

“Proper Objects of This Institution”: Working Families, Children, and the British & Canadian School in Nineteenth-Century Montreal¹

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ABSTRACT

Established in 1822 “for the education of the children of the labouring class,” Montreal’s British and Canadian School Society enabled working families of various ethnic backgrounds to have their children receive free schooling in a non-denominational setting. Located at the edge of the old town in a purpose-built structure, the British and Canadian School figured prominently within the array of early educational establishments studied by Bruce Curtis, Andrée Dufour, and others. In the wake of the rebellions in Lower Canada and the resulting separation of institutions along religious lines, the school became increasingly identified with the Protestant community and in 1866 was formally incorporated into the city’s emerging Protestant school system. Despite this apparent loss of its non-denominational character, the school continued to attract substantial numbers of children from Catholic and Jewish families, the latter resulting from an agreement between the synagogues and the school board. The school also retained its particular attraction for working-class families, who appear to have applied regularly with some determination to see their children exposed to learning even if only for short periods. A Registry of Admissions to the British and Canadian School from the mid-1870s reveals a pattern whereby schooling formed part of long-term strategy within the working class family economy; as such, it sheds light on the work of historians such as Bettina Bradbury and Terry Copp. The Registry also permits analysis of the school population by gender, ethnicity, age, place of residence, and academic competence.

RÉSUMÉ

Établie en 1822 pour l’éducation des enfants des classes laborieuses, l’école de la *British and Canadian School Society* de Montréal permit aux enfants de familles ouvrières de diverses origines ethniques d’être instruits gratuitement, et ce, dans un cadre non confessionnel. Située en bordure de la vieille ville, dans un édifice construit à cette fin, la *British and Canadian School* occupe une place importante dans l’ensemble des premiers établissements scolaires étudiés par Bruce Curtis, Andrée Dufour et autres. Dans le sillage des insurrections au Bas-Canada et du clivage religieux des institutions qui s’ensuivit, l’école devient de plus en plus identifiée à la communauté protestante. En 1866, elle fut officiellement intégrée au système scolaire protestant qui se développait à Montréal. Malgré qu’elle s’affiche officiellement protestante,

l'école continua d'attirer un nombre important d'enfants de familles catholiques et juives, ces dernières à la suite d'un accord entre les synagogues et le conseil scolaire. L'école conserva aussi son attrait particulier pour les familles ouvrières, qui tentaient régulièrement et résolument d'y faire admettre leurs enfants pour y être instruits, même pour de courtes périodes. Un Registre d'admissions à la *British and Canadian School Society* du milieu des années 1870 révèle que l'instruction faisait partie d'une stratégie à long terme de l'économie familiale de la classe ouvrière, comme l'ont montré les travaux d'historiens tels que Bettina Bradbury et Terry Copp. Le Registre permet aussi d'analyser l'effectif scolaire selon le genre, l'ethnie, l'âge, le lieu de résidence et les compétences académiques.

The children of all labouring people or mechanics, residing within the city of Montreal and its neighbourhood, are proper objects of this institution.

First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823.

Among the many parents seeking to send their children to the British and Canadian School during the 1876–77 school year was Charles McKiernan, Montreal's celebrated "Joe Beef." Keeper of the infamous waterfront canteen that was home to an itinerant sea of sailors, dockers, canal workers, and "wharf rats," McKiernan² was also a family man concerned for his children's education.³ His eldest, Leonard Patrick, usually called Charles, had been sent to Stanstead Wesleyan College in the Eastern Townships. This was perhaps an odd choice for Irish Catholic parents—except that McKiernan had as little respect for the Catholic church as he did for middle-class propriety, and despite its name the college was non-denominational. Boarding school may also have been a logical choice given that life in the tavern was, at least in middle-class terms, hardly suitable for children. The desire to distance his son from the rough world of Joe Beef's Canteen would seem to represent a limit to McKiernan's empathy for the disadvantaged. Nevertheless, in January 1877 he sought to enrol Charles in the British and Canadian School, historically a working-class institution located less than a kilometer from the McKiernan home above the Canteen.⁴ That this school was also historically a non-denominational institution can hardly have been a coincidence given Joe Beef's opposition to organized religion, an attitude he shared with many working-class people.

In this paper we argue that, unlike other schools in Montreal, the British and Canadian School provided a learning environment that suited many artisanal families with distinct ambitions for their children. Thus, the McKiernan family's decision to send their children to the British and Canadian School typifies a desire on the part of a great many working families of this period to acquire for their children an education that was appropriate to their needs. The school offered a disciplined environment, a broad curriculum which incorporated many practical subjects, and a long tradition of religious tolerance. These factors played into the strategies many families were adopting in order to adapt to, and even advance in, an industrializing economy. Parents wanted their children to learn to read, write and do calculations in order to meet the growing complexities of a society in which literacy and numeracy were increasingly valued. For half a century the school educated the children of the popular classes, apparently with much success, given the consistently high demand

for admission and even though there were other schools more conveniently located to home.

The literature on nineteenth-century schooling often presents it either as a delivery system for cultural and social values or a service to which not all levels of society had access.⁵ While both are clearly true, much more emphasis must be given to how schools served their constituencies and how families made use of these institutions. Historians have paid little attention to the social and demographic aspects of education in nineteenth-century Montreal; indeed, the topic of Montreal schooling in general has interested few scholars of that period. While Jean-Pierre Charland's *L'entreprise éducative au Québec, 1840–1900* uses printed sources from across the province, the only manuscript sources used are from the South Shore and Richelieu regions (Montréalégie).⁶ Robert Gagnon's examination of the *Commission scolaire catholique de Montréal* is urban-based and shows the link between the social demands of education and the workings of the school commission, but the role of parents, their attitudes toward education, and access of children to schools are not central themes in his study.⁷ By contrast, Andrée Dufour's studies focus on the interactions between the local communities on the island of Montreal and the state, as well as those between the communities and the churches and educational societies; her analysis suggests that the nature of the educational provider is a crucial variable in school attendance.⁸ However, Dufour's attention to the distinction between these forces (state, church, educational societies) is more finely nuanced than her treatment of the differences between confessional groups. Family historian Bettina Bradbury's study of working-class household economies in mid to late nineteenth-century Montreal explores strategies of subsistence including education. She shows, for example, how parents decided when and for how long their children remained at school.⁹

This study follows from our work on the Quebec Protestant Education Research Project and a published monograph, *A Meeting of the People: School Boards and Protestant Communities in Quebec, 1801–1998*,¹⁰ in which we presented schooling from the perspective of communities and their institutions. Here, we make similar use of school board records, such as the minutes and annual reports of the Protestant Board of School Commissioners (PBSC) for the City of Montreal, as well as the *Registry of Admissions* to the British and Canadian School. The *Registry*, which exists for the years 1873 to 1877, provides a list of families seeking to enrol their children, as well as their addresses (a key to determining social class), their religion, and details about the student's previous schooling and scholastic aptitude. For additional information about these families we made use of the databases assembled by *MAP (Montréal: liavenir du passé)*, a research project situated at McGill University's Geography Department, and based on census returns, municipal tax rolls, and street directories. We also consulted the existing sources for the British and Canadian School: the Annual Reports of the British and Canadian School Society 1823 to 1826, and the Annual and Quarterly Reports of the British and Foreign School Society most of which cover the period prior to the 1840s.

This paper has been organized as follows. We begin by exploring the origins of the

British and Canadian School, the motivations of the people who established it, and its pedagogical and administrative aspects. Next, we consider the school's geographical context within the expanding network of public schools. Finally, we will assess the information contained in the *Registry of Admissions* for 1873–74 in order to present a picture of the school's clientele during that academic year. We want to examine some of the reasons parents chose to send their children to the school, the demographic characteristics of the children and their families, and the educational experiences they brought with them.

Origins of the British and Canadian School

The desire to educate the poor was born of a religious zeal that arose in the late eighteenth century, although the notion of general literacy went back to the Puritan and Scottish Presbyterian emphasis on the importance of reading the Bible. The Protestant tradition also stressed the practical applications of literacy and numeracy, skills which have been generally observed among the Scottish and Non-conformist populations in Britain and North America.¹¹ The belief that literacy was an important component of democracy and citizenship brought the idea of general education to the ambitions of the American revolutionaries and later to the agendas of most liberal reform movements across Europe—as well as in Lower Canada.¹² But it was the failure of existing national school systems, whatever their ambitions, to educate more than the prosperous ranks of society, and in England the lack of any real education system outside Non-conformist spheres, that spurred late eighteenth-century evangelicals to undertake the education of the poor as a form of charity. Given the importance they placed on reading the Bible, these evangelicals saw ignorance as akin to godlessness, and knowledge as a key to redemption. Catholics, and others who did not put the same emphasis on literacy, were perceived to be steeped in ignorance; as such, popular education was also a critical tool in the ongoing battle over souls.

By the same token, evangelicals within the Church of England espoused the cause of popular education as a means of revitalizing a declining Anglican church. Chief among the Anglican evangelical organizations dedicated to education was the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (the “SPCK”), which in 1811 had formed the National School Society with a mandate to establish a network of schools across England and Wales.¹³ These so-called National Schools were to be vehicles for the propagation of the “National Religion”—namely that of the Church of England. Asserting the “national” status of Anglicanism and its network of schools implicitly marginalized any rival undertakings, especially the schools of the British and Foreign School Society, which had been formed earlier by Non-conformists wishing to establish their own network of non-denominational schools. The goals of this society would coincide with those of many liberal reformers across North America who wished to promote literacy and knowledge without the religious trappings of organized churches.

Prior to the 1820s, education in Montreal was largely in the hands of religious bodies, many of which had no particular vocation to instruct the poor.¹⁴ The

Sulpician-run *Collège de Montréal* was the classical school of the city's Catholic elite as of the 1760s, while daughters from these families often went to the school run by the *Congrégation Notre Dame*. A Protestant counterweight to the *Collège* was the Royal Grammar School, opened in 1816 by the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning, a public body established by the colonial government to provide schooling across Lower Canada. Despite its ostensibly public character, the Royal Institution's board of trustees and administration consisted principally of Anglican clergy, as well as colonial officials who tended to be High Church, and this resulted in a clear Anglican slant to the curriculum. The Grammar School, moreover, was a fee-paying institution for the city's elite, even though a quota of students were admitted yearly "on the foundation" (meaning free of charge).¹⁵ The city was also sprinkled with small private schools for the sons and especially the daughters of genteel families: Miss Plucknett's Boarding School for Young Ladies on Notre Dame Street, Mrs. Brooks' Young Ladies Boarding and Day School in Place d'Armes, and the Reverend Mr. Urquhart's Montreal Academical Institution on St-Paul Street are but a taste of these.

The poor could turn only to schools run by charitable organizations.¹⁶ Initially the most active of these was the National School Society, which enjoyed much support from the colonial government; as of 1816, well-subsidized National schools were opened in Montreal and Quebec City.¹⁷ The Anglican character of the National Schools set them at odds with the Scottish and Non-conformist communities within Lower Canada's Protestant population, both of which were strong proponents of public education.¹⁸ It also met with opposition from the colony's Catholic majority, both the leaders of the church, who considered the government's involvement in education a campaign for assimilation, and liberal Catholics, who called for greater public support for a system of schooling. The issue of denominational education, and the rivalry among religious groups, proved the principal obstacle to setting up such a system during the century's first two decades. The British and Foreign School Society referred to this situation in its 1821 report, and concluded that the best solution would be the establishment of non-denominational schools.¹⁹ For some time the society had been informed of the dearth of schools in Montreal by recent immigrants who had some experience of non-denominational education, either in England or at the society's schools in Nova Scotia or the United States. Those schools that did exist in Montreal, they learned, were "extremely high," meaning that "it is impossible for any but people in affluent circumstances to send their children to them."²⁰ Clearly there was a need for a concerted effort to bring affordable education to the popular classes of Lower Canada.

By the early 1820s the Montreal proponents of popular education were also convinced that schooling for poor children was crucial to the well-being of society. While conservative Catholics and evangelical Anglicans saw education as a means of strengthening the faith, liberal reformers saw it as way to build social order and promote discipline. They noted with some distress "the state of the rising generation in this city and suburbs," and concluded that school was the answer to "the multitude of children employed in idleness or mischief."²¹ These masses, they argued,

were steeped in ignorance, and it was in ignorance that sin and petty crime thrived: “They have been too destitute of the moral principle of love to their neighbour, to be induced to impart to others, a share of that blessing, which God in his providence had so liberally bestowed upon them. The few have revelled in intellectual luxury, while the despised multitude have perished for lack of knowledge.”²² It behoved the privileged few, therefore, to bring light to this darkness: “The friends of humanity, religion, and morals, had long felt deeply concerned for the welfare of the society of these Provinces, and more especially of the children of their neighbours and fellow citizens, in the place, in which Providence had cast their lot.”²³ This argument was born of deep religious conviction, but it was expressed in neutral, albeit Christian, terms. Indeed, reformers saw the great variety in religious affiliation in a place such as Lower Canada as a challenge, to be overcome by adopting a simple curriculum of general appeal. In the long run, however, social harmony was the real goal. This educational plan, therefore, had a sound, practical foundation: schooling would keep children off the streets and usefully occupied, and if they could gain appropriate knowledge their lives would be improved. “In towns, and their vicinity, the alternatives are, intelligence and virtue, or ignorance and vice. In such scenes of activity, a child will do and learn *something*. If you do not take care that it is good, he will take care that it is evil.”²⁴ In a world where unemployment was on the rise and city streets appeared to be full of unruly urchins, schooling at the very least offered morality, respectability, and discipline. Liberal reformers also hoped that education would lead to greater social autonomy even for the poorer members of society, allowing them to be productive and less likely to be a burden on the state.²⁵

The British and Foreign School Society served as a model for the Montreal reformers, even the name—save for the word “foreign” which they replaced with “Canadian” in order to include local French speakers, who could hardly have been considered foreign.²⁶ One of the central objectives was the schooling of girls: given the “influence that females are allowed to exert in every civilized society, their education assumes an importance equal to that of those who are destined to act a more conspicuous part in this world’s theatre.”²⁷ Such an objective appealed to the Montreal reformers who saw clear advantages to having a class of young women “acquainted with domestic duties and household work, so exceedingly desirable, either in a female servant, or the head of a family, and so especially necessary in this country, where so few servants can be found, who are...qualified for the duties of their respective stations.”²⁸ Such views underscore the reformers’ class interests.

The British and Foreign School Society made use of the “monitorial system,” considered well-suited to schools in which large numbers of pupils required instruction with very limited resources.²⁹ In this respect, as in its focus on the poor, it differed little from the National School Society. Monitorial schools were developed by Joseph Lancaster (or Dr. Bell, according to the Anglicans), wherein the master taught the more advanced pupils who in turn taught the younger ones. By this method, it was claimed, “one master can teach 1000 as well as 100.”³⁰ These monitors were given special instruction outside the usual hours of 9:00 to 12:00 and 2:00 to 5:00 (2:00 to 4:00 during the winter months) in subjects such as English Grammar and

Geography; during regular hours, monitors taught reading, writing, arithmetic and needlework, and the master supervised.³¹

A useful by-product of the monitorial system was a supply of potential schoolmasters, something else that was sorely needed in Lower Canada; there, schools following this model would “train up and qualify young persons of both sexes to supply well instructed teachers.”³² The emphasis on having teachers of both sexes shows that reformers conceived of the education of girls as more than merely a recipe for better servants and housekeepers. In many ways the monitorial method echoed the system of apprenticeship in artisanal production where there was much emphasis on the passing-on of knowledge and skills. Indeed, by 1826 the Montreal society reported that a number of “tradesmen” were making “repeated calls” at their school “for the purpose of obtaining apprentices,” suggesting that the monitorial system itself was seen to provide useful training for potential skilled labourers.³³ As a number of apprenticeship contracts issued in Montreal at this time included clauses stipulating that masters must provide schooling during the period of indenture, it is likely that these young people would have been sent to monitorial schools.³⁴

If the British and Foreign School Society shared its methods and its mandate with the National School Society, it differed fundamentally in its insistence on a non-denominational curriculum; indeed, this was the distinguishing feature of its schools, and would be that of the societies it inspired in Lower Canada. In its constitution, the Montreal society stipulated that “no book, pamphlet or other paper, be introduced into the School without being first presented to, and approved of by the Committee, and that the general reading lessons be confined to the Holy Scriptures, or extracts there from, and lessons for spelling and Arithmetic.”³⁵ Whatever their own religious persuasions, the Montreal reformers felt that non-denominational schooling was highly appropriate in the context of Lower Canada with its diverse population. They gave full credit to Lancaster, “that friend of youth,” and his pedagogical system which, thanks to its “christian simplicity, liberality and charity of its principles, and its admirable adaptation to a community composed of persons of so many different religious denominations,” they considered superior to others.³⁶

The British and Canadian School Society was formally established in Montreal on September 21, 1822, composed of a cross-section of the city’s liberal reformers, to judge by the varied names making up the committee of governors elected to run the society. The inaugural meeting was chaired by Daniel Fisher, a young merchant and member of the city’s leading Methodist family.³⁷ Fisher remained on the committee of governors along with fellow merchants John Torrance, John Frothingham, James Carsuell, Alexander Ferguson, John Mackenzie, and David Handyside—all Methodists or Presbyterians. Other governors included merchants François-Antoine Larocque and Olivier Berthelet, and notary Nicolas-Benjamin Doucet—at the time, liberal French-Canadians who worked comfortably within the British milieu.³⁸ American merchant Horatio Gates became the society’s president, and William Lunn, an English small-businessman with an apparent fondness for serving on public institutions (he would be a governor of the society for the remainder of its fifty-year history, as well as a director of the Montreal General Hospital and a public school

commissioner) became secretary. Louis-Joseph Papineau, speaker of the House of Assembly and leading figure in the *Parti Canadien*, was one of two vice-presidents; the other was George William Grant, member of the legislative council and heir to the Barony of Longueuil. Papineau's presence on the committee, and that of the other French-Canadian members, shows that a fair degree of solidarity was possible on an issue such as schooling whatever political differences might divide the colony. Grant's presence is an anomaly given the tendency of society governors to be moderately successful business figures (in Torrance's case, somewhat more than moderately successful) or professionals, rather than upper-class landowners. Most of these men were united in their commitment to the moral improvement of labouring families and in their opposition to institutions dominated by the established churches. In their selection of a patron the society turned to the governor-general himself, the Earl of Dalhousie, who stood out among colonial leaders for being Presbyterian, rather than Anglican, and a strong proponent of non-denominational education in British North America.

The committee of governors ran the school, their duties included the admission of students following recommendations by individuals who subscribed to the society.³⁹ Subscribers of £1 or more were entitled to recommend one child to the committee; a £2 subscription entitled them to recommend two children, and so on. The committee had the right to reject applicants, as well as the right to expel students for misconduct, but they were obliged to notify the subscribers in question who then had two weeks to make additional recommendations. For every prospective student the subscriber would provide the committee with a signed list specifying the parents' names, occupation, average weekly earnings, place of residence, religious affiliation, and how many other children there were in the family, as well as the intended scholar's name and age. The step of making recommendations allowed for a degree of quality control, as well as the keeping of useful statistics about the society's constituency (statistics which, unfortunately, have not survived). Although there is no way of knowing how many prospective scholars were rejected by the committee, it is likely there were not many. The society's by-laws only stipulate that children should be presentable and scrubbed, free of disease, and over six years old; if there were few places left preference was to be given to those over eight. Most of the real screening was probably done by the subscribers, prior to completing all the paperwork. The process would seem well-suited to a class of reform-minded individuals eager to do good. The annual reports contain lengthy lists of subscribers and the amounts each contributed, for the most part £1 or slightly more. Women, even a number of unmarried women, are conspicuous on these lists, underlining the important role they played within the society. In some cases husband and wife, or father and daughter—as well as various male members of the same family—made independent contributions: Lunn and his wife Margaret Fisher (sister to Daniel) each contributed £5 during the society's first year, making each among the school's top investors.

The school already had a teacher, Thomas Hutchins, who had been sent out by the British and Foreign School Society in July 1822 following a formal request from Montreal reformers.⁴⁰ The governors paid the new master his £100 annual salary as

of the moment he arrived in Montreal.⁴¹ Hutchins came “highly recommended,” presumably skilled in the methods of the monitorial system and well-practiced in the nuances of a non-denominational curriculum. It is unclear what knowledge, if any, he had of the French language, and little evidence that any instruction at Montreal’s British and Canadian School took place in French. It is difficult, however, to imagine the French-speaking members of the society, especially Papineau, applauding the achievements of Canadian children “ignorant of the Alphabet” who could now “read and write words of two and three syllables” unless at least some of these words were French.⁴² In autumn 1823 a British and Canadian School opened in Quebec City which, the Montreal governors noted, set out to instruct in both English and French and had hired two separate masters for this purpose. The situation was clearly different in Montreal—and yet the governors referred to having “supplied lessons in French and English at cost prices” to their sister institution as well as furnishing a complete set of French lessons to a nearby Catholic school.⁴³ If Hutchins himself was not skilled in French it is likely that many of his monitors were, and could apply his methods to teaching the younger Canadian pupils to read. The governors put special emphasis on the achievements of the school’s Canadian children who, in addition to learning words of two and three syllables, understood the “first two rules of Arithmetic;” others were able to master “simple and compound Rules, Reduction and the Rule of Three” after only eight months under Mr. Hutchins’ instruction.⁴⁴

The governors had also earmarked a suitable schoolhouse, a property owned by Olivier Berthelet on Bonaventure Street west of the Haymarket, which they rented at £40 per year as of October 1, 1822. A former hospital, the building featured large rooms which would have lent themselves to monitorial teaching, where the master stood on a raised dais and the students sat at long benches, and where the bustling atmosphere resembled that of a small factory.⁴⁵ In keeping with the monitorial system, students wrote on slates with “slate pencils,” five thousand of which were purchased by the governors.⁴⁶ Within a few weeks of the school’s opening it was clear that the existing classroom space was too small for the numbers of children attending, and so the governors decided to separate the boys from the girls and employ a lady teacher for the latter.⁴⁷ The building’s lower storey was refitted at a cost of £35 to accommodate what became known as the “girls’ school.”

A parallel ladies’ committee was established to oversee the education of girls. Margaret Fisher (Mrs. Lunn) was named its first president and Miss Day, daughter of a prominent New England family, became the secretary. The other thirteen members represented the same social class as their male counterparts, even the same families: Mrs. Gates, Mrs. Frothingham, Mrs. Torrance, and Mrs. Mackenzie. Not all these ladies had husbands who were governors of the society, however; the ladies’ committee was clearly not merely a wives’ auxiliary. Many, such as Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Jones, were involved in the British and Canadian School Society on their own; others served with their daughters, as did Mrs. Bancroft and Mrs. Day. There were even single women on the committee without their mothers, namely Miss Ermatinger and Miss Adams; running a school for girls appears to have had a special appeal for young women. Four days after the committee’s formation on December 21, Miss

Day placed an advertisement in the local press for “a well qualified Schoolmistress to teach the female children Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Needle work.”⁴⁸ The girls’ school opened on January 6, 1823, with Miss Webster as teacher, but the ladies committee was not entirely happy with her and turned to the British and Foreign School Society as the governors had originally done to secure Hutchins. In July 1824 Miss Webster was replaced by a Mrs. Chapman from England, who presumably had more experience with the monitorial system—although she received the same £60 yearly salary as her predecessor.⁴⁹

The British and Canadian School was conducted on strictly non-denominational lines, but the curriculum involved a high degree of moral and religious content. The governors declared it a “very pleasing sight to behold children of all denominations assembled together, and instructed in the principles of the Holy Scriptures, which will tend, we trust, to unite all parties.”⁵⁰ By the 1840s, with religious differences highly politicized, this sort of scriptural study would become identified with Protestantism (logically, given the society’s roots in non-conformist theology) and would form the basis of Quebec’s Protestant curriculum, but in the pre-rebellion political climate where like-minded reformers could meet across religious lines, the governors’ optimism seemed quite reasonable. It also seemed reasonable to expect students to attend church regularly, and the society’s constitution contained provisions to enforce this. Children had to assemble at the school each Sunday morning before proceeding to the particular church which, according to the written information provided by the subscriber, they regularly attended. Each month, the committee appointed inspectors whose duties included escorting the children from school to church and reporting to the master on Monday morning any misconduct they had observed during the service. A Sunday absence was noted as seriously as any other.⁵¹ The philosophy of this institution was to enforce a religious sense, however ecumenical, that would bring order and respectability to the lives of working families.

Context and Constituency

Despite a mandate that contained elements of social regulation, the British and Canadian School appears to have had an appeal for families from the popular classes which went beyond the mere clutching at educational straws. By the end of the first year nearly 500 students had been admitted to the school. Not all of these attended at the same time, of course; many stayed for only a few weeks. According to the governors, “a number of boys have...been obliged to accompany their parents into the country to take land,” while some of the girls were asked to leave for disobeying the rules, some “have been put out to service,” and some, especially the “Scotch and Irish Settlers, who have made this but a resting place, have left the City.”⁵² At the beginning of the school’s second year, 160 boys and 86 girls were in attendance, and a year later these figures had risen to 196 and 121, by which time the total number of students accepted so far was 891. The discrepancy between numbers admitted and numbers in attendance points to a relatively high student turnover. Even so, the large number in attendance at any one time suggests a clear desire on the part of

families to have their children exposed to the British and Canadian School however briefly. Indeed, the high turnover rate is arguably itself an indication of the concern for gaining an education; parents were not discouraged from sending their children to the British and Canadian School because they knew it would not be for long. Even short exposure to reading, arithmetic and domestic skills would prove beneficial to the running of a household or even a small business. Moreover, the pupils themselves seemed to “manifest a great desire to learn”—allowing for a degree of enthusiasm on the teacher’s part—even after a long severe winter, Mr. Hutchins reported in April 1823.⁵³

The ratio of boys to girls (roughly twice as many boys most years) did not change throughout the school’s history, but this should not be read as evidence that parents valued their daughters’ education less than their sons’. Although more families may have opted to send their sons to the British and Canadian School, those that did send their daughters seem to have made more of an effort to keep them there. Over the course of the 1820s the school governors noted an overall decline in enrolment from the original levels, but found that the girls’ school had “suffered little diminution”, which implies that attendance for girls actually remained relatively stable despite the lower enrolment figures.⁵⁴ Thus, the turnover rate for girls was significantly lower than it was for boys. This tendency is consistent with studies of girls’ school attendance in other societies.⁵⁵

Families were prepared to pay school fees. The practice, borrowed from the parent society in England, of charging each student an additional user fee seems to contradict the society’s charitable mandate. Fees, though not very large (between two and three shillings per student per year), would nevertheless have been a burden to most working families, a further indication of the sacrifices many were prepared to make to secure an education for their children.⁵⁶ Unlike the fees charged by later school commissions which were collected by the teacher for day-to-day expenses, these amounts went directly to the British and Canadian School Society as part of its annual income. They were at best a supplemental cushion, as fees were not a great source of revenue.⁵⁷ Given that attendance rates remained fairly consistent but income from fees declined, clearly not all students were paying fees. The governors likely excused large numbers of families of having to pay, knowing how onerous the burden was. Perhaps the real reason that fees were charged at all was to make the school appear less like a workhouse and more like a part of a universal school system envisaged by the reformers.⁵⁸

The governors were more concerned about the declining rate of enrolment, even as attendance remained fairly consistent. They attributed this “want of increase of scholars” to insufficient space, and advocated the construction of a new schoolhouse.⁵⁹ In the governors’ minds, a larger student population would not involve additional costs, apart from the initial sums required for building, given the principle of the monitorial system.⁶⁰ In fact, although space in the Bonaventure Street building may well have been crowded, the real cause for the school’s stagnant numbers was lack of consistent funding. One thousand students might be taught as easily as one hundred, but certainly not as cheaply, given the need for supplies. The principle that a £1

subscription paid for one child's schooling meant that the society needed a steady supply of subscriptions to maintain the school's population. This form of revenue was diminishing even by the school's third year of operation, and although a number of individuals, including Dalhousie, made generous periodic donations, these would hardly have been conducive to long-term budgeting.

Like most educational organizations in the nineteenth century, the British and Canadian School would come to rely on the government for the bulk of its operating funds. Having raised £117 through special subscriptions, the society received a £200 grant from the House of Assembly, the speaker of which was, of course, the society's vice-president. After purchasing a lot of ground north of the old city walls, the society received an additional £400 from the assembly to begin building a new school, followed by yet another £300.⁶¹ This grant is a clear indication that the state was prepared to invest substantially in public education, or at any rate the closest thing to it in 1826. Three years later the assembly began systematically funding public education in Lower Canada by issuing grants to hundreds of locally-appointed trustees and to a handful of charitable institutions, including Montreal's British and Canadian School Society. The school received a grant of £300 in 1829 and in subsequent years was allotted £200 per year up to 1836 when the figure rose to £400.⁶²

It was not just government grants that made the building of the new schoolhouse possible; the governors also put their social connections and business experience to good use. James O'Donnell, the architect of the new Notre Dame church, was on good terms socially with Horatio Gates and came well-recommended by François-Antoine Larocque, who was chief warden of Notre Dame and secretary of the church building committee.⁶³ As a result, O'Donnell drew up plans for a new school in the summer of 1826 at no charge to the society. The governors were delighted with these plans, noting that the building would be large enough to accommodate 414 boys and 232 girls (how they arrived at these precise figures is unclear) plus an apartment for the teacher.⁶⁴ To build the school, the governors chose John Redpath, a master mason who had recently done work on Notre Dame Church and repairs to the National School.⁶⁵ Redpath's tender of £920 and the overall projected cost of £1,510 did not worry the governors unduly; they had confidence in "an enlightened legislature and a liberal public, alike capable of appreciating, and willing to aid every laudable undertaking."⁶⁶ The cornerstone was laid October 17, 1826, and the new school was completed by the following September.

The governors had chosen a strategic location, at the corner of Lagauchetière and Coté Streets in the *faubourg* St-Laurent, an area known as Près-de-Ville. As its name indicates, the area was very handy to commercial and residential parts of town, and would soon attract institutions such as a market in 1829, the Erskine Presbyterian Church in 1833, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in 1838, the Christian Brothers' school in 1839, and the Free (Presbyterian) Church in 1844. Along with this bustle came the houses of an expanding population, chiefly artisanal and to a lesser extent professional in nature, a segment of urban society for whom the British and Canadian School may have served—or at any rate to whom it must have appeared—as a neighbourhood school. Over the following decades, as Montreal

expanded and networks of public schools emerged, the British and Canadian School occupied a central position, accessible from most parts of town, particularly with the advent of the street railway. The school also retained its non-denominational approach to education, although perhaps inevitably this brought it into close association with the city's Protestant school system, which continued the society's emphasis on a practical curriculum, as opposed to the Catholic system which was perceived to be a proponent of separate tradition and religious cohesion.⁶⁷

These networks of schools with their differing philosophies were slow to emerge, however. During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, which were educationally lean years at least as far as Montreal was concerned, the British and Canadian School proved a survivor, perhaps because it had relatively little competition. The 1836 dispute between the assembly and the executive, which led to rebellion and martial law, brought regular public funding of education to a halt. This turmoil also brought an end to whatever enthusiasm francophone reformers such as Papineau would have retained for the British and Canadian School Society. Furthermore, the 1838 Durham Commission's inquiry into the causes of the rebellion brought to the surface what had always been implicit in the society's agenda: that the much-touted "British" system" of education (always a codeword for the non-denominational and monitorial approach, as opposed to Anglicanism of the "National" schools) was effectively a tool of assimilation. So long as it stood in opposition to high Anglicanism (ally of the colonial government) and conservative Catholicism, liberal *patriotes* had few qualms about collaborating with the society and supporting its (liberal) British agenda. By the late 1830s this was no longer possible.

The society's Anglo-Protestant rump was nevertheless optimistic that regular public funding for education was imminent: "The Governor General has with him the most intelligent and active individual of Lord Durham's Commission on Education," a Montreal correspondent informed the British and Foreign School Society in 1840.⁶⁸ The individual was Arthur Buller, author of *The State of Education in Lower Canada* and principal architect of the public school system that would emerge under the 1841 Education Act.⁶⁹ Buller's schemes called for a publicly-funded, non-denominational school system, the society's own agenda in a nutshell. The Act complicated Buller's vision by placing control over school inspection in local hands rather than in a professional inspectorate (which would have eliminated the threat of religious interference) and by introducing the so-called dissentient clause which allowed religious minorities to establish separate schools where numbers warranted. Even so, the Act remained a recipe for establishing non-denominational schools across Lower Canada. It made no real provisions for how public schooling should be administered in Montreal, however. In the absence of a central directive, forces hostile to the idea of non-denominational education showed no interest in collaborating in the establishment of a universal school system for the city's popular classes. The British and Canadian School remained an independent, charitable institution.

The situation was not clarified when further legislation in 1846 effectively created two confessional school boards for the city of Montreal; at long last, government money would be systematically expended on schooling for the rank and file of urban

society, but it would be directed through either a Catholic or a Protestant agency. How did that leave the non-denominational British and Canadian School? For many Catholics, non-denominationalism was already identified with Protestantism, and in practice there was little to distinguish the society's outlook from that of the Protestant board, especially since by this time most Protestant denominations (Anglicans were the major exception) had recognized the need for compromise when it came to moral and religious education.⁷⁰ The city's Protestant school board always included three clergymen, but chief among the lay members was William Lunn, longtime secretary of the British and Canadian School Society, who as secretary of the board became its driving force. To Lunn, the goals of board and society were virtually indistinguishable. Indeed, for some years the Protestant school board was unable to do more than distribute its modest revenue to various independent schools around the city. Although they are not mentioned by name, it is safe to assume that the British and Canadian School was one of them.⁷¹ By the 1860s the Protestant board had opened two schools in the eastern and western ends of the city, and the commissioners were visiting the British and Canadian School as part of their regular administrative responsibilities.⁷² Lunn eventually convinced the society's governors to amend their charter in order to allow the commissioners to take over the school's administration, a transfer that took place in October 1866.⁷³

Despite its longstanding connection with the Protestant community, the school retained its original name, partly because "Canadian" had come to refer to something much broader than it had in 1822, but also because its mandate was still to educate children regardless of religious affiliation. In practice, the school's francophone population had been minimal since the time of the rebellions. "Since the troubles commenced," Baptist minister Newton Bosworth remarked in 1839, "several of the Canadian children have not continued to attend." He also reported that the level of individual subscription had decreased considerably, an inevitable consequence of a difficult political and economic environment; as a result, "large numbers of children... are suffered to grow up without availing themselves of its [the school's] benefits." This situation, the minister added with customary Protestant myopia, was especially bad for Catholic children, whose parents did not seem to value schooling the way those of British origin did.⁷⁴ Bosworth's lukewarm appraisal of the school was not shared by those who provided information to the British and Foreign School Society only a few months later; one correspondent reported that the Montreal school was "much better attended than for some years past" and that discipline was good.⁷⁵ Registration in September 1840 was at 281 (161 boys, 120 girls) with an average attendance of 135–140 for boys, 80–90 for girls; "about one-half" were Catholics and about 45 students were Canadians. With the rise of Montreal's Catholic school board in the 1840s, francophone families would have even less reason to send their children to the British and Canadian School, unless they were deliberately seeking a liberal, non-denominational form of education.

The 1840 statistics suggest that about one hundred English-speaking Catholic students attended the British and Canadian School, a high number considering the existence of the school connected with the Recollet church, the city's centre of Irish

worship. Again, the British and Canadian School must have appealed to the more liberal element within the community. This number would diminish considerably over the course of the following two decades thanks to efforts by the Catholic school board to accommodate anglophone Catholics.⁷⁶ The Christian Brothers' school, which lay, not coincidentally, just across the street from the British and Canadian school, also made concerted efforts to attract Irish boys during this period, apparently with considerable success.⁷⁷ Even so, the significant numbers of Catholics, even French-speaking Catholics, attending the school in the 1870s suggests that the legacy of non-confessional education still held an appeal, although there may have been other factors at work here such as the desire of Francophones to have their children learn English.

The British and Canadian School was also convenient for another demographic group: Montreal's Jews. The older Spanish and Portuguese (Sheareth Israel) congregation was centred on the Chenneville Street synagogue, which stood only a few steps from the school; the newer German and Polish (Shaar Hashamoyim) synagogue lay only a few streets further east. Although both congregations operated day schools during the second half of the century, by at least 1870 a number of Jewish students were attending the British and Canadian School. Obligated by law to pay school taxes to one of the two confessional boards, Jewish property owners typically opted for the Protestant system which they perceived to be more liberal, practical, and above all English-speaking; these taxes went towards hiring Protestant teachers to cover the "general elementary subjects" in the day schools as well as paying the rabbi to instruct the Jewish children attending the British and Canadian School.⁷⁸ As was the case with Montreal's Catholics, a more liberal outlook on the part of certain Jewish families might explain their decision to send their children to the non-denominational British and Canadian School rather than to the more traditional day schools. Matters were not necessarily so straightforward, however: two of the applicants to the school in 1873 were Aaron and Henry Levi, whose father was the assistant rabbi of the Shaar Hashamoyim synagogue. For a quarter of a century the city's Jewish community had a good working relationship with the British and Canadian School that is not wholly explained by its history of tolerance; location was another key factor, but the school also seems to have acquired a reputation for high academic standards, as the evidence from the *Registry of Admissions* will suggest.⁷⁹

Aside from the British and Canadian School Society's rhetoric about bringing light to the ignorant masses, and allowing for the optimism that is typical of annual reports, the school appears to have been fairly successful in its efforts to educate popular-class children. The 1840 report to the British and Foreign School Society depicts a school population with much variation in levels of skill but equally much evidence of success and dedication: out of 140 boys and 90 girls, it is impressive to find that 84 boys and 25–30 girls could "write on paper" (a step above writing on slates) while 113 boys were "cipherers," 28 were studying "Crossley and Walkingham" (a contemporary primer), 4 were studying "geometry and practical mensuration," and 2 were studying algebra (no figures were given in these cases for girls). Thirty of the boys were in the "Grammar Class," an indication that the school had pretensions of

rivaling the Royal Grammar School; a few years later these students may have even been considered for the fledgling High School of Montreal, the secondary school for the city's Protestant elite. There is also reference to the "8th Class," which contained seventy-one boys and eighteen girls; assuming these were older students who had attended school for more than seven years, this class most probably consisted of monitors, or even prospective teachers. Indeed, given this encouraging information, it was the hope of the British and Foreign School Society that the school would soon become "a model, or Normal School" and formally train teachers for Lower Canada's public school system.⁸⁰

The next glimpse into the daily life of the British and Canadian School is afforded by a set of school regulations published in 1860. By this time the system of subscriptions and their resulting privileges had disappeared; application for admission to the school was handled directly by the teacher, who would enter the applicant's name and address in a book, as well as the class the student would enter according to his or her abilities. There seems to have been a waiting list, given that the regulations make it clear that, in the event of a vacancy, the teacher should turn to the next name in the book. Vacancies were declared if a seat were "left unoccupied for a week, and unpaid for, and the teacher is not notified of the reason." The student turnover rate appears to have been as high as it had been in the 1820s. The general impression is of a tightly-run ship: matters of student comportment and discipline dominate the regulations, with much emphasis on obeying instructions and having work correctly done. Although scriptural study would have formed part of the curriculum, there was no mention of the need to attend church regularly or the in-class consequences of poor behaviour during a church service. The monitorial system had long since been discontinued; now "monitors" were elected by fellow students to make sure each desk had ink and that caps and coats were properly hung up, as well as to collect homework, report absences, and keep lists of "credits" and "discredit" marks which the teacher awarded for work well or poorly done. There appears to have been no special advantage to being a monitor other than the thrill of responsibility; monitors had "no authority over pupils other than through reporting to the teacher"—a privilege which, if abused through "mere tale-telling," would be revoked along with the status of monitor.⁸¹

The need to cultivate a supply of teachers through the monitorial system had been obviated by the creation of Normal schools in 1857. McGill University, which administered the Protestant Normal school, began graduating certified teachers a few years later. The British and Canadian School now boasted an array of teachers with various levels of expertise. The headmaster during the 1860s and much of the 1870s was Mr. Arnold, a teacher who received much praise from school inspectors and commissioners alike, and who was paid the impressive annual salary of £1,000.⁸² Under Mr. Arnold was a second teacher (paid £500 a year), head teachers for the intermediary and infants divisions (£300 each), three assistants (£240 each) and a French master (paid only £100 for his services, perhaps an indication of how little the "Canadian" half of the school's supposed clientele now counted). At this time, the other schools under the jurisdiction of the Protestant school board had at best

three teachers on staff, with no specific mention of a French master. The degree of specialization enjoyed by the British and Canadian School, and Mr. Arnold's reputation, go a long way towards understanding its popularity even within the public school network.

The school itself was also modernized and enlarged as a result of high demand and the expectation of continuing success. In 1868 it was supplied with gas, and in the following year the old apartment for the teacher was refitted as a class for infants, a sure sign that the school was thriving, to say nothing of the additional service to the community by taking in younger children.⁸³ The next step was to improve the playground behind the school; girls and boys now had separate spaces.⁸⁴ In early 1873 the commissioners decided on a complete overhaul of the school: the building was extended by four feet to the east, allowing for a new entrance and staircase. The roof was raised and an entire third storey added with a complete set of windows.⁸⁵ See figure 1. By the autumn of that year, the school had become the showpiece of the Protestant board's elementary school network: its oldest and highest-reputed institution now enlarged and modernized for a new generation of urban children.



Figure 1

Choosing the British and Canadian School

The McKiernan family's desire to send twelve-year-old Charles to the British and Canadian School in 1877 may have been the result of a sudden feeling that a champion of the working man ought not to be sending his children to boarding school; more likely it was due to a decline in the family economy, possibly a consequence of the 1870s economic depression. Even so, the school's registry at this time suggests

that students came from a wide variety of social backgrounds—not to mention a variety of religious backgrounds—from labourers in trades undergoing rapid transformation to skilled workers who were less affected by the industrial revolution, but all with ambitions for their children. Moreover, despite being administered by the city's Protestant public school board which was attempting to provide schools in all urban neighbourhoods, the British and Canadian School still required parents to apply for admission. This policy was in keeping with its original mandate to target the children of labourers, but if students were being accepted from all across the city (to say nothing of Stanstead or even further away) and not specifically working-class areas one could conclude that the British and Canadian School offered something that was unavailable in local schools. One could also conclude that parents desired this feature and went to some trouble to gain access to it for their children. At this time, the industrial economy, and especially the economic depression of the early 1870s, made it very difficult for many working-class families to spare their children during school hours when their waged labour or assistance at home was vital to the household economy. Given this situation, it is remarkable that so many of them applied to the British and Canadian School, and suggests considerable determination on their parts to acquire a sound education.

Between September 1873 and April 1874, school authorities received 502 applications from parents and guardians requesting admission of their children to the British and Canadian School. There is no evidence that the school rejected any of the applications. Of the total number of applicants, 10 percent did not attend even though a place became available. Some of these children could not be found, presumably having moved away. Others turned down the offer of admission, having already begun to attend another school. Twelve-year-old Walter Macdonald, for example, had already started attending classes at the Panet Street School when school authorities at the British and Canadian School offered him a place. Of the three applicants from the Arnold family, only ten-year-old William Henry went; by the time the school had decided to admit all three children, their parents apparently had a change of heart and decided not to send William's twin brother Percy or his older sister Emma to the school. What input the children had in their parents' decision to deny them an education at the British and Canadian School is impossible to determine.

The timing of the applications made during the year followed a natural and logical course. Half of the requests for placement were made in September, thus allowing the children to begin classes as early as possible. Figure 2 reveals that the number of applicants steadily declined over the course of the autumn, reaching its lowest level in December, but in January it rose four-fold. Whatever prompted parents to seek to remove their children from other schools during the course of the year it made sense not to do so in December with end of term and holidays looming but to wait for the new year when children were less likely to feel the impact of the transfer. Parents likely decided at the last minute, as was customary in the fragile family economies of many working-class households across the city, to apply for admission just as the new school term was about to begin. Decisions about who could continue at school rather than be sent to work depended upon a number of factors and included the need of

the household for multiple wage earners, seasonal underemployment as well as diminution of salaries, and the availability of work. It also suggests that parents wanted their children to start at a new school under the best circumstances possible.

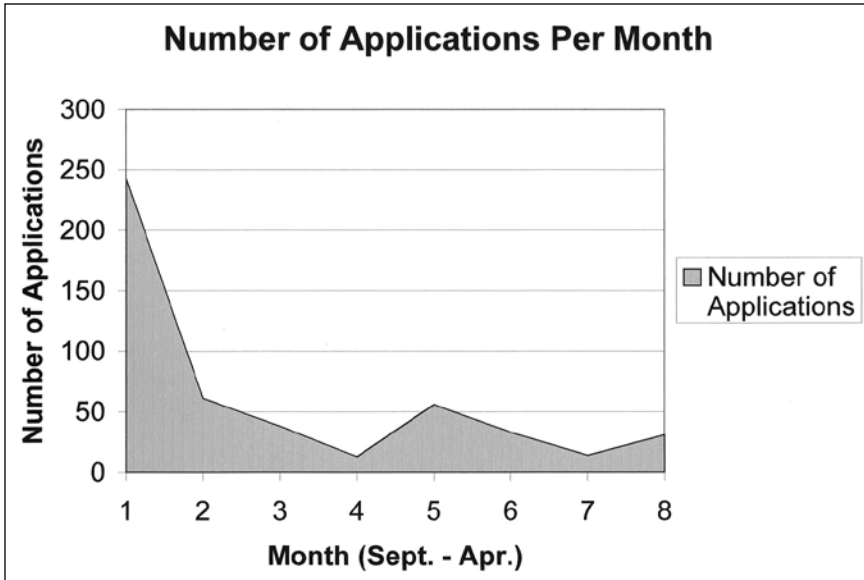


Figure 2

An analysis of the information recorded by school authorities in the *Registry of Admissions* for the 1873–74 academic year provided clues as to the demographic characteristics of the applicants. Using *GIS (Geographic Information Systems)* we created maps showing the location of households based on addresses given in the registry. Where people lived is generally a good indication of social class, with some exceptions. On the first map (see figure 3) the applicants' places of residence appear as small triangles, and the backdrop indicates the social and economic level of each neighbourhood; the shading represents different median rents. Clearly the majority of families lived in the central part of town, in either moderately low- or medium-rent housing, in areas indicated on the map by medium shading. A smaller number came from low-rent areas (indicated by light shading) southwest of the centre, to the east, and north. Very few came from the high-rent areas (indicated by darker shading) northwest of the centre on the flank of Mount Royal, the "Golden Square Mile," home to some of Canada's richest families. The children who attended the British and Canadian School from this area were most likely the sons and daughters of artisans and household staff who provided an array of services to the inhabitants of the mansions which dotted the landscape. Take for example J.J. Coleman, who lived on McTavish Street between the Allan and Lyman mansions in 1873; Lovell's Directory for that year lists him as a "guardian," which in all likelihood means he was the caretaker of one of these estates. Coleman enrolled his three children, Eliza, Mary, and

Alfred, in the British and Canadian School. Tracing this family in the 1881 census and city directory reveals that Alfred had taken over his father's responsibilities on the estate. By contrast, George Tarrante, living at 43 Mansfield Street, was the son of a hairdresser who most likely catered to the neighbourhood's well-heeled clientele and could afford the area's expensive real estate.

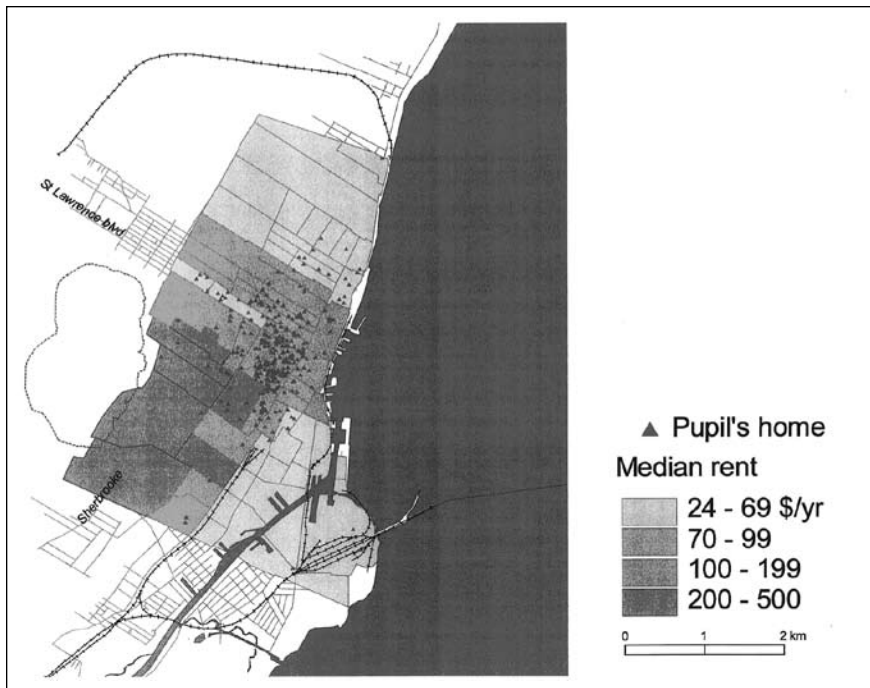


Figure 3

The vast majority of children in this cohort came from the artisanal class, most of them living within walking distance of the school. The second map (see figure 4) shows that 56 percent dwelt within a half-kilometer of the school. A large number lived just outside this half-kilometer circle. A significant proportion came from the neighbourhood north of the school, on or near St-Laurent Street, an area that would soon become home to an immigrant, largely Jewish working class; others came from the eastern and western ends of town. For these students, getting to school would have posed a problem, given the formidable cost of public transportation. William and John Cross lived in Pointe-St-Charles on Forfar Street, although at different addresses, over three kilometers away from the British and Canadian School. On foot, this journey would have taken them across several railway tracks and the canal, and would have been distinctly unpleasant in winter. Like other children who walked to the British and Canadian School, William and John would have passed other schools on the way, notably the Royal Arthur School built in 1870 in the faubourg St-Joseph on the corner of Delisle and Fulford streets to accommodate Protestant students from

the southwestern part of town. Despite the distance, however, William and John were sent to the British and Canadian School, another kilometer further. They may have taken the horse-drawn tram if their parents could afford it (William's father was a brass finisher and John's father an engineer); a later generation of children no doubt hitched a ride on the back fender of electric trams, but the horse-drawn wagons of the 1870s would not have lent themselves so well to this practice. Children who lived very far away may even have boarded with friends or relations who were closer to the British and Canadian School.

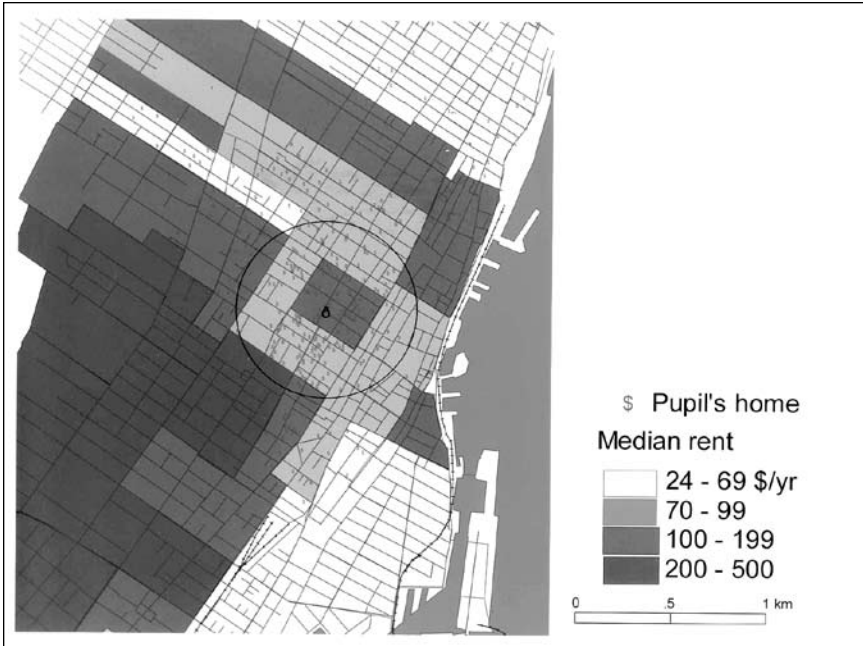


Figure 4

The majority of the applications (61 percent) were made for boys, which is remarkable given that boys were more likely to enter waged labour before their sisters. This tendency reinforces the argument that a significant proportion of these children came from families with stable and high enough incomes to meet basic household needs without having to send their children to work. That was clearly the case for John and Robert Sleeth who would become a lumber merchant and bookkeeper respectively in the family business. Keeping sons in school as long as possible may also have been a strategy implemented by households to bolster their long-term prospects as future breadwinners: James Ferguson, for example, was the son of a labourer but by 1881 had become a machinist, a trade that required a literate workforce. At the same time, more than a third of the applicants (39 percent) were girls. Some of these girls may well have aspired to be teachers; an education at the British and Canadian School offered an opportunity to seek employment in rural schools or a prerequisite level of

instruction for admission to the McGill Normal School.

Where religious denominations were recorded, 80 percent of the children were identified as Protestant, 13 percent as Catholics, and 6 percent as Jewish, although it is possible that some of the children who were listed as Protestant or whose religious designation was not recorded, were actually Jewish. Non-Protestants within the Protestant school system were normally required to pay an additional fee, but there is no suggestion from the Registry that Catholic and Jewish applicants were considered any differently from others, although the nuances of the selection process are of course not evident.

The ages of applicants range from four to seventeen, most being between six and thirteen. The distribution according to age is particularly interesting given one of the household strategies that popular-class families implemented to meet their basic needs, namely to put children to work if necessary. Without mandatory education in Quebec until 1943 (Ontario passed this legislation in 1871) parents were not obliged to send their children to school. Similarly, with no legal work age until the 1885 Factory Act, which legislated a minimum age of twelve for boys and fourteen for girls and earlier with parental consent, parents could send their children to labour in factories at any age. Yet, as figure 5 shows, 86 percent of the children (410) whose parents sought to enrol their offspring in the British and Canadian School were between the ages of six and thirteen. If we consider the age group from twelve to seventeen—twelve being the age when children were most likely to leave school to enter the work force or to help out at home—nearly a quarter (116 or 24 percent) of the applicants belonged to this cohort (twelve to seventeen) and boys made up nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of this number. This finding suggests that for those children, boys in particular, who came from households which did not require their waged labour in order to subsist, school attendance was possible, even expected. That Donald, Archie, and Louisa McNaughton's father was a merchant who paid \$240 annual rent for their dwelling indicates that they could stay in school learning all the skills needed for their future occupation as store clerks, presumably in their father's establishment. Similarly, Rachel Rubenstein lived in a home that cost her gentleman father \$200 rent per annum. All of her six brothers worked as silver platers in the family business.

For others, the British and Canadian School provided an opportunity to learn English, an asset in any future work environment where it was the *lingua franca* of business in Montreal. This may have been on the mind of Antoine Baré's father when he sought enrolment for his son in the British and Canadian School. On the register under competency is written, "wants to learn English, knows division." Similarly, Aimé, André, and Victor Provençal transferred from the Jacques Cartier Normal School to the British and Canadian School even though none of them spoke English. Their father, Demase Provençal, was a successful butcher who not only had a stall at the Bonsecour Market but paid \$180 annual rent for a house on St-Denis Street. As a small but successful businessman, Demase likely understood that English was an asset for francophone men with similar aspirations. By 1880, Aimé had become a barber and Victor a clerk. Perhaps these families chose this school over others because of its history of non-denominationalism. Equally, Hattie Lessar, Jewish and probably a recent immigrant, "knew nothing of English" when she enrolled at the school. Rather

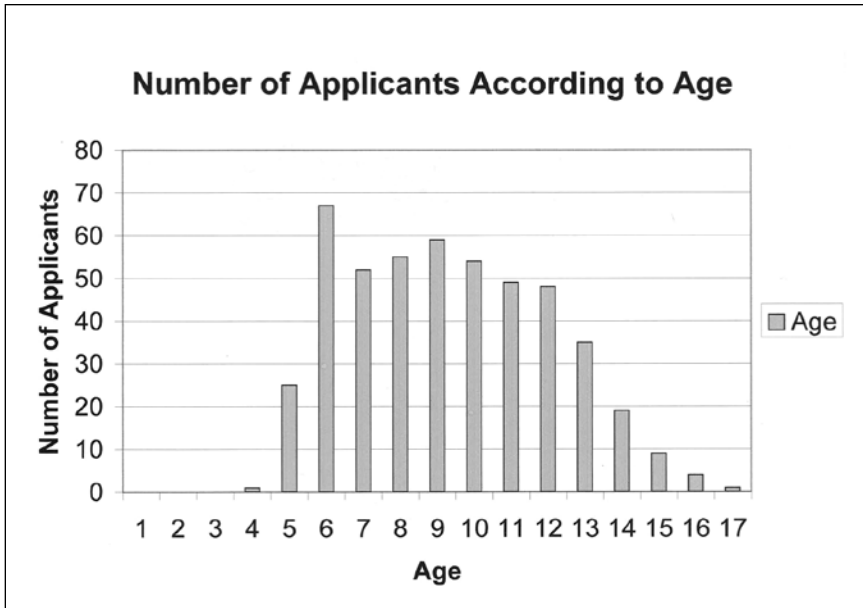


Figure 5

than attend one of the two synagogue schools, Hattie and many of her co-religionists opted for the British and Canadian School where she could obtain a more liberal education at the same time learn English. By contrast, those households which had become increasingly dependent upon the waged labour of children could only furnish them with a few years of schooling. Bettina Bradbury's authoritative study shows that households where the major breadwinner worked in trades undergoing rapid transformation were increasingly dependent upon children's waged labour to complement his inadequate and irregular income. Bradbury points out that as women's non-wage strategies were restricted by municipal by-laws, households became more dependent on children's work to pay for basic needs; "children could and did pay the rent."⁸⁶ Sending children to school involved a considerable expense for these households whose budgets were already stretched to the breaking point. The cost of schooling in real terms included both the school fees and the loss of children's wages.⁸⁷ School fees represented a huge cost for households where twenty-five cents made a significant difference in the budget.⁸⁸ Even so, some of the children who had left the British and Canadian School applied for re-admission months and even years later. If children's school attendance was constrained by absences to attend to household chores, to mind siblings, to care for sick and elderly family members, or by leaving school at age twelve to begin work in the factory or at home, parents understood that a few years of education provided their offspring with useful skills.

The British and Canadian School also catered to families whose fortunes had turned and could not afford what their social background might ordinarily lead them to expect. The most vulnerable households were those headed by widows who were

left without a male wage earner. Widow Eberwin, who shared her accommodation at 154 German Street with six others, three of whom were widows, requested that five-year-old Louisa and eight-year-old Louis be enrolled in the school. The loss of a major bread winner notwithstanding, the economic depression in the early 1870s produced turmoil in a wide variety of households including those normally with stable and adequate incomes. This may well have been the case for the McKiernan family. So too, for the two Eneas sons who had been attending the prestigious Preparatory High School before switching to the British and Canadian School. The Reverend Thomas Gale, a Baptist minister, secretary of the Quebec Temperance and Prohibitory League, and father of five, took his daughter Anna out of private school to enrol her in the British and Canadian School.

Only a minority of children from the 1873–74 Registry can be found listed in the 1881 census or the directory for that year, so it is difficult to obtain a thorough analysis of this cohort with an eye to determining whether study at the British and Canadian School led to improved social status. Nevertheless, many of those children we were able to trace to 1881 seem to have been employed in occupations that required a degree of education. Robert and Charles DeWitt, for example, who attended the school in 1873–74, reported to the 1881 census taker that they and two other siblings were working as clerks; the two youngest children in the family were currently attending school, suggesting that the DeWitts had become prosperous enough for schooling to be considered *de rigueur*. The same was true for the Thorn family, whose children Mary Anne, Annie, and Samuel had attended the British and Canadian School: their youngest sibling was attending school in 1881. Samuel Thorn and another brother were both telegraph clerks, like their father before them. Mary Anne and Annie Thorn and their two older sisters did not report an occupation; all seven Thorn siblings were living with their eighty-four-year-old grandmother, the parents presumably having died. In 1881 Donald and Archie McNaughton were employed as store clerks, likely in their father's business; he was a merchant and the family inhabited a house for which they paid a considerable \$240 annual rent. Louisa McNaughton, who also attended the British and Canadian School, was not listed as having an occupation in 1881. The experience of female students subsequent to attending school is obviously particularly difficult to ascertain; absence of a listed occupation is no necessary indication of social status however. Emma and Mary Anne Grimsdale had become servants by 1881, Mary Anne employed in the house of a bank manager; although hardly a coveted occupation, domestic service was at least in keeping with the original objectives of the British and Canadian School Society. Female students who married or went into teaching—a profession that could easily have taken them outside the city—are nearly impossible to trace in the census.

Almost all of the children applying to the British and Canadian School in 1873–74 had attended educational institutions elsewhere; only five of the applicants had not received any schooling and one had been “schooled at home.” Table 1 shows that nearly three-quarters of the youngsters (74 percent) had been enrolled in Montreal schools before making an application to the British and Canadian School. Thirteen percent had already studied at the school but had left presumably to attend school

elsewhere, to work or help out at home, or because of illness. Take the example of Thomas Nolan who reapplied for admission after an eighteen month hiatus. Others left the British and Canadian School to enrol in private schools before their parents made new applications for re-admission. Edmund Bury, for instance, attended Miss Wilson's School; his brother Albert frequented Miss Taylor's School.

Table 1
Last School Attended: Within Montreal

| School | Denomination | No. of Children |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Ann Street School | Protestant | 8 |
| German School | Jewish | 6 |
| British & Canadian School | Protestant | 28 |
| Bishop's School | Catholic | 1 |
| Bonne Mission | Catholic | 1 |
| Christian Brothers schools | Catholic | 12 |
| College | Catholic | 1 |
| Côte St-Laurent | ? | 1 |
| French School | Catholic | 2 |
| Griffintown | | 1 |
| Jacques Cartier Normal School | Catholic | 3 |
| Ladies' Benevolent School | Protestant | 2 |
| McGill Model School | Protestant | 3 |
| Model School of the Colonial | | |
| Church & School Society | Protestant | 1 |
| Mile End School | ? | 1 |
| private schools | ? | 94 |
| nuns schools | Catholic | 5 |
| McGill Normal School | Protestant | 1 |
| Panet Street School | Protestant | 27 |
| Preparatory High School | Protestant | 3 |
| Royal Arthur School | Protestant | 3 |
| School of Industry | ? | 1 |
| YMCA School | Protestant | 1 |
| St. George's School | Protestant | 10 |
| St. James' School | Protestant | 1 |
| St. John's School | Protestant | 1 |
| St. Lawrence School | Protestant | 1 |
| St. Mary's College | Catholic | 2 |

(Data taken for the school year, September 1873 to April 1874 from the *Registry of Admissions, 1873-77*)

A significant proportion of the applicants came from Protestant schools (41 percent) or from private schools (43 percent). These private schools were probably informal, local places of learning situated in the teacher's house and subject to the needs of the teacher rather than the pupils. Table 2 shows the number of children who had been

schooled elsewhere: on the island of Montreal, in towns and cities in Quebec, and in the countryside. Applications included children who had attended school in other provinces of Canada, mostly in Ontario, and in other countries such as England, Germany, and the United States. Children came from as far away as Minnesota, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York, and as close as St. Albans, Vermont. These school transfers suggest a population on the move, even as they underscore the importance that parents placed on the formal education of their children.

Table 2
Last School Attended: Outside Montreal

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----|-----------|
| Montreal Island | | | 12 |
| | Chateauguay | 1 | |
| | Côte des Neiges | 1 | |
| | Lachine | 6 | |
| | Longue-Pointe | 2 | |
| | Tanneries | 2 | |
| Province of Quebec | | | 26 |
| | Beaudette | 1 | |
| | Charleston | 2 | |
| | Dunegan | 1 | |
| | Frelighsburg | 1 | |
| | Lachute | 3 | |
| | Métis | 5 | |
| | Phillipsburg | 1 | |
| | Pointe-Lévis | 1 | |
| | Quebec City | 5 | |
| | Rawdon | 1 | |
| | Sherbrooke | 1 | |
| | Sorel | 2 | |
| | Trois-Rivières | 1 | |
| | Wickham | 1 | |
| Rural Quebec | | | 5 |
| Other Provinces | | | 15 |
| | New Brunswick | 1 | |
| | Nova Scotia | 2 | |
| | Ontario | 12 | |
| Other Countries | | | 22 |
| | England | 6 | |
| | Germany | 1 | |
| | Scotland | 2 | |
| | United States | 13 | |
| Total | | | 68 |

(Data taken for the school year, September 1873 to April 1874 from the *Registry of Admissions, 1873–77*)

To determine which classroom to place a child—perhaps the reason for having parents or guardians make applications in the first place—school authorities assessed each applicant's level of literacy and proficiency in arithmetic. Given that children's school experiences varied dramatically even within the same age cohort, it is not surprising that applicants' overall knowledge ranged from "knows nothing" to "can do fractions." Scholars of literacy have moved away from seeing literacy and illiteracy as a simple dichotomy, and now think in terms of gradations of literacy or a continuum of capabilities, which usually began with learning to read before learning to write.⁸⁹ At the British and Canadian School, the teachers (we assume) assessed levels of literacy by testing each child's knowledge of the alphabet, grammar and composition, and reading ability (using a series of readers). They also determined a child's comprehension of arithmetic by testing his or her facility at identifying numbers, counting, adding, subtracting, dividing (simple or long division, as in the example of ten-year-old Mary Jane Anderson who was competent at long divisions) and doing fractions (the highest achievement and rare amongst the applicants). There was also some formal separation of students by "grades:" a pupil began with 1st and 2nd Primary (ten-year-old Frank Morrow was, according to the assessment of his competency, "about ready for 2nd Primary"), moved to 1st and 2nd Intermediate, and ended with 1st Senior. Donald McNaughton's ability to do fractions earned this fourteen-year-old a spot in Mr. Swallow's class of 1st Seniors. These formal divisions were nuanced further. While both of the Cameron children were placed in 2nd Primary, the older one entered the "highest class" while the younger brother Lewis was assigned to the "lower class."

Appraisals of competency provide historians with a window onto children's school experiences, specifically variations in applicants' ages and levels of knowledge, school attendance practices, and quality of schooling. Take the following as examples. Despite thirteen-year-old Patrick McLaughlin's history of attending school in New Jersey, and twelve-year-old Louis Ferte's experience at the "Friars" school in Montreal, both of them could not do arithmetic. By contrast, six-year-old Sophie Greenburg had already been to Miss Cameron's School where she learned "to spell some in words of 2 & 3." And ten-year-old Elizabeth Brown, who had also attended Miss Cameron's School in Montreal, could "write, add, subtract, multiply, divide." For some children, entering the British and Canadian School was their first encounter with formal education: ten-year-old Rebecca Blumenthal, for instance, had not attended school before 1873 and "knows nothing." Thus, information recorded in the *Registry of Admissions* gives us a broader and more detailed picture of the various schooling practices initiated by households to allow their children to attend school even for a few years. It may have taken Rebecca Blumenthal ten years to enter a classroom for the first time but her parents eventually found the means to enrol her at the British and Canadian School.

Conclusion

The British and Canadian School provides a rare example of an institution whose history we can trace through a variety of detailed sources for almost a century, from its opening—significantly, two decades before the establishment of a public system of education in Lower Canada in 1841 and the formation of the Montreal school boards in 1846—to its closure in 1894 when the commissioners decided the building no longer met their needs and opted to sell it to commercial interests.⁹⁰ Despite its close relationship with the Protestant Board of School Commissioners as of mid-century and particularly after its takeover by the board in 1866, the school retained a degree of independence. It does not seem to have deviated a great deal from its original mandate to educate the children of the popular classes in a non-denominational setting. Moreover, this mandate appears to have been appreciated by parents, who from a variety of social and religious backgrounds applied to enroll their children in the school even when there were more convenient options.

The early records of the British and Canadian School Society and its parent body show the operation of a charitable organization with a specific agenda; the numbers of students seeking admission and the numbers in attendance suggest that the school filled a need. The *Registry of Admissions* shows that the school continued to meet similar needs within the working-class population of the 1870s. We see how parents timed the applications to suit their families' circumstances, how long children stayed in school, and the reasons parents removed their children before school term ended. In this respect we add a layer to the picture that Bettina Bradbury has created, using census returns, of working families in nineteenth-century Montreal. The *Registry* allows us to consider the experience of going to school from the point of view of the child in the context of family and household strategies. Categories of information (age, address, previous schools attended, and individual competency) show us that children had developed a range of reading, writing, and numeracy skills which varied within age groups. This reflects the ambitions parents had for their children (girls as well as boys), the importance they placed on literacy, and the role of schooling in the family economy. Although we have no way of knowing what input children had in making these decisions, their presence at school and specifically the many cases of academic achievement suggests that at some level the children wanted to be there. Children's agency is not the focus of this paper, but their presence in the sources as individual points to the need for further research to draw out their autonomy.

That these students represented a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds and lived in many different neighbourhoods indicates that the school catered to families with differing expectations of social mobility. It would seem from the evidence of the 1870s that the sons and daughters of skilled tradesmen, of artisans in occupations undergoing rapid transformation in the industrial revolution, and even the owners of small businesses such as Joe Beef, were as well as the children of labourers the proper objects of this institution.

Notes

- 1 We would like to thank the Foundation for the Advancement of Protestant Education in Canada for its funding of the Quebec Protestant Education Research Project. A very special thanks to Sherry Olson of McGill University's Geography Department for guiding us through the databases assembled by the *Montréal: l'avenir du passé* project, and for creating maps from the raw data. We also appreciate the valuable comments made by Brian Young on an earlier version of the paper as well as those by the anonymous readers.
- 2 For more on Joe Beef see Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869–1889," *Labour/Le Travail* 8/9 (1981/82): 9–40.
- 3 Miriam Cloutier of the Mount Royal Cemetery archive provided information about the McKiernan family plot: McKiernan had two sons by his first wife, who had died in 1871 giving birth to a daughter. Their funeral and burial in Montreal's Protestant cemetery involved a somewhat rowdy procession of dockworkers accompanied by a marching band, a clear affront to middle-class mores. See Brian Young, *Respectable Burial: Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 77. By 1877 McKiernan had at least one child by his second wife.
- 4 English Montreal School Board Archives (EMSBA), *Registry of Admissions to the British and Canadian School, 1873–77*.
- 5 See for example, Douglas A. Lawr and Robert Gidney, "Who Ran the Schools? Local influences on Education Policy in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," *Ontario History* 72, no. 3 (June, 1980); Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, "From Voluntarism to State Schooling: The Creation of the Public School System in Ontario," *CHR* 6, no. 4 (December, 1985); Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836–1871* (London, Ontario: Althouse Press, 1988); Susan E. Houston and Alison Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Nadia Fahmy-Eid, Micheline Dumont, *Maitresses de maison, maitresses d'école: femmes, famille et éducation dans l'histoire du Québec* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983) and *Les couventines: l'éducation des filles au Québec dans les congrégations religieuses enseignantes, 1840–1960* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1986).
- 6 Jean-Pierre Charland, *L'entreprise éducative au Québec, 1840–1900* (Ste-Foy, Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000).
- 7 Robert Gagnon, *Histoire de la Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal* (Montréal: Boréal, 1996).
- 8 Andrée Dufour, *Tous à l'école: État, communautés rurales et scolarisation au Québec de 1826 à 1859* (Lasalle, Québec: Éditions Hurtubise HMH, 1996); "Diversité institutionnelle et fréquentation scolaire dans l'île de Montréal en 1825 et en 1835," *RHAF*, 41, no. 4 (printemps 1988): 507–35.
- 9 Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1993), 165.
- 10 Roderick MacLeod and Mary Anne Poutanen, *A Meeting of the People: School Boards and Protestant Communities in Quebec, 1801–1998* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).
- 11 Bradbury, *Working Families*, 123. Allan Greer, "The Pattern of Literacy in Quebec, 1845–1899," *Social History/Histoire Sociale* 11, no. 22 (November 1978): 295–335.
- 12 Bruce Curtis, "Joseph Lancaster in Montreal (bis): Monitorial Schooling and Politics in a Colonial Context," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 17, no. 1 (2005): 4–5.
- 13 W.K. Lowther Clarke, *A History of the S.P.C.K* (London: S.P.C.K., 1959), 52.
- 14 Jacques Viger identified forty-one schools in the city of Montreal in 1825, twelve of which were run by the Catholic church or religious orders (with a combined student population of 1,183), three by educational societies (642 students), one by the Royal

- Institution (48 students), one by a non-Catholic church (70 students), and twenty-four were private (770 students). The “non-Catholic church” school was almost certainly the American Presbyterian Sunday School; that church’s day school did not open until 1830. Viger’s data provide a useful picture of the array of schools in Montreal from 1825 on, but not for the earlier period. Many of these schools that figure in his survey had not yet opened in 1820, including two of the “educational societies” schools (British and Canadian, Montreal Orphan Asylum). The private schools also opened and closed with particular irregularity. See Andrée Dufour, “Diversité institutionnelle et fréquentation scolaire dans l’île de Montréal en 1825 et en 1835,” *RHAF* 41, no. 4 (printemps 1988): 514–517, and “Les premières enseignantes laïques au Québec: Le cas de Montréal, 1825–1835,” *Histoire de l’éducation*, no. 109 (janvier 2006): 3–32, and “Deux recensements manuscrits des écoles de l’île de Montréal en 1825 et en 1835: une contribution de Jacques Viger à l’histoire de l’éducation au Québec,” *Historical studies in Education/Revue d’histoire de l’éducation* 5, no. 3 (octobre 1988): 19–26.
- 15 Réal Boulianne, “The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning: The Correspondence, 1820–1829” (Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, McGill University, 1970), 412.
 - 16 It is not clear whether the Catholic religious orders at this time, such as the *Congrégation Notre-Dame*, took the children of the poor into their schools any more regularly than did the Royal Institution; they certainly did not do so systematically. For the Grey Nuns to teach the orphans and other children abandoned at their door (Dufour, “Diversité institutionnelle,” 518) represented a different sort of charity from that of the British and Canadian School Society.
 17. Boulianne, “The Royal Institution,” 400. Clarke, *A History of the S.P.C.K.*, 156–7. Newton Bosworth, *Hochelaga Depicta, or the Early History of Montreal* (Montreal: William Greig, 1839), 136.
 - 18 Roderick MacLeod, “‘In the Hallowed Name of Religion’: Scots and Public Education in Nineteenth-Century Montreal,” in *A Kingdom of the Mind: The Scots’ Impact on the Development of Canada.*, ed. Peter E. Rider and Heather McNabb (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005).
 - 19 *Report of the British and Foreign School Society, London, 1821*, 11–12.
 - 20 *Report of the British and Foreign School Society, London, 1819*, 69.
 - 21 *The Montreal Herald*, October 5, 1822.
 - 22 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823*, 13.
 - 23 *Ibid.*, 14.
 - 24 *Third Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1825*, 11.
 - 25 Bruce Curtis, “The State of Tutelage in Lower Canada, 1835–1851,” *History of Education Quarterly*, 37, no.1 (Spring 1997): 26.
 - 26 The “foreign” in the original title initially referred to Ireland, where the society appears to have had great success educating Catholics and Protestants alike, “keeping clear of all interference with the particular religious tenets” of the students and their families. By 1823 the society had also opened schools in France, Spain, Italy, Russia, Poland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Mexico, and even India, where “one of the greatest obstacles in the way of moral improvement – the absolute prohibition of female education among the natives is now giving way.” (*First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823*, 18).
 - 27 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823*, 21–22.
 - 28 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823*, 16.
 - 29 George W Spragge, “Joseph Lancaster in Montreal,” *Canadian Historical Review*, XXII (1941, 1): 35. Curtis, “Joseph Lancaster in Montreal (bis)”, 2.
 - 30 *Third Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1825*, 12.
 - 31 *Laws and Regulations of the British and Canadian School Society, September 21, 1822.*

- 32 *Second Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society: Laws and Regulations, Montreal, 1824, 3.*
- 33 *Fourth Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1826, 12.*
- 34 Mary Anne Poutanen, "For the Benefit of the Master: The Montreal Needle Trades during the Transition, 1820–1842" (Unpublished Master of Arts dissertation, McGill University, 1985), 151.
- 35 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 5.*
- 36 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 14.*
- 37 Robert Campbell, *A History of the Scotch Presbyterian Church at St. Gabriel Street, Montreal* (Montreal: W. Drysdale, 1887).
- 38 Berthelet would later become a solid patron of expressly Catholic institutions, although at one time he was a member of the *Institut Canadien*. Léon Pouliot, "Antoine-Olivier Berthelet," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, X.
- 39 *Second Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society: Laws and Regulations, Montreal, 1824, 3–4.*
- 40 Report of the British and Foreign School Society, London, 1822, 35–36. The request had the approval of Governor-General Dalhousie.
- 41 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 14, 28.*
- 42 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 15.*
- 43 *Second Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1824, 11.*
- 44 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 15.*
- 45 Curtis, "Lancaster in Montreal," 3–4.
- 46 *Second Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1824, 10.*
- 47 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 14.*
- 48 *The Montreal Gazette*, December 21, 1822.
- 49 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society: Report of the Ladies' Committee, Montreal, 1823, 20; Second Annual Report, 1824, 15.*
- 50 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 15.*
- 51 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 7.*
- 52 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 15, 20.*
- 53 *Report of the British and Foreign School Society, London, 1824, 136.*
- 54 *Fourth Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1826, 9.*
- 55 See Joel Perlmann, Silvana R. Siddali, and Keith Whitescarver, "Literacy, Schooling, and Teaching among New England Women, 1730–1820," *History of Education Quarterly* 37, no. 2, Special Issue on Education in Early America (Summer 1997): 139. Perlmann et al. observed "longer school attendance for girls in lower schools, evolving teaching roles for women, and increasing literacy as measured by signing ability."
- 56 Bradbury, *Working Families*, 165.
- 57 In the first year of the society's life they generated slightly over £20, only a fraction of its total income of almost £297. The following year the sum had risen to nearly £60 (boys £39.13.7½, girls £19.14.0) out of a total income of nearly £369. The proportions were similar for the society's third year, although by 1826 the fee revenue was down to less than £44 (only £10 of which came from girls).
- 58 *First Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1823, 14, 28.*
- 59 *Fourth Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1826, 9.*
- 60 *Second Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1824, 10.*
- 61 *Fourth Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1826, 10.*
- 62 *9 George IV, cap.46; 2 William IV, cap.30; 4 William IV, cap.23; 6 William IV, cap.30.*
- 63 Franklin Toker, *The Church of Notre Dame in Montreal: An Architectural History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 17, 55.
- 64 *Fourth Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1826, 10.*
- 65 McCord Museum Archives, PO851A, Record Book, July 1, 1826, September 18, 1826.

- 66 *Fourth Annual Report of the British and Canadian School Society, Montreal, 1826*, 11.
- 67 MacLeod and Poutanen, *A Meeting of the People*, 119.
- 68 *British and Foreign School Society, Quarterly Extracts*, September 30, 1840, 6.
- 69 For more on Buller's work see Curtis, "The State of Tutelage in Lower Canada," 30–34.
- 70 Nathan H. Mair, *Protestant Education in Quebec: Notes on the History of Education in the Protestant Public Schools of Quebec* (Quebec: Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Comité protestant, 1981), 19.
- 71 *Report of the Protestant Board of School Commissioners for the City of Montreal, 1847–1871*, 6.
- 72 English Montreal School Board Archives, Minutes of the Protestant Board of School Commissioners for the City of Montreal, March 16, 1865.
- 73 EMSB Archives, Minutes of the PBSC, October 22, 1866, November 27, 1866.
- 74 Bosworth, *Hochelega Depicta*, 149, 205.
- 75 *British and Foreign School Society, Quarterly Extracts*, September 30, 1840, 6.
- 76 Robert Gagnon, *Anglophones at the CECM: A Reflection of the Linguistic Duality of Montreal* (Montreal: Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal, 1996), 16.
- 77 They did so using a method ("*méthode simultanée*") that deliberately set out to counter the "liberal" effects of the Lancastrian system. See Nive Voisine, *Les frères des écoles chrétiennes au Canada, Tome 1: La conquête de l'Amérique, 1837–1880* (Québec: Editions Anne Sigier, 1987), 54–56, 315–16.
- 78 David Rome, *The Drama of Our Early Education*, Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, New Series 44, 1991, 46.
- 79 That is, the community as a whole enjoyed this good working relationship. In 1886 a dispute arose over the replacement of the retiring Hebrew Teacher at the British and Canadian School, leading to the Spanish and Portuguese congregation withdrawing its share of the school taxes. Apart from the ensuing financial difficulties, this development had little impact on the education of most Jewish families. See *Report of the PBSC, 1886*, 6.
- 80 *British and Foreign School Society, Quarterly Extracts*, September 30, 1840, 7. By the 1850s, the school is referred to as a model school in government documents.
- 81 School Regulations adopted by the British and Canadian School Society, July 13, 1860. This document also includes an Act of Incorporation, 22 Victoria, cap.CXXII, May 4, 1859, 1–2, and By-Laws adopted December 8, 1859.
- 82 EMSB Archives, Minutes of the PBSC, March 16, 1865, November 8, 1866, April 15, 1869.
- 83 EMSB Archives, Minutes of the PBSC, March 16, 1865, November 2, 1868, June 18, 1869.
- 84 EMSB Archives, Minutes of the PBSC, April 26, 1873.
- 85 Guy Pinard, *Montréal: son histoire, son architecture* (Montréal: Éditions La Presse, 1986), 52.
- 86 Bettina Bradbury, "Pigs, Cows, and Boarders: Non-Wage Forms of Survival among Montreal Families, 1861–91," *Labour/Le Travail* no.14 (Fall 1984): 45.
- 87 W.B. Stephens, "Literacy in England, Scotland, and Wales, 1500-1900," *History of Education Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (Winter, 1990): 562.
- 88 Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1993), 165.
- 89 Daniel Resnick and James Gilchrist cite the work of Robert F. Arno and Harvey J. Graff (eds.), *National Literacy Campaigns: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Plenum, 1987) in their article "Literacy Development: A Laboratory for Social Science," *History of Education Quarterly* 30, no. 4 Special Issue on the History of Literacy (Winter, 1990): 670. See also, Perlmann, Siddali, and Whitescarver, "Literacy, School, and Teaching"; Bruce Curtis, "Some Recent Work on the History of Literacy in Canada," *History of Education Quarterly* 30, no. 4: 613–24; Stephens, "Literacy in

England, Scotland, and Wales,” and Gloria L. Main, “An Inquiry into When and Why Women Learned to Write in Colonial New England,” *Journal of Social History* 24, no. 3 (Spring 1991): 579–90.

- 90 In November 1892, the commissioners purchased land for a new building that would provide “accommodation more in accordance with modern educational requirements that could be obtained in the British and Canadian School.” Dufferin School was built at a cost of \$54,775 and opened in April 1894. Later that year, the British and Canadian School was sold for \$17,500 and used ever since for commercial purposes. It is currently a noodle factory. Reports of the Protestant Board of School Commissioners for Montreal, 1892–93, 5; 1894–95, 5.