

## Property and Gender: Lessons from a 19th-century town\*

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In all large cities of the advanced capitalist world, property ownership and urban space are highly gendered. If real or immovable property has long been gendered masculine, the same cannot be said for urban space. This paper explores the processes whereby the town centre of Montréal, the largest city in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Canada, became a space that was gendered masculine. There are a number of unique aspects to the experience of Montréal; nevertheless the level of segregation by gender that was achieved here paralleled the experience of many other major industrializing cities. Thus the lessons to be learned are not primarily of local interest, nor indeed are they just historical, for property ownership and urban space are now issues that for the first time confront the majority of humanity.

This study is part of a larger experiment in historical geography known as *Montréal l'avenir du passé* or MAP for short.<sup>1</sup> Based on the availability of highly detailed maps, we are creating a series of interactive geo-databases for the entire city at six points in its recent history: 1825, 1846, 1880, 1912, 1949 and 2000. This article uses the first three of these reference points to track the evolution of property ownership by gender and the relative presence of men and women, particularly in the town centre.

In the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Montréal became the first colonial town in the world to industrialize. Thus, the pivotal dates for this study represent an artisanal and commercial town in 1825, a late pre-industrial town in 1846, and an early industrial city in 1880. The population of Montréal grew rapidly over the period, from 22,500 in 1825 to 45,000 in 1846, reaching 175,000 by 1880. However, the city limits did not change, and by 1880 a further 50,000 people lived in a series of small suburban municipalities that ringed the city. The area studied here is restricted to the city of Montréal.

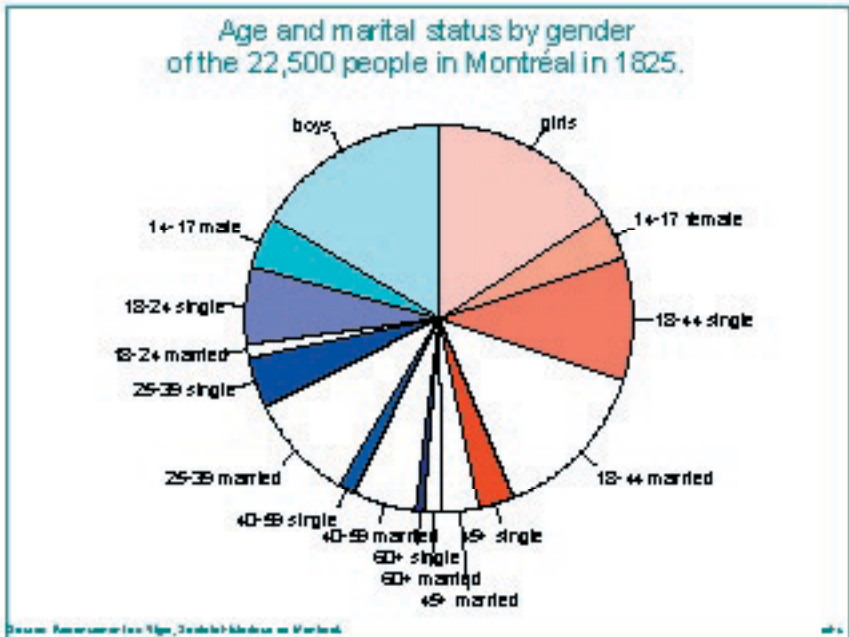
Historical geo-databases link various nominal series, such as census returns, tax rolls or city directories to period maps that have been transformed, so they all line up within a standardized system of spatial co-ordinates. Accurate linkage of an historical series to such an urban map in the absence of a common

street numbering system is a very time-consuming process and may not always be possible. Montréal did not develop a citywide system of civic numbers until the 1850s, and so both the 1825 and the 1846 maps are presently linked to their data at a resolution that is decidedly below optimal levels. I present the bulk of the data from 1825 at only the ward level, while for 1846, I complement ward data with slightly more than 100 streetscapes. A streetscape is composed of all the properties fronting on to a street for several blocks; the design of these 1840s streetscapes was based on rental values in the municipal tax roll of 1848. By contrast, I use over 12,000 lots to show the 1880 data. Undoubtedly, this higher resolution allows us to see phenomena that are at present not visible for the earlier dates. To minimize the effect of this compatibility problem, I developed a lot level analysis for the town centre from 1825 to 1840 based on the lord of the manor's land registry.<sup>2</sup>

### **Gender and space in a pre-industrial town**

Montréal in 1825 was a bustling artisanal town serving a fertile and fully settled agricultural region comparable in size to the Home Counties. Almost all finished goods were manufactured locally within vibrant craft communities; porcelain and glassware were the only major consumer goods not actually produced in town. The working of leather and wood and the metal and needle trades accounted for half the firms active in production. Distilleries, breweries, a nail manufactory, three shipyards and several foundries capable of producing steam engines constituted the bulk of the town's heavy industry. At the height of navigation on the St Lawrence, Montréal was the major transshipment point for goods bound for Upper Canada in what is now southern Ontario. The half dozen major importing houses that dominated this trade effectively controlled the local Board of Trade and the fledgling Bank of Montreal. With the merger of the North West and Hudson Bay companies in 1821, control of the fur trade had reverted to London, and Montréal firms were no longer active in any staple exports, save for potash.<sup>3</sup> A diversified and hierarchical mercantile community nevertheless continued to develop largely to service the local artisanal and manufacturing communities.

As this brief sketch might suggest, much of the formal economy of the town was gendered masculine. Dressmaking, millinery and mantua making, the latter a form of cloak, were the only skilled trades open to women.<sup>4</sup> No women identified themselves as merchants in the city directories, although they accounted for a quarter of the traders and a third of the dry-good sellers. Women were active in petty commerce, from grocers and tavern keepers to hawkers in



the crowded streets adjoining the public markets.<sup>5</sup> It was, however, as domestic servants that most women entered the formal economy.<sup>6</sup>

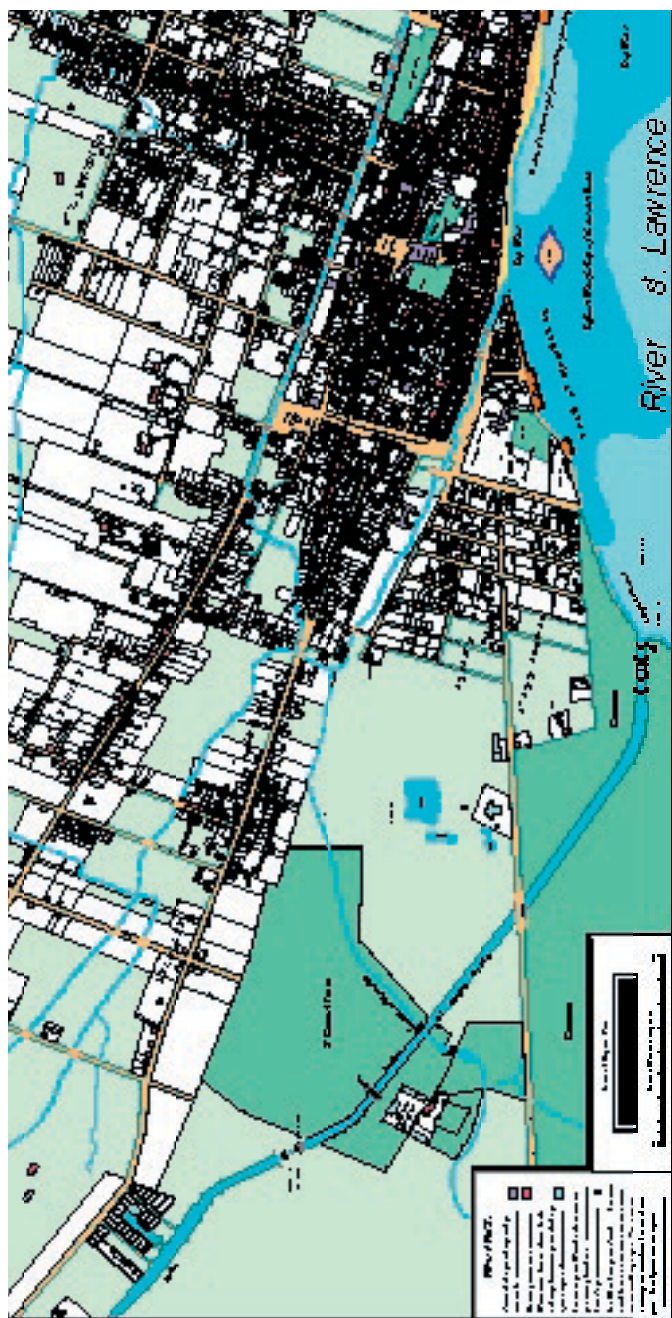
This highly gendered labour market had important implications for the gendering of urban space. It meant that men and women were to be found in almost equal numbers throughout the city.<sup>7</sup> This surprising fact stemmed from the importance of households to craft production and the significance of women's labour within craft households.

Linking the households of masters, who hired apprentices or journeymen, to this census revealed that for every three men active in craft production, there were slightly more than two working-age women resident in the household.<sup>8</sup> The cooking, cleaning, mending and retail activities of complex craft households meant that neither the wife's labour nor the servant's labour was ever strictly speaking domestic; they both served production. When combined with the large numbers of affluent homes in the town centre, this meant the majority of adolescent boys and girls as well as single men and women in their early twenties no longer lived with their parents, because they lived and worked in complex, often craft-based, households.

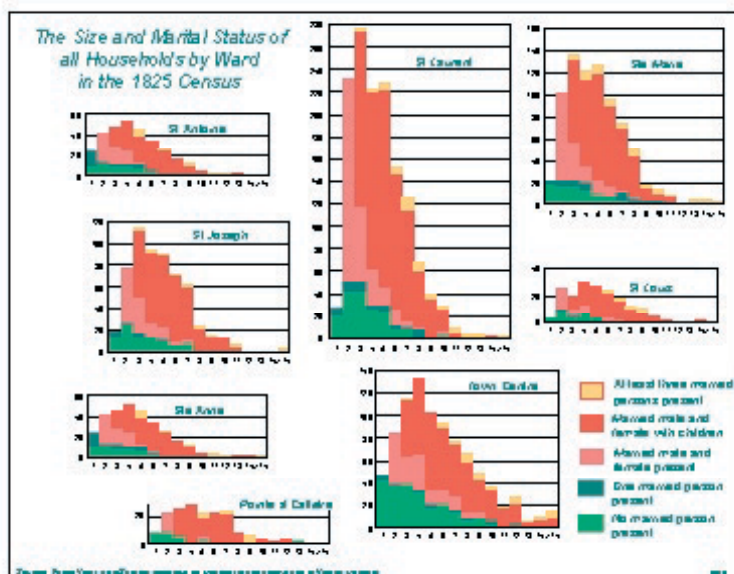
**Demographic composition by ward according to the 1825 census** (expressed as a percentage of the ward's population; colour coding reflects being one fifth **higher** or **lower** than the citywide average)

	Town Centre	Pointe à Callière	Sainte Anne	Saint Joseph	Saint Antoine	Saint Laurent	Saint Louis	Sainte Marie
Number of residents	5309	640	1193	2764	1408	6638	875	3668
Boys	13.1	16.5	17.6	17.5	16.9	17.7	18.4	19.5
Young men 4–17	5.0	2.1	3.7	4.2	4.3	3.7	3.6	4.3
Single men 18–24	10.2	6.3	7.2	5.8	5.0	4.5	4.4	4.2
Married men 18–24	0.7	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.6	0.9	1.1
Single men 25–39	7.6	4.5	7.8	2.5	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.0
Married men 25–39	7.6	8.2	11.9	9.7	7.3	9.6	6.8	10.4
Single men 40–59	1.8	2.4	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.8
Married men 40–49	3.9	3.1	4.5	5.8	6.0	5.7	5.7	6.3
Single men 60 +	0.4	1.8	0.4	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.9
Married men 60 +	1.2	0.6	0.9	1.3	2.5	1.6	1.9	1.3
All males	51.5	46.5	56.4	49.7	47.8	49.1	46.5	51.8
Girls	12.5	19.0	15.6	17.5	15.6	16.9	18.4	17.3
Young women 14–17	5.7	2.6	3.6	3.9	4.8	4.0	4.4	2.9
Single women 18–44	14.2	13.6	6.6	8.3	11.2	8.3	10.6	6.7
Married women 18–44	10.6	11.0	14.7	14.7	13.0	15.2	13.0	16.0
Single women 45 +	3.3	5.8	0.9	2.7	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.0
Married women 45 +	1.2	1.6	2.4	3.2	4.1	3.4	3.9	2.4
All females	48.3	53.6	43.8	50.3	52.1	50.9	53.5	48.3

This gendered spatial distribution was an integral aspect of the artisanal and commercial life of the town. Most young people postponed marriage until their mid to late twenties, and they lived and worked disproportionately in the town centre or between the docks and the Grey Nun's foundling hospital in Pointe à Callière. Most newlyweds then chose to live in the popular-class neighbourhoods of St Laurent, Ste Marie and St Joseph, where their combined savings still might offer them the possibility of opening a small family business. Lying between a swampy stretch of undeveloped land and the city barracks, St Louis ward was clearly not a popular choice for either masters or young families. By contrast, St Antoine, on the slopes leading to Mount Royal, was already a bourgeois enclave of older families. The new ward of Ste Anne was exceptional in terms of both demography and geography. Near the recently opened Lachine Canal and with the largest median-size lots of any ward in the city, Ste Anne was home to many of the town's larger artisanal and manufacturing facilities.



MAP's geo-referenced edition of the "Map of the City and Suburbs of Montréal" in 1825 by John Adams



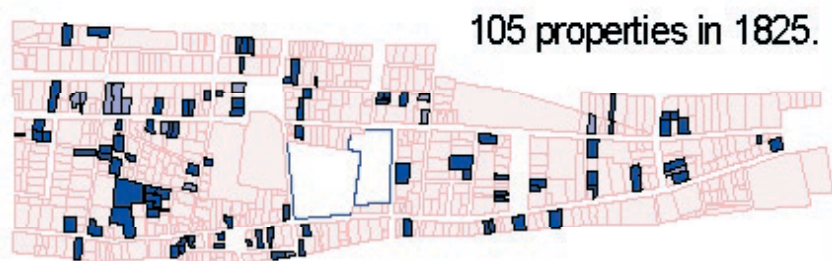
In all wards of the city, there were more households than developed lots. Thus, despite the bucolic impression conveyed by the Adams map, most households shared their building with another household. Indeed, more than a quarter of all households shared their modest dwellings with two or more households.<sup>9</sup> In this fast-growing town, with tens of thousands of immigrants passing through every year, property was at a premium, and only one in four households owned any real property. Control of property was highly concentrated, with less than one percent of the population owning sixty percent by value of the city.<sup>10</sup>

The default marriage regime in Lower Canada was a community of property as defined by the Custom of Paris, with the added proviso of testamentary freedom. Women could be separate as to property, but this required a notarized marriage contract being signed prior to the celebration of the marriage. Women could keep property separate from the community, in what was known as their '*propre*', by such an agreement. All other property was vested in the community of husband and wife administered solely by the husband, but the wife's consent was required for any sale of real property. Concretely, this regime meant few married women owned property in their own name. Normally property-owning women were either single or widowed.





## Town centre properties owned by women in 1825, 1832 and 1840.



Darkly shaded lots the woman is sole proprietor.  
Lightly shaded lots the woman is co-proprietor.  
Hatched lots are the Hôtel Dieu and the Convent of Our Lady.

Sources: Archives de Saint-Sulpice, Geo-referenced 1811 map. MAP

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Despite these legal and social constraints, 178 women owned 298 properties worth £177,630 in 1825, compared with the 1,144 men who owned 2,382 properties worth £1,298,130. Significantly, women owned properties in all wards and across the broad range of property values, from modest wooden homes worth only £100 to substantial commercial structures, like this waterfront warehouse developed and owned by Elizabeth Mittleberger the widow Platt, which was assessed at £6,250 in 1825. The Sulpician's *terrier*, or land registry, reveals that she was far from alone.

The sale of the use rights to any real property held under seigneurial tenure was subject to a substantial levy known as the *lods et ventes*. This twelve percent tax on the total value of the property was payable to the lord of the manor from the date of sale and carried the maximum interest rate permitted by the usury legislation of six percent. This charge constituted a privileged lien on the property, second only to that of the Crown, and so the Sulpicians were in no particular hurry to collect unpaid dues. Often years could pass between a sale and the seisin, or official recognition by the lord of the new proprietor's rights. Furthermore, an acquisition of property through inheritance, rather than purchase, was exempt from the *lods et ventes*. For both of these reasons, the *terriers* do not permit either an accurate dating of sales or the identification of all transfers, which makes the large number of properties identified and their rapid turnover are all the more remarkable.

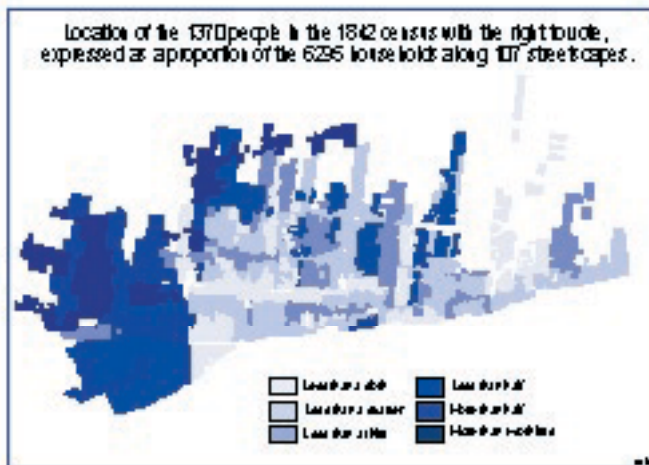


Between 1825 and 1840 women owned in whole or in part 200 of the town centre's 608 lots. This presence was anchored by two of the three principal female Catholic orders in the city, which each owned substantial properties in the centre of town. The third, the Grey Nuns, owned and operated the large foundling hospital in Pointe à Callière, visible on the Adams map and pictured here in an 1867 photograph by Notman. During the 1820s and 1830s all three orders made extensive renovations to their institutions. These orders also owned domain rights to small fiefs within the city and parish. Unquestionably, the presence of these female orders in the town centre was a clear statement of the continued complexity of gender in this pre-industrial urban space.

In all three years examined, women owned significant parts of the town centre. Co-proprietorship was a common enough occurrence among the heirs of an estate, but it constituted only a distinct, albeit relatively stable, minority of proprietors. At one point or another over these fifteen years, women either individually or collectively owned almost one in every three properties in the commercial heart of British North America. From the perspective of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, this prominence of women is extraordinary. It was also too much for some men and, in 1832, the Tories and the reform-minded *Patriotes* in the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada, all men, agreed to deny women proprietors the right to vote for the new municipal councils of Montréal and Québec City. Women would not gain the municipal franchise until 1960.

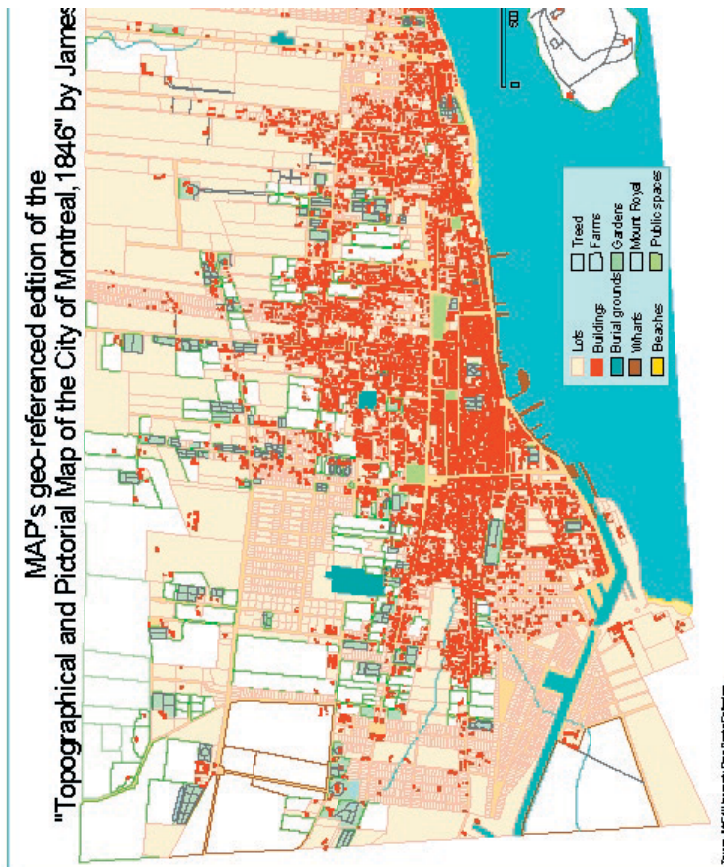
### **Gender relations in late pre-industrial Montréal**

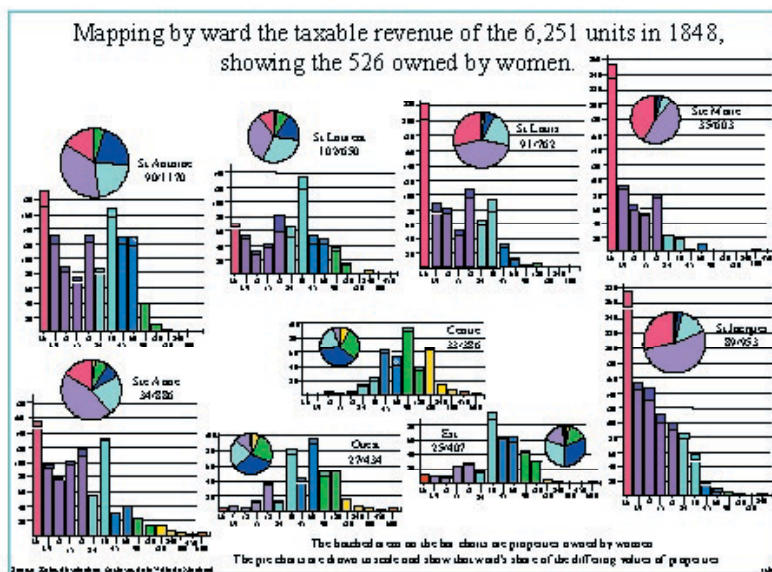
The denial of the franchise to propertied women in municipal elections, when they had had the vote provincially since 1791, reflected a more profound transformation in gender relations in the city. For as real property values increased fourfold from the mid 1820s to the mid 1840s, the value of moveable property that had been gendered female collapsed. This changed the political economy of marriage. Whereas in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Montréal there had been a rough parity in the value of property brought to the community by the bride and the groom, by the 1840s, among those couples who still had sufficient property to merit signing a marriage contract, by value the property was overwhelmingly that of the groom. Although there was an important class dimension to this complex transformation, it cannot be adequately explained by simply invoking the tensions of socio-economic change. For as the census of 1842 so clearly revealed, there was a different urban geography to apparent affluence, as measured by the numbers of domestic servants, than to political influence, as measured by the numbers of people who could vote in provincial elections. Domestic servants were the norm in the wealthier clusters of villas and town-



St Antoine, but they were also very frequently to be found in the increasingly commercial town centre and in the many craft-based households in St Laurent and western St Louis wards. Clearly, in the predominantly English-speaking west end home ownership and therefore the franchise was much more common. However, invoking Lord Durham's "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state" is an inadequate explanation, for it simply begs the question of why ethnic and religious divisions were becoming so pronounced.

Explaining these complex issues has been at the heart of much of my recent work; here, however, a brief synopsis will have to suffice.<sup>11</sup> The changed political economy of the family undermined the ability of craftsmen to become masters, because without a significant financial contribution from the bride, few newlyweds could establish their independence, all the more so given the escalating cost of land. In the second quarter of the 19th century in Montréal, the wage-earning stage of a journeyman went from being a period in the life cycle to a life sentence. Without the incentive to postpone marriage, couples married earlier and family size grew. These increased domestic responsibilities further undermined the ability of the wife to contribute financially to household income. As families restructured along more patriarchal lines, there was a corresponding rise in the role of both organized religion and conservatively configured ethnic identities. This new cultural conservatism legitimized





divinely ordained, but at the cost of an appropriation of nature that was to have far-reaching effects on how people interacted with their environment. One can quite literally see this appropriation at work in the 1846 commercial map drawn by James Cane. With thousands of vacant lots surrounding the developed city, land had become a commodity. Understandably, the pride of place Adams had accorded the public sphere now, in Cane's perspective, belonged to private enterprise, trade, markets and religious institutions. How did all this affect the gendered ownership of land?

Changes to ward boundaries and to how the municipal tax roll for 1848 was organized affect how we see women proprietors in this roll. The town centre now consisted of three wards, not two, with the western ward encompassing Pointe à Callière. The densely developed St Joseph ward had been split between St Antoine and Ste Anne wards, while the vastly expanded St Louis now took in the entire eastern half of the former St Laurent ward. Ste Marie had also been split, with the more developed part nearest the town centre becoming St Jacques ward. The roll itself was organized by units, rather than by lot, and the values reflected the rents paid rather than the property's capital value, as had been the case in 1825. (The colour coding does, however, permit an accurate comparison.) There was an obvious decline in both

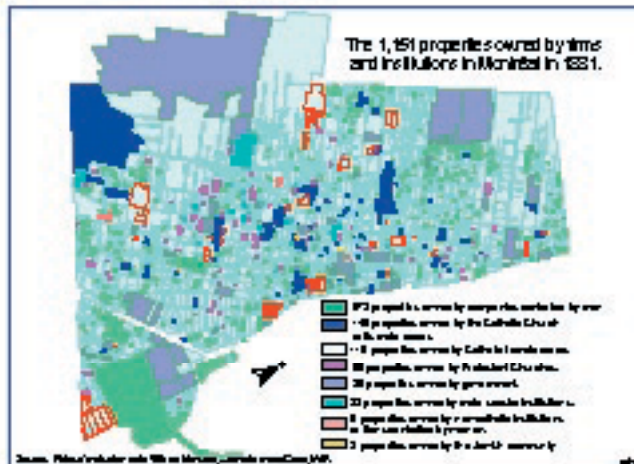
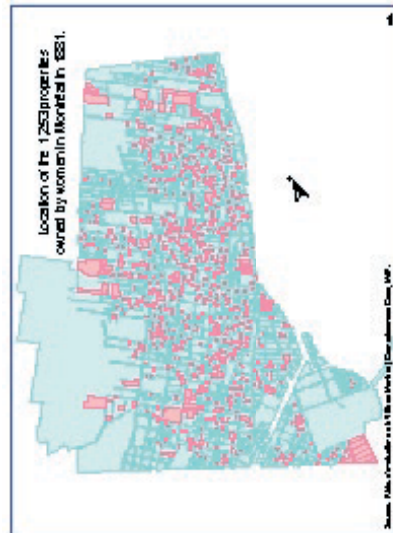
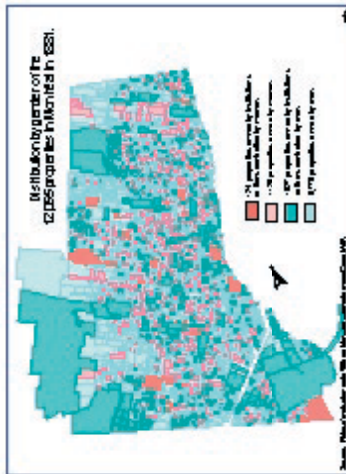


the relative number of properties owned by women and in the value of their properties. In only two wards, St Laurent and St Louis, did women own more than 10 percent of the units, whereas the two fastest-growing popular class wards posted the lowest averages: Ste Marie at 5.8 percent and Ste Anne at 3.8 percent. In the town centre, women owned only 6.9 percent of the units. Unquestionably then, this roll indicates a decline in the access to real property by women, but it does not suggest that there was as yet any gendered segregation to property ownership of urban space. Women continued to own properties across a broad range of values everywhere save in Ste Anne. Furthermore, in the two most affluent suburban wards of St Antoine and St Laurent, women owned numerous higher-end properties. As this might suggest, the extent of the decline is more apparent than real, because women owned fewer multi-unit properties than men. In the division of an estate widows were most likely to inherit the family home, while the half of the estate that would go to the legitimate offspring would more likely be the rental properties, whose revenue stream could be shared. Unlike the *terrier*, the tax roll did not generally list co-proprietors and by 1848, it would have been 'normal' for a single male offspring to appear on the roll as sole proprietor. This new normalcy would justify the revocation in 1849 of the provincial franchise for property-owning women. Women would not regain the right to vote in provincial elections until 1940.

### **Gendered spaces in an industrial town**

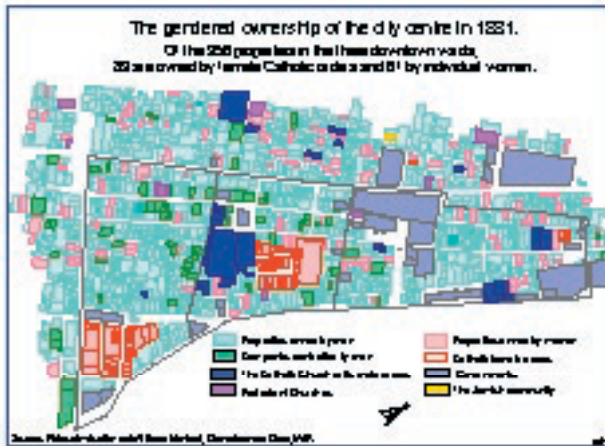
Overall women owned slightly more than one in ten properties in Montréal in 1881. While largely absent from the industrial corridor on either side of the Lachine Canal, they owned numerous large properties and hundreds of smaller ones throughout the rest of the city. This apparent improvement in the level of property ownership by women was, however, closely related to a profound restructuring of urban space according to gender. Many of the large properties were owned by the rapidly expanding female Catholic orders, but their presence paled in comparison to the institutionalized presence of men. Two novel aspects of this situation need to be stressed. First, although an institutional presence was not in itself new, now all institutional life in the city was highly gendered and not just that of the churches. By a combination of law and new cultural practices, urban institutional spaces had become highly segregated. The municipal, provincial and federal governments were now all under exclusively male control. No longer did any Protestant church countenance female clergy, while secular institutions, from McGill University to self-help organizations like the Mechanics Institute or the private clubs of privilege such as the *Institut Canadien*, were all exclusively for men. Secondly, companies now





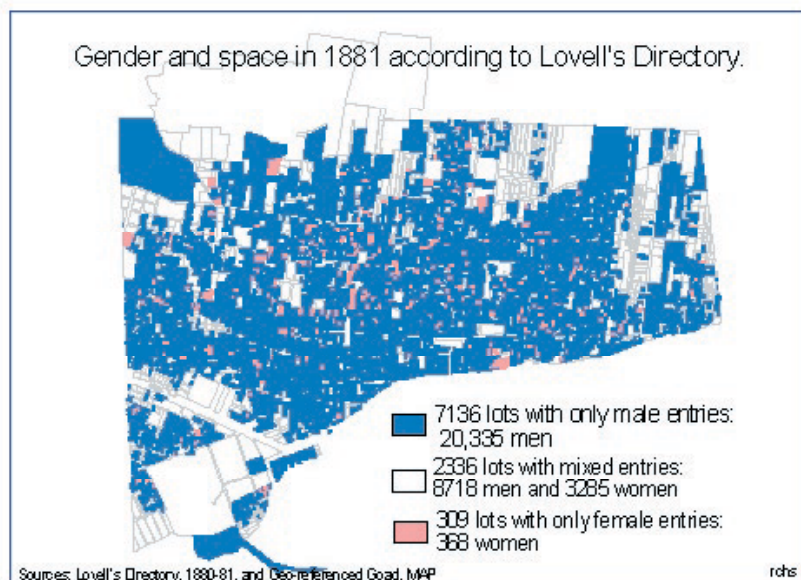
owned more than one in twenty properties in the city. This was a dramatic increase from the late pre-industrial period. Companies owned 679 properties, and only one was owned by a firm controlled by women.

These changes were most visible in the city centre. Property ownership by individual women was considerably lower than it had been at any point during the pre-industrial period. Individual women now owned only a half dozen

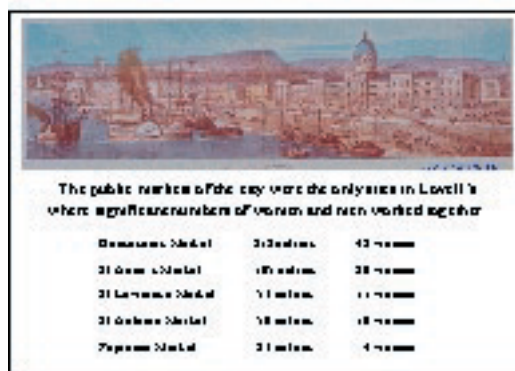


properties on either St Paul or Notre Dame and only three on St James. Symbolic of this decline was the cultural change in how women were identified on the roll. As late as the 1840s, the state consistently recognized widows by their maiden names, with not infrequently the name of their deceased husband provided as a simple suffix, as we saw with Elizabeth Mittleberger, the widow Platt. In 1881, only nine of the 41 individual female proprietors in the town centre were identified on the tax roll by their own name; seven were unmarried, while one was herself deceased. All but one of the married women were simply given their husband's name, while all ten widows were referred to by only their deceased husband's name.





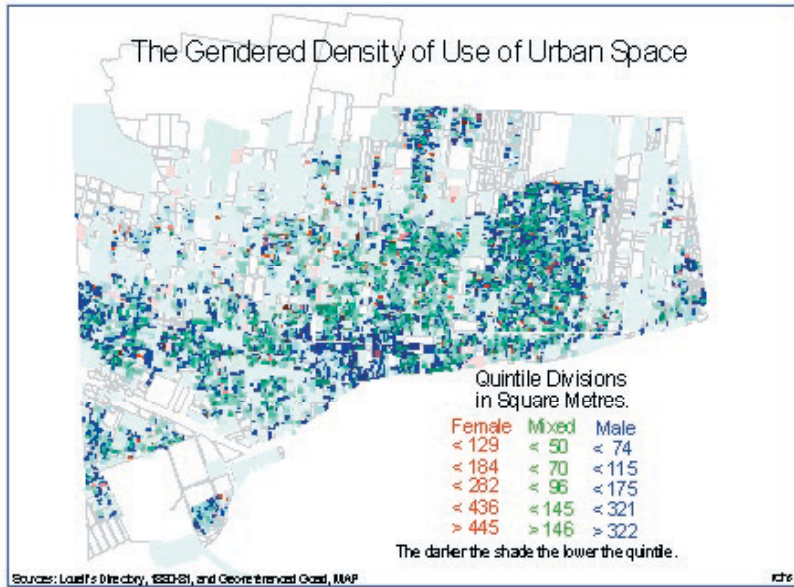
The nature of the female institutional presence had also changed qualitatively. As perhaps suggested by the evident subdivision of the Grey Nun and Hôtel Dieu properties, these were no longer evidence of a distinct feminine presence in the city centre. Both orders had built new and much larger complexes on the slopes of Mount Royal in the affluent St Antoine ward. These orders financed their new premises by redeveloping as exclusively commercial properties their centuries-old holdings in the city centre. Only the Convent of Our Lady would survive in the old city into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, before it too moved to a



large west end estate. Aside from the Sulpicians' continued presence on Place d'Armes and the government precinct adjacent to Place Jacques Cartier, much of the city centre was now almost exclusively commercial in nature. This did not yet mean, however, that the land was owned by companies. On only three streets was there more than a scattering of properties owned by companies: on St Gabriel, once home to the fur traders of the North West, on St François Xavier, home to the Montreal Stock Exchange, and on the new banking and insurance centre of the Dominion: St James Street. Everywhere else the ownership was individual or familial, but almost invariably masculine.

Ownership affects but does not define usage, and so to understand if this eclipse of female property ownership translated into a marked segregation of urban space it is necessary to examine who used these properties and how they were used. To do this, I turn to the Lovell's city directory for 1880–81 and its 32,341 distinct entries for people, firms and institutions in the city. These entries generated 32,706 linkages to 9,781 lots in the city.<sup>12</sup> By 1880, men dominated this formal urban landscape.

In this industrial city, young boys, slightly older unmarried women, and adult men constituted the three most important segments of the highly fragmented work force that earned wages outside the home. Usually working people only had a single entry in the city directory and it recorded where they lived, rather than where they worked. Most popular-class households had only a single entry for the male head of household. Thus, the male dominance of the directory is not all that surprising. What is surprising is the large number of entries for particular lots. In a city whose housing stock consisted of single-family dwellings, duplexes and triplexes in almost equal numbers, one would expect to find most lots having only one to three entries; in fact, two thirds of all entries in the city directory were for lots with four or more entries. In only one area of activity, the city's public markets, did this remarkable concentration of people in the urban landscape involve significant numbers of both men and women. These men and women were recorded in Lovell's as working in these markets because they had their own stalls. The continued independent presence of women in these particular public spaces no doubt speaks to the continued importance of women's role in the preparation of food for domestic consumption, but it also suggests the significance of town/country relations. The stalls mentioned in Lovell's were all located in formal market buildings, the most impressive being the Bonsecour market pictured above, but they were surrounded by farmers' markets. Despite the name, it was not primarily farmers but their wives and daughters who worked these markets. It is this



continued, equitable sharing of responsibilities within rural households that helps explain the unique gender politics of urban markets.

In addition to these markets, there were, of course, numerous factories where men and women would have worked together. Being a business directory, Lovell's does not provide this detailed information. Just as Lovell's did not link the waged assistants of the market-stall keepers to their workplace, so too were factory workers only identified with a particular company if they chose to identify themselves as employees. For example, 584 people, all men, chose to identify themselves as working for the Grand Trunk Railway, which was approximately one in four employees of the city's largest industrial enterprise. Most working people, however, did not work in such large establishments, for the early industrial city was characterized by uneven and combined development. Factories developed to address bottlenecks in particular stages of production. Once these problems were overcome, many new workshops and manufactories both upstream and down were established, so the scale of operations was very uneven. In all three scales of enterprise (workshops, manufactories and factories) people used a combination of hand tools and machine tools. Large factories did not replace older ways of doing things; rather they led to a greatly increased scale of production based on a highly exploitative reliance on small and medium-size businesses. It is this heterogeneity of the



early industrial landscape that Lovell's tracks with remarkable accuracy, and it is this complexity that explains the surprising density of urban land use revealed by the directory.

By dividing the number of entries on a lot by the size of the lot, we can obtain a rough indication of the spatial and gendered character of this heterogeneity. I say rough, because lot size and size of building were not the same, while multi-story buildings were more common in the city centre than elsewhere. The remarkable differences in concentration levels by gender do suggest, however, that this rough indicator reveals significant patterns. Fully two thirds of all 'mixed' spaces have density levels higher than the densest quintile of 'female' spaces. Single-family homes owned by widows and large properties of the female orders clearly account for a disproportionate number of lots. Or put another way, for women who ran their own small businesses space was at a premium, as the situation facing dressmakers and milliners illustrates well. The 369 women identified by Lovell's as working in these crafts were to be found at 341 different lots in the city, only 20 of which were exclusively female. They worked alongside a further 147 women and 1,251 men at these locations. Exclusively male spaces, on the other hand, showed a much more equitable distribution that was nevertheless spatially concentrated. The high densities in northern St Jacques ward, in upper St Louis ward east of St Lawrence Blvd, and below the escarpment running out from the old St Joseph ward are suggestive of the close proximity between workshops, manufactories and





home, for none of these areas are noted for their factories. The highest concentration levels were, however, to be found in the city centre.

Clearly, by 1880, male sociability is structuring the city centre far more effectively than was indicated by my earlier analysis of institutions and firms. The manner in which St James Street, the emerging financial centre of the new Dominion, stands out in this urban landscape speaks to the long-term significance of this novel gendering of space. Although there are important mixed lots as well, most notably the Bonsecour and Ste Anne markets, there were very few women in most of them. The densely occupied mixed lot on St Gabriel, for example, is the Canada Hotel with 41 male occupants and one female occupant, the proprietress, according to Lovell's. As this suggests, male sociability extended to long-term residency by men in hotels and clubs: the Ottawa Hotel on St James was home to 24 men, 27 stayed in the Richelieu on St Vincent, 45 men and two women resided at St Lawrence Hall adjacent to Place d'Armes, while 52 men and two married women lived at the Windsor Hotel on Dominion Square in the fashionable west end.



Understandably, it was the commercial and administrative buildings that dominated this view of the urban landscape. Lovell's listed 26 men as operating out of the City and District Savings Bank building on St James, pictured here in a drawing from the *Canadian Illustrated News* of 1872. The Merchant Exchange had 25; Barron's Block, 29; the Corn Exchange, 33; the Harbour Commissioner's, 38; the Court House, 53; and the City Hall 57. These densely occupied office buildings gave employment to hundreds more people than the office holders, proprietors and partners listed in the city directory, but unlike the hotels these were exclusively male sites.

## Conclusion

The relationship between the ownership of real property and the gendering of urban space has been at the heart of this article. The legal system of pre-industrial Montréal favoured male proprietorship and transformed the most common form of joint proprietorship, that between a husband and a wife, into a male-managed domain, and yet it was not at all unusual for women to own real property. Furthermore, women were to be found in roughly equal numbers to men in all parts of town. Their presence does not explain why women owned as much property as they did, but like the prominent role played by female religious orders, their daily presence certainly contributed to making this female ownership appear normal.

The numbers and presence of female proprietors appears to have declined, perhaps significantly, during the 1840s. This pattern was consistent with broader changes in the viability of a family-based craft world. It is these latter changes, and not the decline in property ownership, that best explain why women's presence in the city began to change. Nonetheless, property ownership was central to the gendering of urban space, because the franchise directly linked citizenship to property. If an independence of means guaranteed an independence of thought, then an explicit gendering of the franchise as male denied any legitimacy to the independent thought of women. This was part of a much larger cultural reaction that mobilized both religion and ethnicity in a new concerted attack on both popular and Enlightenment democratic values. I think this cultural turn is only understandable in light of the increasingly unequal relations in marriage,<sup>13</sup> but an important aspect of the relationship between property ownership and the gendering of urban space needs to be made explicit. First, men restricted the thoughts and actions of women, and then they effectively restricted their access to urban space.

By 1880, the city centre had been successfully transformed into a highly segregated male space. Elsewhere in the city, most notably along Ste Catherine Street in the west end, new shopping districts were developing; places where women could consume safely segregated from the bourgeois centres of political and economic decision making. The subsequent absorption of many of these shopping districts into a more amorphous 20<sup>th</sup>-century 'downtown' has blurred the significance of the new spatial order of the early industrial city. In Montréal, women had lived, laboured and loved in the old town centre for more than two centuries. Yet as this space became the financial and commercial capital for the new Dominion of Canada, there was an almost complete eclipse of any female presence in its public places, while its newly dominant private spaces became overwhelmingly male. This novel gendering of the urban landscape was related to, but not directly caused by, changes in access to real property. Nor was it the result of the socio-economic changes wrought by industrialisation. Rather, this transformation was part of a much larger restructuring of gender relations and of our conception of the natural, which preceded, permitted and shaped the changes in social relations generally associated with industrialisation.

Once established, these new forms of bourgeois masculinity and sociability prepared the way for the subsequent and continuing corporate dominance of the city centre. As this wonderful photograph by Conrad Poirier of a woman sprinting across Place d'Armes in 1942 to catch her tram reminds us, women



would be let back into the city centre. It was, however, only to fill subordinate positions in the extraordinarily gender-segregated world of the modern corporation. For both their initial exclusion and their partial re-admittance, we are all still paying the costs.

## Endnotes

- \* I dedicate this paper to the memory of my father, Thomas G. Sweeny 1918–2005, who first taught me about gender in the city. I would like to express my appreciation to Valerie Burton for her critical remarks on my initial presentation and to Élizabéth-Anne Malischewski for editing the various drafts.
- <sup>1</sup> Initially, from 2000 to 2002, with funding from Geoide, MAP benefited from the collaboration of a half dozen colleagues from across Canada. Since 2003, MAP has continued as a joint effort of the geographer Sherry Olson of McGill and myself. We discuss our early work in “MAP: Montréal l’avenir du passé. Sharing geo-databases, yesterday today and tomorrow.” *Geomatica*, 57: 2 (2003), 145–54.
- <sup>2</sup> From 1660 to 1854 land in the St Lawrence valley was held within a manorial economy modeled on the seigneurial regime of northern France. Starting in 1840, on the island of Montréal and in two other seigneuries owned by the Sulpicians (an elite order of the Roman Catholic Church which had strongly supported the colonial state’s repression of the forces for popular reform in 1837–8), people could opt out of this property system, but they had to handsomely compensate the lords for their loss of feudal privilege. For a study of the impact this commutation process had on the city see my collaboration with Grace Laing Hogg “Land and People: Property investment in late pre-industrial Montréal.” *Urban History Review*, 24: 1 (October, 1995), 44–53. I discussed how it affected the rural parts of the island in “Paysans et propriétés : Les commutations montréalaises, 1840–1859,” in Christian Desseureault, John Dickinson et Joseph Goy (eds.), *Famille et marché XVI<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Sillery: Septentrion, 2003, 161–6. For a prize-winning study of what the Sulpicians did with the money see Brian Young, *In Its Corporate Capacity: The Seminary of Montreal as a Business Institution, 1816–1876*. Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1986. For a general discussion of the significance of the seigneurial regime see my “What difference does a mode make? A Comparison of Two Seventeenth Century Colonies: Canada and Newfoundland.” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Series, Vol. LXIII, No. 2, April 2006, 281–304.
- <sup>3</sup> Potash was a by-product of land clearance, when the cinders of burnt trees were leached to produce the principal bleaching agent for the British cotton

- industry. For a critical synthesis of the spatial and temporal dimensions of international trade in this period see my "Industry and nation in a colonial space: Nineteenth century Lower Canada," in Jean-Paul Barbiche (dir.). *Des Amériques: Impressions et expressions*. Paris: l'Harmattan, 1999, 127–33.
- 4 Mary Anne Poutanen *For the benefit of the master: the Montreal needle trades during the transition 1820–1842*. Master's Thesis in History, McGill University, 1985.
  - 5 Occupational analysis is based on my computerized editions of these directories: *The 1819 City Directory of Thomas Doige*. St John's: MUN, 1997–2002 and *The 1820 City Directory of Thomas Doige*. St John's: MUN, 1999–2002. For a contemporary discussion of hawkers see *Observations sur les Réglements concernant les Regrattiers*. Fonds Viger-Verreault Boite 63, Liasse VIII, no 19. Archives du Séminaire du Québec.
  - 6 Grace Laing Hogg, *The legal rights of masters, mistresses and domestic servants in Montreal, 1816–1829*. Master's thesis in history, McGill University, 1989.
  - 7 The asymmetrical age categories in this census reflected two of the state's primary concerns in this colony of settlement: for women they correspond to child-bearing years, while for men they correspond to the call-up regulations for the militia.
  - 8 I was able to link 71% of the 467 local masters who hired 914 apprentices and 339 journeymen before notary during the 1820s, in my "Artisans and Gender" American History Association (AHA), Seattle, 2005.
  - 9 Census data is based on my computerized edition of the census taker's, Jacques Viger, personal copy of the returns, which enumerated all households by buildings: *The 1825 Manuscript Census of Montréal*. St John's: MUN, 1997–2002.
  - 10 Property data is based on my computerized edition of a tax roll I reconstituted from the papers of Jacques Viger: *A reconstituted tax roll of Montréal, 1825*. St John's: MUN, 1997–2002.
  - 11 "Risky Spaces: The Montreal Fire Insurance Company 1817–1820." in Claude Bellavance & Pierre Fournier (dirs). *Les territoires de l'entreprise*. Ste-Foy, Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 2004, 9–23. "Property, Immigration and Identity in Late Pre-Industrial Montréal" Canadian Historical Association (CHA), University of Manitoba, 2004. "Artisans and Gender" AHA, Seattle 2005. "Class structure of industrial neighbourhoods of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Montréal." CHA, University of Western Ontario, 2005. "The Urban Ecology of Social Segregation in an Industrializing Town," in Martyn Lyons (ed.) *Proceedings of the 20<sup>th</sup> International Congress of*

*Historical Sciences*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press & In-Compass, 2006.

- <sup>12</sup> Analysis is based on my computerized edition of this directory (*Lovell's 1880–81 Alphabetical listing of Montréal*. St John's: MUN, 2003) linked to MAP's geo-referenced Charles A. Goad & Co. Insurance Map for 1880. There are a number of factors why some properties were not linked to the directory, the most important being that undeveloped properties generated no linkages, city owned properties were often not listed in the directory; parts of the popular class areas to the southwest and the northeast were not as well covered by Lovell as elsewhere in the city; and firms that owned multiple properties were generally only listed for their main addresses. For example, a building and loan society could own dozens of properties but only appear once, for its head office. What is important for present purposes is that I have no reason to believe that these linkage problems are particularly biased against women; if anything they tend to an under-representation of men and the firms and institutions they controlled.
- <sup>13</sup> Although later, the Canadian situation was consistent with the argument in Ruth Perry's path-breaking study *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748–1818*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.