy-nine per cent of the Irish and 90 per cent of the Scots were in the top three ranks. Other ethnic groups tended to place in the lower three ranks.

There was a high correlation between ethnicity and religion, making the religious stratification similar to that of ethnicity. Seventy-five per cent of the Anglicans and ninety-five per cent of the Presbyterians fell no lower than the middle category. Almost 71 per cent of the Roman Catholics congregated in the bottom three classifications. The Methodists tended to fall more in the middle of the distribution, with 44 per cent in rank 3, but another 44 per cent were ranked in 1 and 2.

Families headed by women, most of whom were widows, were concentrated in the lower strata and only 19 per cent placed in ranks 1 and 2. The distribution of men was fairly even, except for the bottom category, where they made up only 12 per cent. Seventy-four per cent of widows and widowers were located in the bottom three categories, while married and single men were more likely to place in ranks 1 and 2.

Master mariners clustered in the top ranking: some 74 per cent of them gained that status. Slightly fewer merchants, 69 per cent, were rated in rank 1 but 98 per cent fell no lower than rank 2. Eighty-eight per cent of farmers placed

in ranks 1 to 3 and 85 per cent of fishermen place in ranks 3 to 5. No blacksmith was positioned lower than rank 3 but carpenters placed mainly in the middle. Seventy-three per cent of labourers fell in the bottom three strata and the same proportion of mariners occupied ranks 3 and 4.

Arichat, Black River, and Loch Lomond placed more families in rank 1 than in any other category. Framboise, River Bourgeois, Red Islands, and St. Peters placed their largest number in rank 2. River Inhabitants families showed the most concentration in the middle strata, while L'Ardoise and River Bourgeois did likewise in rank 4. Only Petit de Grat and West Arichat families were more likely to end up at the bottom than in any other single rank.

Richmond County in 1871 was a stratified society in which ethnicity, religion, occupation, and geographical area often determined where a family would place on the scale. A Scottish Presbyterian farmer from Black River was more likely to end up in the first rank than a French Roman Catholic fisherman from Petit de Grat.

One feature emerging out of the 1871 data is that Roman Catholics appear to have been subject to much more inequality than Protestants. Economically, the Protestants dominated the middle, although they held a much smaller share of the population but the Roman Catholics had a much larger number in the top and bottom strata than their share of the populated warranted.

Although most of the French appeared in the lower stratas, there was a polarization between the very wealthy and the poor.

Stratification in 1901

The 1901 Census provided five possible variables for measuring economic stratification: wages, literacy, land ownership, occupation, and the number of rooms within a residence. Each measure has its limitations but together they provide a relatively reliable measure of social or economic inequality.

The first measure, "wages," is the most problematic of the five. It is apparent from the census schedules that enumerators had difficulties with the definition of "wages" and the instructions they had to go by were not particularly useful. The chief enumerator for the County of Richmond, Angus J. Boyd, explained in a note attached to the St. Peter's schedule that "Figures in column 26 of this Schedule... in connexion [sic] with the names of persons who are not 'wage earners' were entered under the misapprehension of the Instructions relative to that column."⁶⁷ Most enumerators attempted to estimate income, but the census takers for Black River and West Arichat included only those who received actual wages from another party for labour over a period of time.

⁶⁷ 1901 Census Schedules, No. 1, St. Peters, p.1.

Salaries and other payments for services rendered were excluded from the wage category by some assessors. For example, the fees paid county officials, such as ferrymen and Justices of the Peace, were not included in the wage columns. Other enumerators appear to have attempted to include income from all sources.

Evaluating the findings presents several problems which range beyond the apparent unreliability of the "wage" amounts given by the enumerators. The income data only represents income over the past year but the other variables reflect long term accumulation. While it can provide an indicator of potential social and economic mobility, there is no evidence to suggest that there was a high correlation between income at any one point in time and status. For example, some of the families with the high incomes in 1901 do not appear to have been upwardly mobile. The socio-economic level of families developed over the long term and not over one year.

Although income as a variable cannot be ignored, because it provides information on potential upward mobility, the problems involved with it created the necessity of constructing two ratings, one including and the other excluding income. After comparing the two methods it was decided to omit income from the classification system developed for individual families because the absence of data for many families had a significantly negative affect on their ranking. However, it was used as a supplementary variable in comparing rankings. In

this way, families from Black River and West Arichat did not receive artificially low ratings merely because of the absence of "wage" information.

The instructions governing literacy were less prone to the error than those related to income. The enumerator was to record the answers to the literacy questions precisely as the head of the household provided them and not make any attempt to verify or interpret the answers. He was to ask if the household head could read and write, and then ask the same question about each member of the household.

There was ambiguity about how to deal with the question about the number of rooms in a house. It is likely that respondents and enumerators would have a different interpretations of what constituted a "room."

The addition of house size as a variable and the unavailability of assessment records means that the number of possible points were different in 1901 than in 1871 for the later calculation the maximum score was 37. Using a method of evaluation similar to the 1871, scores were divided into five categories.

Table 6.5**Socio-economic Structure of Richmond County 1901**

Strata	Rating points	Number of families	percent of population owning land	Average acreage	Income
1	30-37	4	75.0	393	\$1060
2	23-29	48	97.9	336	821
3	16-22	405	96.5	149	500
4	8-15	1302	95.5	59	310
5	0-7	927	77.6	16	215

When compared to Table 6.3 there were fewer people in the upper strata in 1901 than in 1871. The declines in all other strata were absorbed mainly into the fourth. Because the variables used for the 1901 evaluations are not identical to the variables used for 1871, it is possible that most of this variance is a result of research methodology, rather than changes in the structure of society itself. Even if these tables do represent a change in structure, interpretation of the data is difficult. They could mean that people were getting poorer and therefore more families were moving down the scale. On the other hand, it may be that a few families were acquiring far more assets than their neighbours and moving away from the rest of the population. The increase in the amount of land owned by the top two strata suggests the latter was happening. However, the population was

becoming more homogeneous in the lower stratas. The evidence supports the idea that although a small number of people were acquiring a larger share of county assets, inequality was decreasing in the other ranks.

In order to answer some of the questions raised by the 1901 structural profile, the data was reworked by quintile. The following table represents the results where income was excluded as a variable in status.

Table 6.6

Socio-economic structure of Richmond County by Quintile, 1901

Rank	Number of families	percent of population owning land	Average acreage	Average income
1	585	96.8	159	\$496
2	685	95.0	68	335
3	488	95.7	32	256
4	508	87.2	20	228
5	420	66.0	10	198

When we compare these two tables with tables 6.3 and 6.4, they show that those at the very top had distanced themselves from the others with regard to land ownership. Table 6.6, on the other hand, illustrates that a redistribution had taken place in land, leaving each rank with less land on average, but more families owning land. This change may be directly related to the inheritance

practices of families in fishing communities. The tables suggest that inequality in land ownership was decreasing.

Those at the top of the distribution held a large proportion of the resources of the County and much of the political power but their affluence does not seem to have had a major impact on other ranks. Unfortunately, these tables only show how each group was doing relative to other ranks.

As in 1871 the top percentile and the bottom percentile for 1901 provide contrasts. The average reported income for the elite was \$887 and they owned on average 391 acres of land. The average age of the family head was 53.6 years and they lived in families with slightly more than six others in residences that had on average 11 rooms. The bottom percentile had an average income of about \$157 but only one-quarter owned land, averaging about 2.5 acres each. The average age of the head of the household was 49.7 years and they lived in families with three others in a house that had one room. The fact that some of this bottom group, unlike those in the same situation in 1871, owned some real estate suggests they were slightly better off.

There were other changes in the social structure of the County. The elite group were now made up of twenty-two Scots, with three English, two French, one Irish, and one Channel Islander. Nineteen of this group were Presbyterians, five were Roman Catholics and there were two Anglicans, two Baptists, and two

Methodists. The Scottish Presbyterians had taken over from the French Catholics on the top of the social scale. The elite groups in 1901 and 1871 were similar in gender and marital status.

The occupational breakdown of the elite had also changed. Sixteen of the group were farmers, six were merchants, one a hotel proprietor, one a carpenter, one a manager, one a postmaster, one a teacher, one a trader, and one retired individual. The merchants and master mariners were no longer the force they had been in 1871. The change in occupational structure was reflected in the geographical distribution of the elite: eight lived in the Black River district, four in River Bourgeois, three in Loch Lomond, four in River Inhabitants, two in Arichat, two in St. Peters, and one each in Framboise, Grand River, L'Ardoise, D'Ecousse, and Red Islands.

The changes in the composition of the elite reflects the changes that were taking place in the overall structure of Richmond County. The percentage of French in the top rank declined by half, but the Scots moved up. The distribution of the English remained roughly the same but the Irish declined in rank, as did those of other ethnic origins. Anglicans and Presbyterians gained in rank while Roman Catholics tended to decline in status. Except for the elite, the occupational distribution was similar to that in 1871, although a large number of new occupations had appeared.

As in the rankings developed for 1871, it appears that the variables used for 1901 establishes the existence of a hierarchy. The five families that rose to the top of the 1901 rating scale read like a who's who of turn of the century Richmond County: David A. MacLeod, Joseph Matheson, John Morrison, Alex McTavish, and A. B. Hooper.

David A. MacLeod (1857-1940) was the son of a merchant, John MacLeod, whose property and business interests near Cleveland, in the River Inhabitants district, straddled the line between Inverness and Richmond Counties. When David A. got into trouble with his father from reckless behaviour that resulted in the destruction of a valuable team of horses, he ran away to sea to try to earn enough money to repay his father for the loss. During his years at sea he was not only able to pay his father, but also to save money,⁶⁸ and when injuries forced him to return home, he took over at least part of the family business. According to Ronald Caplan, editor of MacLeod's memoirs of his life at sea, "[i]f it is any useful measure of his success as a merchant, it was said of Macleod that he had the biggest barn in Richmond County."⁶⁹

Joseph Matheson (1833-1915) was born in Grand River, the son of

⁶⁸ Captain David A. MacLeod, Cape Breton Captain, (Wreck Cove, Cape Breton: Breton Books, 1992). This publication was based mainly on a diary kept when David MacLeod was at sea and his memoirs.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 145.

Kenneth and Isabella (Mackay) Matheson and became a merchant as well as the postmaster at L'Ardoise. In 1864 he married Maria Hooper, the daughter of Josiah and Elizabeth Hopkins (Hart) Hooper of Fourchu and a sister to Albert Bruce Hooper, another of the top five in 1901. He was appointed Justice of the Peace on 9 June 1869,⁷⁰ won election as an M. L. A. for Richmond County in 1886, a position he held until 1896, and served as a Liberal member of the Canadian House of Commons from 1900 to 1904.⁷¹

Third on the scale, John Morrison (1836-1918), was born in the Black River district, a son of John and Isabel (Logan) Morrison. He was generally referred to as "John, the Hotel" because he established a hotel at St. Peters during the construction of the St. Peter's canal. Later he also became the local stage proprietor. His first wife was Margaret Kelly (ca. 1837-1867), daughter of Charles and Mary Kelly, whom he married in Sydney in 1861.⁷² They had three children. After Margaret died, John married Amelia Ogden Strople (1846-1909),⁷³ the daughter of Elisha and Ruth Strople of Antigonish.⁷⁴ They had nine

⁷⁰ PANS, RG 34-320, Series J, Vol. 1.

⁷¹ Elliott, p. 154.

⁷² PANS, RG 32, Series WB, Richmond County Birth Register, 1865-66, no. 69.

⁷³ St. Peters United Church Cemetery, g.s.

⁷⁴ PANS, RG 32, Series WB, Inverness County Marriages, 1871, no. 115.

children, most of whom died young.⁷⁵ Like many high status family heads, John became a Justice of the Peace, being sworn into office on 15 August 1874.⁷⁶ In 1894 he ran for election to the Nova Scotia Legislature and won but the courts voided the election after a protest was registered by one of his opponents, Joseph Matheson. In the subsequent election Morrison was defeated by Matheson.⁷⁷

Of the top five in 1901, only Alex McTavish (1857-1939) was not resident in the County in 1871. He had been born in West Caribou, Pictou County, the son of Donald and Martha (MacKenzie) McTavish and in 1892 married Jennie A. Stewart (1858-1930), daughter of Charles and Amelia (Langley) Stewart of Bear Island,⁷⁸ Richmond County. His occupation at the time of his marriage was given as merchant and on the 1901 Census as "carpenter"⁷⁹ but he later became fuel foreman for the CNR at Point Tupper. Although his name does not appear in the list of magistrates or politicians, he was active in church affairs and served as an

⁷⁵ St. Peter's United Church Cemetery; Antigonish Anglican Church Records.

⁷⁶ PANS, RG 34-320, Series J, Vol. 1.

⁷⁷ Canadian Parliamentary Guide, (Ottawa: J. Durie & Son, 1897, p. 325; Shirley B. Elliott, The Legislative Assembly, p. 159.

⁷⁸ PANS, RG 32, Series WB and B, Richmond County Marriages, 1892, no. 21.

⁷⁹ 1901 Census, Port Malcolm, p. 5, no 47/50.

elder of the Methodist Church at Port Hawkesbury.⁸⁰

Albert Bruce Hooper (1840-1920) was born in Arichat, the son of Josiah and Elizabeth Hopkins (Hart) Hooper. His father, a native of Bristol, England, was a merchant and shipbuilder and served as M. L. A. for Richmond County from 1867 to 1871. The Hooper family moved to Fourchu before 1871. There Albert became a merchant and trader and was involved in the lobster canning business. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in May 1870. He died at Fourchu on 1 January 1920.⁸¹

The biographies of these men indicate that the analytical technique of using land ownership, house size, occupation and education to explore the county hierarchy, is valid. Of the four factors used for determining the status of a family in 1901, the ratio of rooms within the residence to the number of residents provides the best predictor of family social status. Table 3 looks at the relationship between the number of reported rooms in a house, the ratio of rooms to residents, and the average reported income of the family.

⁸⁰ Pictou Advocate, 27 July 1939, p. 1, col. 6.

⁸¹ PANS, RG 34-320, Series J, Vol. 1; Presbyterian Witness, 24 Jan. 1920; Elliott, p. 97; 1871 Census Framboise, family no. 60; 1881 Census, Fourchu, family no. 4; 1891 Census, Framboise, no. 86; 1901 Census, Framboise, no. 79; PANS, RG 32, Series WB, 1870, no. 25, Richmond County Marriages.

Table 6.7
Household Size and Income
Richmond County 1901

Rooms per Residence	Average Residents per Household	Rooms per Resident	Average Income (\$)
Over 10	6.54	1.98	933
10	5.12	1.95	563
09	5.17	1.74	581
08	5.79	1.38	413
07	5.22	1.34	497
06	5.07	1.18	321
05	5.41	0.92	302
04	4.80	0.83	275
03	4.90	0.61	245
02	4.34	0.46	208
01	3.48	0.29	131

Table 6.7 reveals that poorer families were smaller than those who were more affluent. Those with the largest houses had the most people residing in them. The ratio of rooms to occupants reveals a pattern of overcrowding for those in the lower ranks. The largest dwellings provided almost two rooms for each resident, while in the smallest houses more than three persons were

crowded into one room.

Table 6.8 provides an estimate of the number of families and individuals that would have lived in each size residence. Problems with the collection of data and the poor quality of microfilm copies of the census resulted in the loss of data for a considerable number of families.

Table 6.8

**Number of Families and Number of Persons
per House Size, Richmond County 1901**

Number of Rooms per Residence	Number of Families	Number of Persons	Percentage of Persons Per House Size
Over 10	26	170	2.7
10	32	164	2.6
09	41	212	3.4
08	80	463	7.5
07	90	475	7.7
06	124	629	10.2
05	150	811	13.1
04	265	1271	20.6
03	216	1053	17.0
02	178	772	12.5
01	50	174	2.8
Total	1252	6194	

Thirty-four per cent of the population lived in houses that provided a ratio of at least one room per person. Although generally people might have shared sleeping space with one other, much more privacy was available than in the homes of the bottom one-third of the population. Approximately one-third lived in conditions where they would have had to share their sleeping space with one other person. The bottom one-third lived in crowded conditions where they

would have shared their sleeping space with more than one other person.

One possible effect of this overcrowding was the spread of disease. It was difficult for families living in such conditions to isolate those who became ill from the rest of the family. It is likely that those living in crowded conditions were more prone to epidemics, such as diphtheria and tuberculosis. The fishing villages, where houses tended to be smaller and overcrowded, were particularly devastated in the diphtheria epidemics of the late 1870s.

The differences between the elite and the poor of the country went deeper than land ownership and houses. Most of them came from families that were already doing well. Albert Hooper and David MacLeod both had fathers who were merchants and who left their sons considerable property. John Morrison, Joseph Matheson, and Alex McTavish came from farm families. Although each of these men can be credited with considerable achievement on their own, most came from families already rated in the top quintile.

Social Mobility

Two methods were used for assessing families and social status over the period of the study.⁸² The first method was to follow the family from 1871 to 1901, focusing on the person most likely to be the principal heir. The other method was to trace those in the 1901 Census back to the family of origin. Both the number of observations and the results of each approach were different. The first method generated 1370 observations, while the second generated 2000. When forward linkage was used, more families appear to have been upwardly mobile than were downwardly mobile. When the backward linkages were used the reverse was true. Table 6.7 is a summary of the results generated by using linkages from 1871 to 1901 when an attempt was made to follow the principal heir. The results of these two methods appear to underline the importance of impartible inheritance in mature communities.

⁸² Although it would have preferable to also examine structure and mobility over ten year periods, the available family level data was inadequate for creating a scale in 1881 and 1891.

Table 6.9

**Mobility of Richmond County Families Linked
from 1871 to 1901
1370 linked families**

	1	2	3	4	5
1	216	110	41	12	5
2	88	124	86	42	36
3	21	49	90	49	34
4	13	25	62	79	42
5	4	11	29	59	43
Total	342	319	308	241	160

The numbers across the top represent the ranks in 1871. The numbers down the side represent the position of the families in 1901. The largest persistent group consisted of those who had been in the first rank in 1871 and 63 per cent of them maintained their ranking. Overall, 39 per cent of the families stayed in the same rank, 34 per cent moved up at least one rank and 27 per cent moved downward. About 27 per cent of those in the lowest category remained there and only three per cent moved up to rank 1.

When families were linked backward from 1901 to 1871, the trend was different. This was because more families were traced and the concentration was not on following the principal heirs. Table 6.8 summarized the results of this

method.

Table 6.10

**Mobility of Richmond County Families
Linked from 1901 to 1871
2000 linked families**

	1	2	3	4	5
1	266	121	46	78	5
2	141	167	122	51	26
3	38	76	121	73	42
4	33	51	119	134	62
5	9	26	63	108	82
Total	487	441	471	384	217

When the families were linked backward from 1871 to 1901, 39 per cent families stayed in the same rank, 28 per cent rose at least one rank, and 33 per cent declined one or more ranks. Without knowing the fate of the families that migrated it is impossible to draw conclusions about whether staying or leaving was the best choice but the majority of families who stayed either maintained their standing or moved upward. However, being a principal heir was central to maintaining or improving social standing.

Those who left opened niches that could be filled by those who remained.

Although the upper rank was more likely to be persistent, the disappearance of some of the large merchants left a void that provided opportunities for small storekeepers and grocers to set up businesses. Peter Haywood of Arichat, a seaman in 1871, used the money he made at sea to establish a small grocery business in Arichat and, as a result, moved from rank 4 to rank 2. Malcolm McNeil revived the fortunes of his family after the death of his father in 1870 by becoming a school teacher and later superintendent of schools. He moved from rank 3 to rank 1. Those who were able to abandon a declining skill and learn a new one could achieve upward mobility such as with the case with George Spry, a ship carpenter in 1871, who had become an electrician by 1901, improving his ranking from 4 to 2.

The majority of the people who moved upward had some assets from the family that provided a "head start." How the next generation was able to apply these assets determined whether they remained in the same decile as their parents or moved up or down the scale. Nathaniel Clough, in the top rank in 1862, died in 1865 leaving his estate to his family, including sons George and Daniel.⁸³ As a result, George and Daniel moved from the bottom of the economic scale to the first and second ranks respectively. Charles LeBlanc of Little Arichat established upward mobility by achieving the status of master

⁸³ Richmond County Probate Records, Will bk. D, p. 226.

mariner and acquiring 50 acres of land deeded to him by his father.⁸⁴ Inheritance appears to have been the main element in the different results shown in Tables 6.7 and 6.8. Those families who did not subdivide their assets, or had considerable assets, found it much easier to maintain rank or move up than did those who had only a small legacy or none at all.

Certain occupations seemed to facilitate upward mobility and several of these new occupations were spawned by economic and technological changes. The improvement of roads and new methods of transportation resulted in an increase in travel, making it possible for people such as wheelwrights and hotel proprietors to increase their wealth and status. Occupations in the transportation field, other than in coastal trade, were expanding, especially railroad-related occupations. Although the Cape Breton railway only touched the western boundary of Richmond County, residents were able to find work in a variety of railroad-related jobs, from the lowly "navvy" to station agents, car inspectors and engineers. Daniel Morrison of Port Malcolm, who became a steam engineer, had moved up two categories from the rating given to his father,

⁸⁴ 1871 Census, Little Arichat. Div. 2, no 44. In 1862 Charles LeBlanc had no assessed property but his father had land valued at £80. By 1871 his father had no recorded land and Charles had fifty acres. Although the deed of the property was dated before 1862 it appears that the father held the for some time after the date of the deed. Richmond County Deeds, Bk. K, p. 447, dated 3 Oct. 1860, and p. 459, dated 3 Oct. 1861.

a carpenter in 1871. Malcolm McLeod, who operated a hotel in St. Peters, rated higher than his father, a farmer in the Red Islands district.⁸⁵

Government jobs were also an important route to upward mobility or means of maintaining status in the face of other reverses. Alexander F. Boudreau increased his status rating two categories by becoming collector of customs and Charles Sampson of River Bourgeois moved upward by becoming inspector of schools. Postmistress Susan Ballam was able to maintain the top rating of her family by taking over the post office at Arichat after her husband died.

One of the most important methods of maintaining status or moving upward involved education. Higher levels of schooling gave some ambitious youth access to the professions. The middle and upper echelons of county society were more successful in achieving success in this manner. Although most of these professionals moved elsewhere, a few remained in the County. George W. Kyte became a barrister and achieved a higher status than his farmer father. Also, Jeffrey Poirier increased his status by becoming a teacher. Many other County residents entered the clergy, studied law, and entered the medical professions.

⁸⁵ Malcolm's father Angus rated 2 on the decile scale in 1901 and Malcolm rated 1. However, using the five strata scale would put them at the same level.

Downward mobility resulted from a number of factors but the most common was the death of the household head, age or illness, and the devolution of assets to the next generation. Widowhood often led to a declining standard of living. When Dominique Gerroir of West Arichat died in the 1870's he left his widow with sufficient assets to place the family in the top rank.⁸⁶ However, she lived for more than two decades after the death of her husband and by 1901 her rank had declined to number 4, forcing her to take in a lodger.⁸⁷ Similarly, Sarah Ann LeNoir of Arichat dropped from rank 1 in 1871 to rank 2 in 1901 after the death of her husband, Daniel, in 1877. Sabine Boudrot of River Bourgeois dropped from rank 3 to rank 5 after the death of her husband in 1898. About 12 per cent of all downwardly mobile families were headed by widows.

Information about how widows coped is rare but one revealing story involves Melanie Maquet and her daughter Irma. In 1852 Melanie Baresté dit Pertus (1835-1918) married Victor Maquet (c. 1811-c. 1870),⁸⁸ a man twenty-

⁸⁶ PANS, RG 48, Richmond County Probate, file A-176, Will book D, pp. 534-536.

⁸⁷ 1901 Census, West Arichat, p. 10, no. 89/93.

⁸⁸ The date of Victor Maquet's death is difficult to ascertain. According to the family he was lost off the coast of France but his family did not hear of his death for two years. He is listed on the 1871 Census but since seamen were to be listed at home even if at sea, he may have been dead by this time. According to Emma Bissett Sampson's memoirs her grandmother was working as a nurse before Irma's last child was born in 1870, suggesting that her husband had already been gone for some time.

four years her senior, and had two daughters,⁸⁹ Irma (1852-1925) and Adele (b. 1860). In 1868 Irma married Desire Sampson (1843-1870), but was left a widow with two children when she was only eighteen.⁹⁰ Irma's father was lost at sea, probably around the same time as her husband died. By 1871 it is likely that the two widows, Irma's two young children and Adele, made up the Maquet household, although Victor is still listed as the head.⁹¹ In order to make a living, Melanie hired out as a nurse and mid-wife, while Irma took in washing.⁹² The Maquet and Sampson widows may have been more fortunate than most because Melanie was a skilled mid-wife who owned a home and five acres of land and Irma was young enough to remarry, which she did in 1873.⁹³ The widows thus suffered through a difficult period following the deaths of their husbands.⁹⁴

Illness often depleted family assets. When John Mackenzie of Grand

⁸⁹ The baptism of a son appears in the church records but he must have died young as no other record of him has been located.

⁹⁰ 1871 Census, D'Ecouse, Div. 2, "Deaths in the Last Twelve Months," no. 7.

⁹¹ 1871 Census, D'Ecouse, Div. 2, family no. 28.

⁹² Emma Bissett Sampson, "Out of the Dark," unpublished manuscript in possession of Thomas and Carol (Sampson) Giammo, Silver Spring, MD.

⁹³ St. Hyacinth Catholic Church Records, D'Ecouse, 1873, marriage 3.

⁹⁴ Based on the methodology they would have fallen from the middle strata to the fourth strata if Maquet was deceased, since no occupation was recorded for Melanie or Irma.

River made his will in 1894, he described himself as "weak in body" but he lived for five more years.⁹⁵ His family rated in the first rank in 1871 but had declined to rank 2 by 1901. Illness could undermine upward mobility, as it did for Roderick Currie of L'Ardoise, who had moved from the bottom to rank 2 but because of illness, had to ask the Municipal Council in 1901 for an exemption from paying his taxes.⁹⁶ Long term illness, such as various lung ailments, generally referred to as "consumption," often depleted family assets. John Poirier of D'Ecousse, who was retired by the time he was aged 58, declined from the third to the fifth rank. Illnesses of a long duration often resulted in downward mobility, even when they did not affect the main income generating member of the family. Medical costs for other family members could often have a similar affect.⁹⁷

Age was another source of downward mobility. About one-third of the families that moved downward were headed by people aged 60 or over. William Cruickshanks of River Inhabitants fell from the first rank in 1871, when he was

⁹⁵ Richmond County Probate Records, PANS, RG 48, file A-354, Bk. E-1, p. 519.

⁹⁶ Minutes of Richmond County Council, BI, MG 14, 74(b), Bk. 2, 9 Jan. 1901, p. 478.

⁹⁷ By this period it was common to have a doctor during illness. For those who could not pay, the municipality often paid the bill. See for example, Minutes of the Richmond County Council, BI, MG 14, 74(b), Bk. 2; 13 Jan. 1891, p. 98; p. 107, 16 Jan. 1891.

49 to the fourth rank by 1901, when he was 79. Martin Baccardax of D'Ecousse, who was 51 in 1871, had declined from rank 3 to rank 4 thirty years later.

Bankruptcy, played almost no role in the social mobility of Richmond County persistent families because those who suffered such total economic failure were non-persisters. The most notable illustration of this involved Donald Matheson of L'Ardoise who, in 1871, belonged to the County elite but lost his business shortly thereafter. Donald Matheson, like others who faced such a catastrophic decline, left the County. However, even those who did not have elite status often left the County when faced by financial reverses. That was the case with Neil McPhail of Sporting Mountain in the St. Peters district, who left after signing over his land to a local merchant for a debt.⁹⁸

Families headed by individuals in certain occupational groups saw a decline in their status. In particular ship carpenters, masons, tailors, shoemakers, and those in other traditional trades could no longer maintain their ratings. Their declines were reflected in erosion of land ownership, housing quality, as well as education, and incomes levels. The decay in standing was probably responsible for the decrease in the numbers working in these trades.

Inheritance played an important part in social mobility. The main

⁹⁸ Richmond County Deeds, bk. S, p. 128, 1878. Neil's widow died in 1906 in Tyne Valley, PEI, where she was living with her son. Sydney, The Weekly Post, 6 Apr. 1906.

tendency was for farmers to transfer the bulk of their assets to one heir.⁹⁹ This allowed the heir to maintain most of the family assets and, if possible, build upon them. Some farmers had adequate property to provide for more than one heir but division rarely occurred unless at least one hundred acres could be provided for each.¹⁰⁰

Non-farm families often transferred their assets to more than one heir. It was this successor group that was most likely to suffer downward mobility. When Elias Forest, who ranked in the first strata in 1871, made his will in 1890 he left his estate to his wife, Marine, and two grandsons, Louis and Peter LeJeune. In 1901 both grandsons fell to rank 2. Fathers often devolved part of their assets to their sons before they died, resulting in the decline of both. This was the case with Maurice Morvan of Rockdale, who transferred some of his estate to Thomas Morvan in 1900 for \$1.00,¹⁰¹ resulting in Maurice's decline from the third to the fourth rank.

⁹⁹ Examples of farmers leaving the bulk of their estates to one heir can be found in Richmond County Probate Records, file A-395, Will bk. E.1, p. 236, will of John McLean, Sporting Mountain, 6 Feb. 1883; PANS, mfm 18997, p. 20, will of John McDonald, Hay Cove, 3 Aug. 1900.

¹⁰⁰ Examples of dividing an estate between more than one heir can be found in Richmond County Probate, will bk. E.1, p. 295, file A-285, Kenneth Matheson, Grand River, will dated 14 Apr. 1877; file A-304, will bk. E.1, p. 331, John Matheson, St. Esprit, will dated 19 Aug. 1880.

¹⁰¹ Richmond County Deeds, Bk. D.1, PANS, mfm 18688, p. 128.

In summary, Richmond County was a stratified society. Looking at the area from a distance, the society may have appeared homogeneous. However, the ability of families to meet their needs varied. Those on the bottom of the social scale, who had the least to lose, tended to migrate but those in the upper ranks were more likely to persist. For those who did stay, upward mobility was possible and there was an up and down movement of families across social ranks. George Lafford, in the top rank, left his widow well provided for and Helaire Poirier, positioned in rank 3, left his widow with some security but Zephirin Boudrot, on the bottom of the social scale, could not ensure his widow sufficient resources to prevent her from falling into poverty. Inequality was clearly an element of rural life in late nineteenth century Richmond County and that inequality was important for the people who lived there. It helped shape the options available to them for meeting their needs. However, over the period 1871 to 1901, it appears that inequality was declining.

Inequality and Social Mobility

The concept of inequality and social mobility is central to the study of social history but the reasons for its central position appear to relate more to values than objective reality. Anselm L. Strauss, in his study of the contexts of social mobility, concluded that the tendency for someone studying social class

and mobility was to “accept his own form of society, or rather some idealized version of this, as the goal toward which all humanity [was] moving.” To Strauss, this tendency was symptomatic of “a failure of the imagination.”¹⁰² Students of wealth inequality seem to be particularly prone to using this method, as they concentrate on the importance of capital accumulation for investment purposes¹⁰³ and use inequality to justify their political ideology.

The perspective of this study is not to look at inequality as a means of explaining or justifying social structure to support any particular economic or social position. Measuring inequality is merely a tool in trying to determine whether families were able to meet their needs and not their needs as perceived by the values of others. The clear assumption in the vast majority of studies dealing with inequality is that needs can only be satisfied by material possessions. However, in social history there is a great deal of anecdotal material which suggests this perspective is too simplistic to explain behaviour. Material gain was the perceived motive behind many decisions but that was often only an outward manifestation of the need for security or esteem. What the Richmond County example seems to show is that many households were

¹⁰² Anselm L. Strauss, The Contexts of Mobility, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1971), p. 13.

¹⁰³ Lars Osberg and Fazley Siddiq, The Acquisition of Wealth in Nova Scotia in the Late Nineteenth Century, (Halifax: Dalhousie University, 1989), p. 1.

able to achieve their objectives within the social and economic context of the County and did not see the need to leave. The social structure was sufficiently open that people could progress socially and economically.

This does not mean that Richmond County did not have its poor. Those who lived in crowded conditions, had little property or other resources, had little or no education, and had to compete for jobs in a market where jobs were scarce, struggled to survive. Without more data the numbers suffering from this kind of poverty cannot be estimated. On the other hand, many of these people may not have felt poor. Raymond Fougere of Poulamon, whose father died when he was four, may be accused of having a romantic view of his past but his attitude reflects a satisfaction with what he had.

I was brought up with the mother, and the brothers and sisters.... Oh! – not a thing coming into the house. I don't know how she brought us up, but she brought us up. No money from the government at all....

But she's plant everything, you had everything in the house. Better food than there is now. It was planted with manure from the barn, it wasn't fertilizer or anything like that.... Them days you had everything.¹⁰⁴

Another resident of D'Escousse summed up his comments about his community:

¹⁰⁴ Moira Ross, An Island Parish: The 150th Anniversary of St. Hyacinth's D'Escousse, (D'Escousse: St. Hyacinth's Parish, 1995), p. 57. Errors are as in the original. Raymond's family were in rank 2 in 1901, before the death of his father.

"This was our world."¹⁰⁵ The danger for us, as historians, is to place too much of our world into their past.

¹⁰⁵ ibid., p. 62.

Conclusions

The last three decades of the nineteenth century were a period of transition in North America. Westward advancement of the frontier, the rise of cities, technological innovation, and the spread of corporate capitalism transformed the lives of people throughout the continent. Richmond County was not insulated from these forces of disruption. People there were obliged to come to terms with unprecedented and often traumatic change. Families and individuals found themselves struggling to impose their will on circumstances which in many respects threatened to destroy a familiar, and what many contemporaries saw as a desirable, rural way of life.

In Richmond County the last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the community entering a post-frontier or "mature" stage of development. In demographic terms this meant cessation of overall growth, an ageing of the population, reduction in the presence of children, and fewer young married couples. But maturity did not translate into community collapse. A core population persisted and through the last quarter of the nineteenth century most homesteads continued to be occupied. As with stabilizing rural communities elsewhere in eastern North America, Richmond County became an area where residents engaged in a creative adaptation to altered circumstances.

Opportunities and expectations were reconciled through subtle and complex compromises negotiated within the context of the private household. The most visible expression of these compromises involved choices as to who would stay at home and who would leave to seek their fortune elsewhere. But both persisters and migrants should be seen as de facto partners in a family-based quest for survival.

Growth before 1871 had been fuelled by development of farms, expansion of coastal trading and ship-building, and the gradual transferral of the local fish trade from Channel Island merchants to indigenous fishermen and merchants. By 1871 the land resources were almost fully occupied, international markets for products of the traditional fishery were shrinking, thanks to both competition and tariffs, and similar forces were making coastal trading less profitable. It took time for some families to recognize that they could not provide for all members within the local economy, and thus population size threatened to expand beyond the capacity of the available nearby resources. Eventually most families responded in a rational manner to the threat of mass impoverishment. Across Richmond County population pressure never reached a crisis stage because the push of potential adversity at home and the pull of opportunities elsewhere drew young people away, thereby transforming the community into a place characterized by demographic stability.

Farmers generally maintained their farms as an intact unit, thereby maintaining their own security and ensuring that one heir would have the home-place. Other children were provided an education or training in some trade or profession. Daughters were given a dowry, traditionally in livestock and bedding, but increasingly in money as cash became more plentiful. Many fishing families divided all their assets among their family members. This strategy became increasingly less effective as time passed because declining fish stocks and shrinking markets increased the need for preserving sufficient land to allow for subsistence agriculture. Overall, some members of almost every family had to search for opportunities elsewhere and were often provided by their kinfolk with resources to migrate. Coastal traders either maintained their vessels in the remaining trade or sought opportunities elsewhere. Some sold their vessels and lived off the capital thereby created. Those who stayed in the coastal trade generally did not replace their vessels or expand their operations.

In mature rural areas upward economic and social mobility was increasingly difficult to achieve since the resources for extensive development no longer existed. In these communities achieving upward mobility was a slow process. For those already on the top of the social scale, further success often meant moving away, as they sought status in a larger context. For those on the bottom of the scale, and in a situation where everyone knew their neighbour, it

was difficult to overcome poverty and local prejudices. Thus few of the economically and socially disadvantaged could improve their lot. The search for subsistence and security was paramount for these families, who were often drawn from Richmond County by economic necessity.

Selective out-migration became the most overt means of achieving stability within households. Although families regretted the fact that certain of their members often had to travel far to find opportunities, they did not see these departures as an expression of crisis. In fact, for many who left, the decision was not forced but chosen; it came to be seen a part of growing up, seeking independence, and meeting personal objectives through mastering a new environment, and achieving the respect of others.

Staying behind was equally viable as an option for those able to inherit the family home-place or part of it. Even people with only small plots of land could achieve a degree of success and meet many of their needs by working away for wages, while maintaining the security of a home of their own within a familiar environment where they felt they belonged. For many, providing a home, food, and other necessities for a large family meant a successful life. Realization of these goals made it possible for the bulk of those continuing to reside in late nineteenth century Richmond County to feel a sense of basic accomplishment. Persisters lived among people who shared the same

language, practised the same religion, did the same kind of work, and held the same cultural values.

This equilibrium also had a dynamic component. Families were constantly in transition as individual members moved through their life cycle. But the overall needs of an ageing population tended to be different from the needs of the young. Youth flowed to the newest frontiers, adopted the latest fad, purchased the newest fashions, and fuelled the growth of cities. Many of them sought satisfaction through materialism. Those persisting in mature communities, with older populations, such as Richmond County, Nova Scotia and Chelsea, Vermont saw things differently. Stability became a paramount goal as the community wrestled with both internal and external upheaval. Families innovated in an ongoing attempt to achieve and maintain a balance between their available resources and the number of people they could support. The requirement to care for the needs of ageing family members, who were living longer, required many families to control the size of the next generation. Nonetheless, stability did not imply stagnation. Families continued to move up and down the social scale, people left occupations and entered new ones, uneconomical farm crops or farm products were dropped and new ones substituted, new fish products were developed and new markets were found. Mines opened and closed. All these were strategies successfully used by

families in their protracted adaptation to a constantly changing order. Their efforts and achievements deserve recognition in our reconstruction of rural Canada in the post-Confederation era.

Appendix I

In the following charts the horizontal labels represent the names of the Census Districts in 1871. Although some districts were broken into separate districts in 1901, the original census districts have been used by reconstituting the districts as they were in 1871. The following codes have been used for district names for both 1871 and 1901.

FR.....	Framboise
LL	Loch Lomond
RS	Red Islands
GR.....	Grand River
LA.....	L'Ardoise
SP.....	St. Peter's
BR	Black River
RI.....	River Inhabitants
RB	River Bourgeois
DE	D'Ecousse
PG	Petit de Grat
AT.....	Arichat
WA	Little Arichat (West Arichat)

RICHMOND COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE AND GENDER 1871 FEMALES

AGE	FR	LL	RS	GR	LA	SP	BR	RI	RB	DE	PG	AT	WA	TOTAL
UNDER 1	5	4	7	8	22	13	5	18	8	32	40	15	22	199
1-4	36	18	32	37	92	28	39	72	52	80	105	42	94	727
5-9	31	28	50	43	106	82	53	98	64	109	121	68	121	974
10-14	34	19	45	54	99	57	42	82	45	69	113	53	105	817
15-19	18	32	45	36	107	55	42	54	66	59	103	64	105	786
20-29	39	49	96	78	148	99	74	98	88	121	220	90	151	1351
30-39	36	21	29	61	101	53	44	74	62	109	109	74	97	870
40-49	19	19	34	32	64	48	30	43	31	56	81	63	60	580
50-59	13	16	33	31	46	30	16	23	35	47	56	33	64	443
60-69	8	12	20	22	34	17	19	23	18	31	44	35	37	320
70-79	5	4	5	18	18	7	7	10	7	18	17	15	17	148
80+	3	4	1	8	13	4	3	3	3	5	4	2	3	56
TOTAL	247	226	397	428	850	493	374	598	479	736	1013	554	876	7271

**RICHMOND COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE AND GENDER
MALES 1871**

AGE	FR	LL	RS	GR	LA	SP	BR	RI	RB	DE	PG	AT	WA	TOTAL
UNDER 1	11	4	4	12	32	13	5	23	9	26	23	5	24	191
1-4	27	19	30	28	98	42	42	57	58	83	106	44	101	735
5-9	41	25	27	39	114	61	37	91	74	115	129	73	121	947
10-14	40	24	49	39	106	75	47	79	58	79	104	59	76	835
15-19	36	25	65	43	76	55	45	30	53	59	90	57	78	712
20-29	51	41	79	80	141	97	84	89	77	127	203	95	140	1304
30-39	28	22	29	64	83	52	34	70	61	93	97	45	86	764
40-49	28	12	23	32	67	35	25	61	31	57	71	49	62	553
50-59	12	10	28	18	50	32	17	23	24	28	57	35	40	374
60-69	9	14	34	19	34	27	18	27	21	36	61	24	34	358
70-79	5	11	8	16	14	7	14	15	16	11	22	17	16	172
80+	2	2	2	4	7	3	5	3	3	6	6	1	6	50
TOTAL	290	209	378	394	822	499	373	568	485	720	969	504	784	6995

**RICHMOND COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE AND GENDER
FEMALES 1901**

AGE	FR	LL	RS	GR	LA	SP	BR	RI	RB	DE	PG	AT	WA	TOTAL
UNDER 1	7	2	7	1	26	4	3	20	12	21	21	6	11	141
1-4	32	12	32	23	89	37	18	75	63	99	79	23	53	635
5-9	33	18	51	28	150	69	22	82	74	131	83	32	65	838
10-14	25	22	50	34	135	79	31	84	73	97	83	33	65	811
15-19	26	12	51	33	102	68	20	70	41	66	81	35	45	650
20-29	25	26	45	32	130	101	30	94	65	81	96	34	60	819
30-39	36	20	40	29	113	47	25	69	50	90	81	45	40	685
40-49	29	13	47	42	86	52	21	59	50	71	66	19	52	607
50-59	29	18	34	44	78	50	23	46	54	53	77	36	45	587
60-69	14	18	25	35	66	29	32	37	35	57	44	25	29	446
70-79	19	13	18	18	25	19	16	26	12	28	23	21	28	266
80+	5	6	11	9	20	12	7	8	11	20	15	4	15	143
TOTAL	280	180	411	328	1020	567	248	670	540	814	749	313	508	6628

**RICHMOND COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE AND GENDER
MALES 1901**

AGE	FR	LL	RS	GR	LA	SP	BR	RI	RB	DE	PG	AT	WA	TOTAL
UNDER 1	4	3	9	4	25	1	7	17	14	21	21	6	9	141
1-4	31	11	36	21	117	45	16	66	73	82	75	28	47	648
5-9	27	20	64	29	137	65	28	94	55	104	97	38	66	824
10-14	38	22	59	45	126	80	32	75	81	142	86	35	67	888
15-19	39	20	43	46	134	77	25	63	61	82	94	27	57	768
20-29	51	30	47	67	155	119	34	96	78	86	101	29	62	955
30-39	34	24	28	21	136	47	27	76	55	90	84	30	42	694
40-49	31	17	49	34	97	51	34	58	56	61	53	25	46	612
50-59	20	14	24	34	80	52	23	38	62	58	61	21	31	518
60-69	22	16	27	42	75	37	18	54	34	56	57	23	44	505
70-79	13	5	12	13	29	15	19	34	16	23	20	11	14	224
80+	5	4	9	5	15	11	6	5	3	13	5	5	2	88
TOTAL	315	186	407	361	1126	600	269	676	588	818	754	278	487	6865

APPENDIX II

OCCUPATIONAL RATINGS 1871 AND 1901

OCCUPATION	POINTS ASSIGNED
agent life insurance	5
bank agent	5
barrister	5
blacksmith	4
brick burner	3
brick maker	3
butcher	3
can maker	3
canal hand	2
car inspector	3
carpenter	3
caulker	3
clergyman	5
clerk store	3
coal miner	2
collector of customs	6
cook	2
cooper	3
county treasurer	5
diver	4
domestic	2
dressmaker	3

electrician	4
engineer	5
factory hand	1
factory man	1
factory manager	4
farmer	4
ferryman	3
fisherman	2
gentleman	6
harbor master	5
harness maker	4
harness maker	4
hotel proprietor	5
housework	1
joiner	3
keeper marine hospital	3
knitter	1
labourer	1
land surveyor	5
laundry worker	1
lighthouse keeper	4
lineman	4
liquor dealer	6
lock master	5
lockman	3
magistrate	5

mail courier	3
manager	5
mariner	3
mason	3
master mariner	6
merchant	6
milller	4
milliner	3
M. P. P.	6
navvy	2
painter	3
physician	5
pilot	3
postmaster	5
postmistress	5
preventive officer	5
priest	5
property income	3
proprietor	5
prothonotary	5
publisher	5
railroad blacksmith	4
railroad employee	3
railroad mechanic	5
railroad station manager	4
registrar of deeds	6

restaurant keeper	4
sailor	3
school inspector	5
sealer	3
servant	1
sheriff	5
shoemaker	3
station agent	5
steam engineer	5
steamship agent	5
steward	3
stone keeper	5
stone mason	3
superintendent marine railway	5
tailor	3
tanner	3
teacher	5
teamster	3
tinsmith	4
trader	6
truck man	3
washer woman	1
watchman	3
wheelwright	4

APPENDIX III

ELECTED OFFICIALS RICHMOND COUNTY 1871-1901

Richmond County Municipal Councillors (1879-1901)

			Family Rank	
			1871	1901
Bissett	F. W.	1856-	1	
Boudrot	John	1846-1874	1	2
Boudrot	Thomas	1854-	1	2
Boyd	Angus	1855-1938	1	1
Brymer	William	1825-1908	1	1
Calder	William	1830-1908	1	1
Chisholm	William	1843-	1	1
Currie	Daniel	1850-1933		2
Ferguson	Roderick	1852-	2	1
Finlayson	Alexander	1876-1931	1	1
Fuller	Charles J.	1840-1894	2	1
Ganion	Edward	1820-	1	1
Hearn	D. A.	1853-1920	2	
Jean	William G.	1852	5	1
Johnson	John J.	1861-1923	1	1
LeBlanc	Edward			
LeBlanc	Jeffrey			
LeBlanc	William	1839	1	2
LeLacheur	Colin Priaulx	1856-1914	2	2
LeVesconte	William	1831-	1	1
Madden	Edward	1826-1896	1	
Malzard	Francis	1855-1901		1
McAskill	Angus	1830-1908	1	1
McAskill	Norman	1854-1915		1
McCuish	Angus	1843-1919	2	1
McDonald	John			
McDonald	Ken N.	1848-1918	2	1
McKay	John	1857-1900	1	1
McLean	Dan	1861-1895	1	1
McLeod	Archibald	1866-1946	2	2
McLeod	D. A.	1857-1940		1
McLeod	Kenneth	1822-1916	1	1

			Family Rank	
			1871	1901
McNeil	M. J. G.	1844-	3	1
McRae	Allan	1841-1921	1	1
McRae	Murdo	1846-1907	3	
Morrison	A. E.	1859-	1	2
Morrison	Archibald	1856-	1	1
Morrison	John	1836-1918	2	1
Morrison	R. G.	1828-1909	1	1
Morrison	W. E.			
Morrison	William R.	1843	2	1
Murchison	John	1838-1896	1	1
Poirrior	Amie b.	1835-	3	2
Porrior	Alexander p	1868-	2	1
Power	L. G.	1857-	2	2
Proctor	Edward	1832-	1	3
Shaw	D. N.	1825-1897	2	
Thomson	Joseph R.	1849-	1	2

Richmond County M. P.'s (1871-1901)

			Family Rank	
			1871	1901
Flynn	E. P.	1828-1900	1	1
Finlayson	Duncan	1867-1925	1	1
LeVesconte	Isaac	1822-1879	1	
Paint	Henry N.	1830-1921	1	
Gillis	Joseph	1849-1921		
Matheson	Joseph	1833-1915	1	

Richmond County M.L.A.'s (1871-1901)

Flynn	E. P.	1828-1900	1		
McRae	Murdoch	1846-1909	1		
McCuish	Alex	1843-1919	2	1	
			Family Rank		
			1871	1901	
LeBlanc	Isidore	1837-1919		1	2
Matheson	Joseph	1833-1915	1	1	
Joyce	Simon	1848-1922	1	1	
Finlayson	Duncan	1867-1925	1	1	
Boudrot	Charles	1822-1883	1		
Hearn	David	1853-1920	2		
LeBlanc	Abraham	1840-1913	1	1	
Morrison	John	1836-1918	2	1	

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Interviews and other Informants

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- Beaver, Kenneth, St. Peter's.
- Beck, Myra, Massachusetts.
- Brackett, Margaret, Dartmouth, N.S.
- Butts, Annabel (Morrison), Port Hawkesbury.
- Boyd, Edmund, Halifax.
- Boudreau, James "Jimmy," St. Peter's.

Calder, Mabel (Ross), St. George's Channel.

Campbell, Lillian (MacKenzie), St. Peter's (deceased).

Campbell, Roy, St. George's Channel.

Campbell, Shirley (McDonald), Dartmouth.

Campbell, Danny, Johnstown.

Davidson, Catherine (Morrison), Bass River, Colchester Co., N.S.

Doyle, Sr. Mary Aquin, Halifax (deceased).

Farrell, Irene, Halifax.

Ferguson, Alice, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Ferguson, Murdoch, Cleveland (deceased).

Ferguson, Muriel, Cleveland.

Flynn, Patricia (Morrison), Halifax.

Fougere, Dan, Halifax

Gerroir, Mary, Johnstown.

Gillis, Patricia (Boudreau), Beaverbank, Halifax.

Hallen, Linda, Massachusetts.

Kirk, Shirley, Dartmouth.

Latimer, Florence (Dunphy), Pondville and Massachusetts.

Lawson, Bill, Harris, Scotland.

Lewis, Jessie (Murray), Orangedale.

Lewis, Ruth (MacKay), Halifax.

LeVesconte, Christene (Dunphy), Pondville.

MacDonald, Archibald, Grand River.

MacDonald, Cameron, Charlottetown, P.E.I.

MacEwan, Harvey, St. Peter's.

MacEwan, Kenneth, St. Peter's and Dartmouth.

MacInnis, Stewart, Sydney River (deceased).

MacKay, Jessie (MacDonald), The Points.

MacKenzie, Roddie, St. Peter's.

MacKinnon, Richard, Vermont.

MacLean, Frederick N., California.

MacLellan, Peggy (Strachan), Halifax.

MacPhail, Margaret (Palmer), Marble Mountain (deceased).

MacRae, George, Dundee, Richmond County, N. S.

MacRae, Jessie, Port Hawkesbury.

MacRae, Robert, Tennessee.

MacRae, William, Seaview (deceased).

MacVicar, Wayne, Glace Bay.

McNeil, John, Sydney.

McPhee, Leo, River Bourgeois.

McPherson, Ann (Cash), Sydney.

Marble, Dr. Allan, Halifax.

Marchand, Doug, Halifax.

Morgan, Lester, Whiteside.

Morgan, Vida (Proctor), Halifax and Lower River Inhabitants.

Morris, Carrie (MacKenzie), Sydney.

Morrison, Annie "Mrs. John N." (MacKenzie), St. Peter's (deceased).

Morrison, Robert, St. George's Channel.

Morrison, Jessie (Ross), St. Peter's (deceased).

Mury, Joseph A., West Arichat.

Murray, Dolina (McPhee), Port Hawkesbury.

Nedjar, Kendra (Gunn), Melrose, MA.

Parker, Stanley Wilson, Sydney.

Pettipas, Kenneth J., Dartmouth.

Pringle, John "Jack," The Points (deceased).

Punch, Terrence, Halifax.

Robertson, Catherine (Morrison) MacRae, St. Peter's.

Ross, Janie (MacKenzie) Ross, St. Peter's.

Ross, Jean, Chance Harbour, Pictou County.

Sampson, Claude, Lower Sackville.

Sampson, Edna, L'Ardoise.

Sampson, Quentin, L'Ardoise (deceased).

Scanlan, Terrance, Walkerville.

Shupe, Evelyn, Halifax.

Smith, Charles, Dundee.

Spencer, Robert.

Stone, Arthur, St. Peter's and Ottawa.

Sutherland, Betty (McDonald), Soldier's Cove.

Sutherland, Thomas, Soldier's Cove (deceased).

Thibeau, Clarisse (Young), Halifax.

Thibeau, J. Richard, Halifax.

Towse, Marian MacDonald, Stoneham, MA.

Urquhart, Blanche (Peeples), Grand Anse.

Urquhart, Donald, West Bay (deceased).

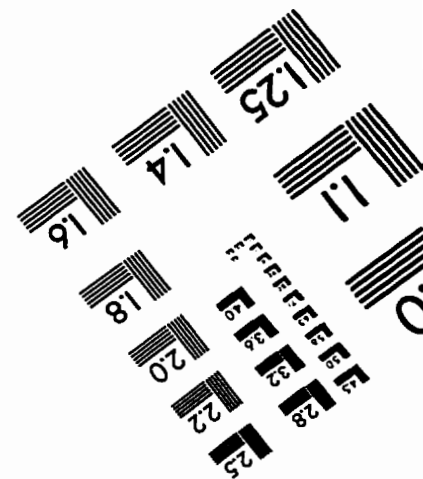
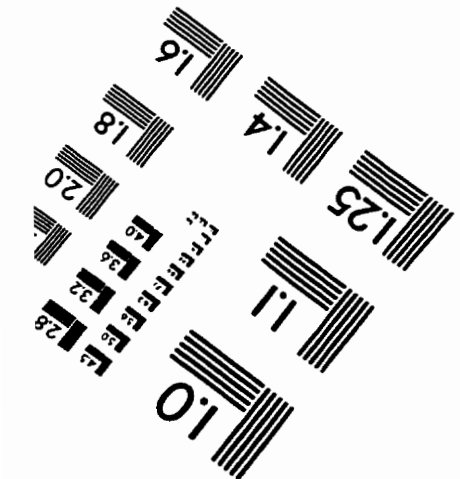
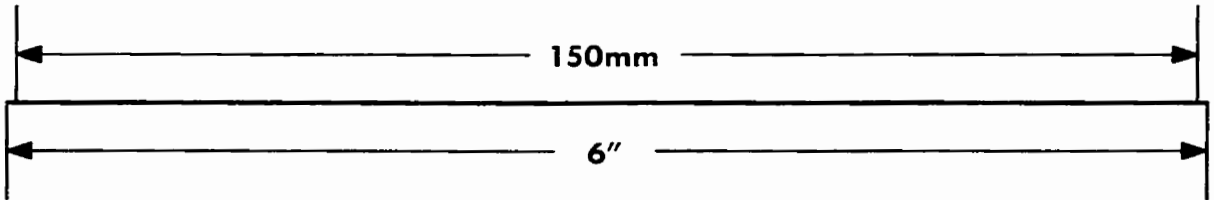
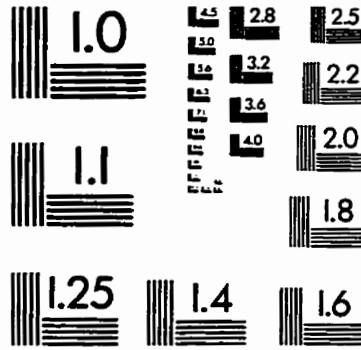
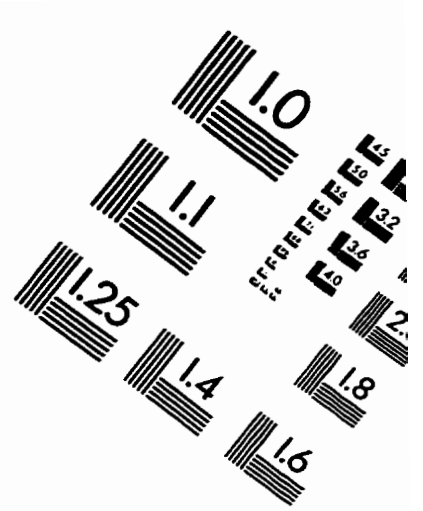
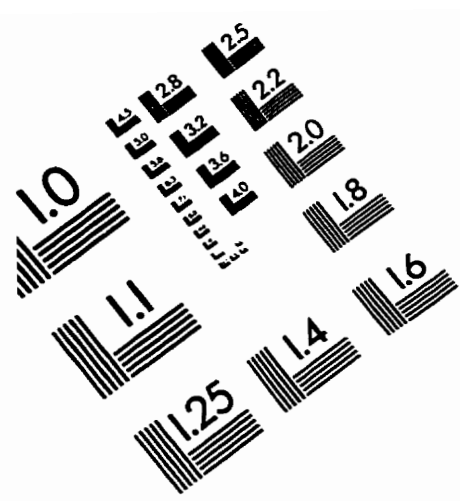
Urquhart, Harriet (Peeples), Port Hawkesbury.

Urquhart, Marnie (MacLeod), West Bay.

Wheaton, Christene (Calder), Halifax.

Wincey, Bill, Dartmouth.

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