

# Domestic Textile Production in Colonial Quebec, 1608-1840\*

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## Résumé

Au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, les ethnographes et les historiens de l'économie se sont intéressés à une grande variété de thèmes, y compris les rôles sexuels et l'évolution de la production textile au début de la colonie. La plupart des travaux des dernières décennies s'inscrivent dans une démarche ethnographique et muséologique, et reposent sur une documentation d'époque, comme des inventaires de ménages et des contrats de mariage, mais aussi sur des artefacts, une source largement inexploitée par la majorité des historiens. Tandis que les conservateurs de musées et les spécialistes de l'ethnographie québécoise ont mis l'accent sur les vestiges matériels des textiles domestiques et les diverses étapes de leur fabrication, la plupart des historiens de l'économie se sont surtout intéressés à la productivité agricole et industrielle. Les historiens de l'époque coloniale, par exemple, exploitent les données accessibles concernant la laine, le lin et le chanvre dans leurs exposés sur l'autosuffisance des premiers colons et l'agriculture commerciale, mais ils étudient rarement les modes d'organisation familiale qui permettaient aux ménages de subvenir à leurs besoins courants. Le rôle de la main-d'œuvre féminine à la campagne, de même que la participation des femmes à l'économie de marché en milieu rural, sont par conséquent des aspects que ces historiens ont négligés. Même si le travail des femmes et l'habillement ont leur place dans l'histoire sociale, l'absence de sources et le fait que l'on traite ordinairement de ces sujets dans des contextes plus larges ont malheureusement mis en veilleuse l'étude de la production et de l'utilisation des étoffes. Après un survol de l'historiographie consacrée aux textiles de fabrication domestique, l'auteur examine le rôle de la production familiale du tissu au Québec, ainsi que les aspects sexuels de la fabrication d'étoffes pour la famille.

## Abstract

In the early twentieth century, ethnographers and economic historians showed an interest in a variety of themes including gender roles and the early evolution of textile production. Most work since then has been ethnographically and museologically based, drawing on historical sources, such as household inventories and marriage contracts but also on artifacts, a largely unknown phenomenon to most historians. While museum curators and specialists in Quebec ethnography have emphasized the material remains of household cloth and the various steps in its fabrication, most economic historians have been primarily interested in agricultural and industrial productivity. Colonial historians, for example, use information about wool, flax and hemp in their arguments concerning self-sufficiency and commercial agriculture and rarely explore the ways in which households were organized to meet their daily needs. These historians have, therefore, neglected the role of female labour in the countryside, as well as women's participation in the rural marketplace. Although woman's work and clothing are also within the sphere of social history, the lack of sources and the fact that these subjects are usually treated within larger contexts has meant that cloth making and use have yet to receive the attention they deserve. After surveying the historiography related to home-made textiles, the author discusses the role of the domestic production of fabric in Quebec, as well as the subject of gender in the making of household cloth.

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*Tant vaut la femme, tant vaut la ferme.*  
—Quebec adage, circa 1900

Quebec's agriculture is the subject of much historical investigation in Canada, but his-

torians have written little about women's farming efforts. This is particularly true of the non-mechanized production of textiles, an important activity in rural Quebec which existed well into the twentieth century.

Although historians have neglected the role of female labour in the countryside, as well as women's participation in the rural marketplace, ethnographers have examined the fabrication of household textiles by rural women. Whereas ethnographers emphasize traditional domestic activities and neglect periodization, historians tend to disregard the former while using the latter as a starting point for their work. In order to explore the existing literature on this subject and to identify the role of women in the domestic manufacture of fabric, I will review the pertinent historiography, describe the non-mechanized fabrication of cloth in the province, and discuss the importance of gender in the production of homemade textiles.

### Historiography

The evolution of the historiography of Quebec textile production has been dominated by two distinct currents, ethnographic and economic. Only during the last two decades have social historians developed an interest in this field, concentrating most of their work on industrial labour relations, working conditions and gender roles in the factory (1850–1950). This is probably due both to a paucity of sources available for the colonial period and to the current interest among Canadian historians in the study of industrialization in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

### Ethnographic and Museological Approaches

Clothing, especially that of certain groups, such as voyageurs and *habitants*, has long been the object of curiosity among artists and travellers describing early Quebec customs.<sup>1</sup> Drawing on these iconographical and literary sources, a group of Quebec ethnographers, or ethno-historians, began during the early twentieth century to study the material traces of French culture in the province. Some, such as Pierre-Georges Roy, emphasized documentary sources while others, like E.-Z. Massicotte, also explored folklore and ethnographic traditions. Their combined research has provided a basis for what is today identified as the ethnology of French America, which defines its field of study as the traditional civilization of Quebec.<sup>2</sup> These scholars have written more about household textile production and use than their colleagues in other disciplines.

Early ethno-historians, such as Roy, Massicotte and Marius Barbeau, used information contained in interviews, census returns, correspondence and notarial records

to gather information relating to tools and clothing, thereby forming the basis for their understanding. Although few of these studies used broad social or economic approaches or were systematic in their use of sources, the authors' observations and conclusions remain pertinent. For example, Massicotte questioned the relationship between locally-produced and imported cloth and identified gender roles and regional variations in consumer practices and textile production.<sup>3</sup> For the most part, however, because early-twentieth century ethnographers knew they were writing about the disappearance of traditional domestic crafts, especially hand-carding, spinning and weaving, they were particularly concerned about describing the various stages and activities involved in the home production of cloth.<sup>4</sup> They tend, therefore, to be more descriptive in their writing than analytical.

One of Quebec's best-known heirs to the early ethnographic tradition was Robert-Lionel Séguin, whose 1967 and 1968 monographs on the traditions of farming families and clothing are now considered classics in their field. Séguin used a wide range of sources, including artifacts.<sup>5</sup> Although his treatment of the habitant has been criticized by historians for being too static, Séguin's work has had a lasting effect on ethnographic and museological studies.<sup>6</sup>

His monographs were among the major sources used in another influential work on this subject written by Harold and Dorothy Burnham of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and published in 1972. The Burnhams wrote a number of pioneering works in this field and developed a museological approach to textile history. Their artifact catalogues begin with a brief historical introduction, followed by a selection of products and equipment found in different museum collections.<sup>7</sup>

With the exception of social historians, who often refer briefly to clothing, the field of Quebec's clothing history has been treated mainly by specialists in ethnography and museum curators.<sup>8</sup> Because of the traditional way museum collections have been organized, curators have tended to specialize either in textiles, like the Burnhams, or in clothing, thus isolating two inseparable subjects. While another ROM curator, Katherine Brett, was beginning to build a substantial clothing collection, as well as publishing articles on the subject, a well known Quebec ethnographer, Madeleine Doyon-Ferland, was making an important contribution to the popularization of

traditional clothing.<sup>9</sup> Yet another museum curator, Jacqueline Beaudoin-Ross of the McCord Museum in Montreal, has analyzed evidence of rural female dress in Quebec found in travel literature, a wide range of iconographical sources and artifacts.<sup>10</sup> One of the more detailed studies of rural clothing is Bernard Audet's analysis of post-mortem inventories from the Île d'Orléans between 1670 and 1710. Following in the Séguin tradition, Audet provides a description of clothing items found in the inventories.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the interest in new ethnographic approaches, such as the concern for social attitudes and values, most recent students of clothing and textiles continue to develop themes relating to the adaptation to the environment and changing styles and appearances. Publications written in the 1970s and early 1980s explore in greater detail topics only broached by Séguin, but most of them appear to be influenced not only by the themes developed by him, but also by his use of interviews, inventories and artifacts.<sup>12</sup>

Edited by Jocelyne Mathieu in 1988, one of the most recent studies of costume history appeared in a special issue of *Canadian Folklore canadien*. Although qualitative approaches and the ethnographic emphasis on the non-temporal nature of traditional rural clothing are very much in evidence in this collection of essays, other subjects, such as the evolution of communications, technology and *mentalités* are also mentioned. The clothing of specific groups is treated in detail, as is the hooded coat. In addition, some authors use quantified data, and refer to the availability of imported products. The impact of this material on homemade cloth and the relationship between the raw resources of textiles and the finished products, receive less attention. A more comprehensive study of existing references in social and economic history would have provided some of the review's ethnographic and museological analyses with a stronger contextual framework and a better understanding of the representative nature of items discussed. Despite these shortcomings, the authors' use of sources and statistical data, plus their treatment of ethnic and social influences, make this well illustrated volume an indispensable guide for students of Quebec clothing history.<sup>13</sup>

The ethnographic contribution to the evolution of Quebec textiles has been substantial, but its frequent reliance on anecdotal sources suggests additional work would help establish the relationship between

clothing and textile histories, as well as provide necessary syntheses of these inseparable subjects. It would be informative to identify and analyze the underlying presuppositions and biases of earlier writers, such as Madeleine Doyon-Ferland, and to verify their conclusions. This is particularly true in two areas, the rapport between imported and domestic products and the roles men and women played in textile production in the home and in the mill. These subjects will be treated further after consideration of how economic historians have studied textile history.

### **Social and Economic History of Textile Production**

While Museum curators and specialists in Quebec ethnography have described the material remains of household cloth and the various steps in its fabrication, most economic historians have been primarily interested in agricultural and industrial productivity. Related subjects, such as domestic production of textiles and the isolated attempts to market them locally, have received little attention.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to studying farming techniques and crop statistics, historians who have touched on Quebec's textile history have been preoccupied with issues relating to colonial manufacturing and the growth of textile plants in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Early aspects which have been studied include the importation of fabric from overseas, the absence of colonial cloth-making establishments, and the initial attempts to create them.<sup>15</sup>

Historians of colonial agriculture have also emphasized the subject of productivity. They used information about wool, flax and hemp in their arguments concerning self-sufficiency and commercial agriculture, but rarely explored the ways in which households were organized to meet their daily needs. Quebec historians have long been interested in the family economy, but since this subject has been treated only as a part of agricultural history, it has not yet been developed in detail.<sup>16</sup> Although a few recent analyses of Quebec agriculture have mentioned domestic textile production and tools for making household cloth, most historians, while examining the raw materials needed for the fabrication of textiles, neglect the processes and results of domestic transformation.<sup>17</sup>

Social historians have shown an interest in clothing, but since the subject has been mainly treated as one aspect of daily life, the amount of information about it tends to be sparse.<sup>18</sup>



**Fig. 1**  
*James Duncan's Selling Canadian Homespun Cloth (1806-1882). Although the degree of rural women's involvement in the marketplace is unclear, this image suggests that men acted as agents when selling their wives' products. The woman in this illustration is shown kneeling behind the men who are seen showing cloth, possibly the product of her labour, to another man. (Courtesy Royal Ontario Museum, ROM 951.158.11)*

Thus, little has been written about such socio-cultural subjects as the symbolic significance of clothing for different ethnic and social groups.<sup>19</sup>

Although there are a few exceptions to the rule, notably in the monographs of ethnographers and ethno-historians, such as Robert-Lionel Séguin and Jean Provencher, most of these scholars tend to ignore the results of each others' work.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, in the realm of the daily activities of rural women, most economic historians appear unaware of the ethnographical literature about domestic female labour and add little to the work of their colleagues in ethnography.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, despite the amount of material published on different facets of textile history, no one has set out a simple chronology of mill evolution or analyzed the relationship between household and industrial textile production. Various pertinent questions have yet to be answered: When and where did the first mills develop? What materials did they use? What types of goods were produced? And, what impact did they have on styles and on the making of homemade fabrics?

The deficiency in sources mentioned earlier is particularly evident in the field of colonial textile history. Although early census returns mention weavers, they are absent from this source between the late-seventeenth century and the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Thus, one has to look to other anecdotal sources, such as government correspondence and newspapers, to find additional infor-

mation. In a study of newspapers, only a few references to textile establishments were found, notably in the Montreal area and Eastern Townships between 1796 and 1832.<sup>23</sup> Although this information may lead to additional research, it hardly compares to the wealth of data that exists on early textile mills in the United States and overseas.

#### **Homemade Cloth in Quebec, Ontario and the United States**

An avenue worth exploring is a comparison of the non-mechanized fabrication of American and Canadian textiles. Working with data which is not always comparable, I analyzed hand production in the United States and Upper and Lower Canada in the early nineteenth century and found that whereas farming families in the United States made ten yards per inhabitant in 1810,<sup>24</sup> Lower Canadian families produced 8.3 yards per person in 1827, falling thereafter to 3.2 yards in 1842 and 2.7 in 1851. Although American figures for later periods are unavailable, it is interesting to note that, while the Lower Canadian output was dropping in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, it remained much higher than that of Upper Canada. Lower Canadian families continued to make linen when American and Upper Canadian farming families were abandoning this time-consuming practice. In 1851 only 14,700 yards of linen were made in Ontario compared to over 900,000 in Quebec. While the Ontario figures continued to decline be-

tween 1851 and 1870, Quebec production rose by over fifty per cent. By 1870, Quebec farming families were producing four times the amount of cloth made by their Ontario counterparts, a trend which continued into the twentieth century.<sup>25</sup> The continuation of the fabrication of homemade linen, combined with the extensive use of recycled and unusual materials, such as cow hair and the patching of cloth evidenced in artifactual analysis, all suggest that hand production in Quebec remained an important part of the farming family's economic survival.<sup>26</sup> What kind of strategy did this type of activity represent? Was it subsistence agriculture? Were farming families finding it difficult to get involved in the larger market place, or were they increasing household production because they did not possess the necessary funds to acquire manufactured goods? Was rural Quebec becoming entrenched in an increasingly self-sufficient existence?

Although existing information provides some clues to these queries, more work is needed before we can begin to respond to many of them. For example, the amount of imported clothing in household inventories is an indication that rural families acquired goods at the market. What remains difficult to ascertain is the degree to which inhabitants were involved in the market and the nature of the material acquired there. Were they involved, for example, in buying and selling second-hand clothing? Despite the presence of Sunday clothing, the amount of homemade material in rural houses and its often dilapidated condition suggests rural women could not afford to be as concerned as their urban counterparts with appearances.<sup>27</sup>

This preliminary investigation of domestic textile fabrication raises a number of related questions. Were rural parents continuing to use expanding families as cheap labour to produce homespun? If the diminishing number of carding tools found in household inventories can be taken as a valid indicator, then it seems evident that women were taking raw materials formerly processed in the home to carding mills that were springing up around the province. This suggests that rural women were not opposed to time-saving solutions and took advantage of them when it was feasible to do so. In order to throw light on some of these questions, it is necessary to explore the degree to which household production met the clothing needs of the rural family and to identify clearly the workers at all stages of cloth production.

### Homemade versus Imported Cloth

The idea that rural families made all of their clothing is frequently found in historical references, especially in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>28</sup> Historians writing during the first part of the twentieth century have occasionally made use of these references, giving credence to the idea that the domestic fabrication of cloth was a widespread and traditional part of country life.<sup>29</sup> This view was, moreover, also developed by early ethnographers who were among the first to describe the various stages involved in the fabrication of domestic cloth. When one realizes that the amount of homemade fabric continued to rise during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the relationship between pioneer ethnographers and their subject becomes clearer. Scholars were likely portraying household activities still pursued during their lifetimes. Some specialists may have assumed that they were describing vanishing techniques which had continued to exist unchanged since the early years of settlement. In fact, as shown below, the household fabrication of cloth did not become important until the early-nineteenth century.

Other chroniclers, like Séguin and the Burnhams, have been more precise in their descriptions of the evolution of household production but, like current specialists in ethnography, they appear to have over-emphasized the quantities made.<sup>30</sup> This is not surprising because, as mentioned earlier, the idea that farming families made most of their own clothing has been current in historiography.

In a 1983 article I demonstrated that, although the existence of domestic textile equipment was increasing in the nineteenth century, imported goods were far more important than previously thought. Based on 400 post mortem inventories, this analysis showed that while approximately forty-two to forty-six per cent of rural residents residing in the Quebec City area between 1790 and 1835 possessed enough equipment to produce cloth, over fifty per cent of important clothing articles were of imported material. Not only does this conclusion raise questions about the nature and evolution of household production in rural Quebec, it has implications for artifact-related studies, museum collections and exhibits: care must be taken not to confuse local production with textiles imported from Europe or the United States.

## Gender in Textile Production

Who produced the household linen and clothing worn by rural inhabitants and what were the critical periods in the development of the domestic fabrication of textiles? For example, were the colonial producers itinerant weavers who used the raw resources from local farms to supply their residents with clothing? What role did women play in meeting the clothing needs of the family?

Answers for some of these questions are found in existing studies, but it is only through the analysis of a variety of sources, including artifacts and extant technology, that one can paint a more complete picture of the changing role of gender as a factor in textile production. The Burnhams agree with Séguin that, although trained craftsmen were rare in the French colony, men were the principal weavers well into the eighteenth century. While little is known about the activities of these artisans, most appear to have settled in villages and urban centres, especially in the Montreal area.<sup>31</sup> In 1714, twenty-five looms existed in Montreal and rural families in neighbouring areas were having fabric made by urban weavers.<sup>32</sup> When did female weavers begin making a significant quantity of homemade textiles? The Burnhams maintain that weaving gradually became a woman's occupation, and after a serious economic recession in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, rural women became responsible for spinning and weaving.<sup>33</sup> What is important here is the Burnhams' identification of a significant change from male to female weavers occurring after 1825.

Is it possible to define more precisely when this change took place? Little weaving appears to have been accomplished by either men or women during the French regime, but women were said to be involved in this craft as early as the late seventeenth century.<sup>34</sup> According to contemporary accounts and analyses of household inventories, women's role in spinning and weaving varied from region to region and gradually grew over the eighteenth century. Most women ar-

iving in New France were too poor and too involved with household chores and child-rearing to have the means or time to weave. Women living on farms on the Île d'Orléans in the late seventeenth century possessed a paucity of clothing, most of which was probably imported, and no looms.<sup>35</sup> A hundred years later, their neighbours in the Quebec City area were equipped. An analysis of household inventories revealed that thirty-one per cent of farming families in the 1790s owned looms. During a slightly earlier period, between 1778 and 1782, in the less populated area of Saint-Hyacinthe, only four per cent of household inventories included looms.<sup>36</sup> By the second decade of the nineteenth century, the percentage of looms in the Quebec City area had reached forty-seven! Thus, during the latter eighteenth century, a greater percentage of women in the settled areas of the province were weaving than their ancestors in less populated regions.

Women in recently settled areas such as Saint-Hyacinthe were, however, actively involved in spinning. During the 1780s over seventy per cent of households in the area possessed spinning wheels. This figure compares well with those for the rural areas neighbouring with Quebec City (sixty-three per cent) and Montreal (eighty-two per cent) in the 1790s.

Women's activities obviously varied according to the nature of their families and farms. Young mothers could spin and look after children,



Fig. 2

This rendition of a mid-nineteenth century country woman at her spinning wheel was commissioned from Francis Back in 1989 for use in an exhibit in the Canadian Museum of Civilization's History Hall. This museum interpretation of one of the rural household's most pervasive occupations, spinning, is based on both iconographical and documentary sources. (Courtesy Canadian Museum of Civilization)

but they could not spin and weave and take care of a family.<sup>37</sup> Children who were old enough to spin thread and look after younger family members would have provided their mothers with enough support to allow them to weave.

Between 1750 and 1835, the most significant increase in the availability of looms occurred between 1795 and 1807. In 1830 the Surveyor-General of Lower Canada maintained that weaving was the universal responsibility of the female members of the rural family.<sup>38</sup> By this time the settlements along the Saint Lawrence River were more populated than earlier, and many of them included families of five or six children.<sup>39</sup> Thus, a female labour force was available to undertake domestic tasks such as sewing, spinning and weaving. It was, therefore, at the turn of the century that women began to play a significant role in the fabrication of cloth.

What were the critical periods for domestic cloth production between 1835 and 1900? As mentioned above, the quantity of homemade fabric increased during the latter-nineteenth century. Some rural women were making more of their own cloth during the same time that others were finding employment in the growing number of industrial textile plants in Quebec. What, then, was the relationship between home and mill production in different regions across the province? Was the experience possessed by women and children in domestic sewing, spinning and/or weaving transferred to the early textile mills? It is necessary to recall that by 1871 seventy-five per cent of the workforce in the Canadian clothing industry was female. One wonders if the sexual division of labour found in the home was reproduced in the mills? This is an area where yet more work is needed.

### Conclusion

In the early twentieth century ethnographers and socio-economic historians studied a variety of themes such as gender roles and the early evolution of textile production. Most work since then has been done by ethnographers who have drawn on historical sources, such as household inventories and marriage contracts. The debate animated in the 1960s and 1970s by Fernand Ouellet, Gilles Paquet and Jean-Pierre Wallot concerning an early nineteenth century crisis in Lower Canada's agriculture has been pursued by economic historians, some of whom have used farming aspects related to the fabrication of homemade cloth to support their conclusions. Some facets

of Quebec's colonial textile history have been sketched by specialists in ethnography but most questions in Canada's early textile history, especially those concerning gender and household production, remain unanswered. More quantitative data has to be marshalled and analyses of different periods in the evolution of hand and mill production multiplied before definitive conclusions can be drawn.

Historians would benefit from a greater awareness of the work on traditional lifestyles by their counterparts in ethnography. For example, detailed historical reconstitutions of the colonial work day of rural women could be enriched by information from studies in Quebec ethnography of the sexual division of labour in the hand production of textiles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ethnographers and museum curators would be well served by current quantitative techniques and by the integration in their studies of existing data in economic history related to imports, and farm crops and animals.

In their attempt to build an integrated analysis historians can afford to include artifact analysis and the results of ethnographical field work. There are serious difficulties inherent in using these sources, but in some cases they are more informative than documentary ones. To quote the French historian Michel Vovelle,

History is happy to embrace new approaches but as we struggle to rediscover the characteristics of our cultural histories, including the attitudes and behaviour of different social groups, we find few substantive traces of their passage. Historical ethnography for example is faced with a wide range of difficulties due primarily to a lack of sources capable of supplying historians with similar information as that found by ethnographers in the data they gather from field work.<sup>40</sup>

The challenge is not only to explore new sources but to build multi-disciplinary teams capable of complementary and comparative work in the field of textile history. Although new research is needed, enough information already exists to form a basis for a unified approach to the study of Quebec's clothing and textile history.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, the nineteenth century references cited in E.-Z. Massicotte, "Le costume des voyageurs et des coureurs de bois," *Bulletin des recherches historiques* 48 (1942): 235-240.
2. René Bouchard, *La vie quotidienne au Québec : histoire, métiers, techniques et traditions*. (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1983), especially the Forward and the first chapter concerning Robert-Lionel Séguin's work. See also W.S. Wallace's description of Pierre-George Roy's contribution to Quebec history in *Le Bulletin des recherches historiques*, hereafter, *BRH* (January-February, 1945): 19-21.
3. E.-Z. Massicotte, "Toile importée et toile du pays sous le régime français," *Le Bulletin des recherches historiques (BRH)* (February, 1934): 104-106; "À propos de toile du pays," *BRH*, (December, 1929): 736-740; "L'industrie du lin au Canada," *L'Almanach du peuple* (1922): 353-359; "Le costume civil masculin à Montréal au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* (May, 1939): 127-147; "Chapellerie et chapeliers en la Nouvelle France," *BRH* 30 (1924): 164, 165; "Souliers sauvages et souliers de bœuf," *BRH* 30 (1924): 379-381. Pierre-Georges Roy's interest in this subject dates from an earlier period. In 1898 he edited L.P. Lemay's *Fêtes et corvées*, (Lévis) which contains a description of the breaking of flax fibres: 39-42. See also Roy's *L'Île d'Orléans* (Québec, 1928), 465, 466 and his "Nos coutumes et traditions françaises," *Cahiers des dix* (Montreal, 1939), 59-118. For a bibliography of Roy's work, see Antoine Roy, *L'œuvre historique de Pierre-Georges Roy. Bibliographie analytique* (Paris: Jouve et Cie., 1928). Lemay wrote a series of short pieces on the techniques of flax preparation: "Le brayage," *Les Gouttelettes* (Montreal: Beauchemin, 1904): 147; "La fileuse," *Les Gouttelettes*: 154; "À la brairie," *Les épis* (Montreal: J.-A. Guay, 1914): 39-47. In his two-volume treatment of the crafts of religious communities, Marius Barbeau described the nuns' embroidery skills: *Saintes artisanes de chez nous*, vols. I, II (Montreal: Beauchemin, 1943 and 1946).
4. This concern for the survival of traditional feminine crafts was the subject of a brochure written by a professor at the School of agriculture, Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, Georges Bouchard, *Les petites industries féminines à la campagne* (Montreal: L'école sociale populaire, n.d., c. 1925), 13-15. According to Bouchard, he almost always noticed spinning wheels and children clothed in homespun flannel in the Lac Saint-Jean area. The author wondered whether these women would continue to make homespun when similar products were being manufactured and sold at reasonable prices.
5. *Le costume civil en Nouvelle-France* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1968), and *La civilisation traditionnelle de l'«habitant» aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Montreal: Fides, 1967 and 1973), 619-629. See also, 'Keep me warm one night': *Early Handweaving in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), esp. 6-9.
6. According to Jacques Mathieu and Réal Brisson, "...les enquêtes ethnographiques ont eu tendance à renforcer cette image d'un portrait-type de l'habitant, dans l'espace, comme dans le temps (Séguin, 1967)". From "La vallée laurentienne au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle : un paysage à connaître," *Cahiers de géographie du Québec* (April-Sept., 1984), 109. For another evaluation of Séguin's influence, see Jean-Claude Dupont, "Robert-Lionel Séguin, travailleur scientifique," *Les cahiers des dix*, no. 43 (1983), 20-25.
7. This approach tends to emphasize existing artifacts, such as coverlets and equipment and neglected objects which have disappeared. The Burnhams were aware of this problem and mentioned that most of their clothing examples came from Ontario. See 'Keep me warm one night', 62. See also Dorothy K. Burnham, *The Comfortable Arts. Traditional Spinning and Weaving in Canada* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1981), 54. A museological approach was also developed by Judith Buxton-Keenlyside in her highly detailed description of extant spinning wheels. See *Selected Canadian Spinning Wheels in Perspective: An Analytical Approach* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1980). Buxton-Keenlyside also curated a temporary exhibit on this subject at the National Museum of Man, now the Canadian Museum of Civilization.
8. Early specialists writing about clothing were rare and those that did neglected its evolution, depicting the farming family's wardrobe as somewhat static. See E.H. Loosly, "Early Canadian Costume," *Canadian Historical Review*, 23 (December, 1942): 356-359; Sœur Marie-Ursule, "Civilisation traditionnelle des Lavallois," *Les archives de folklore* 5 and 6 (1952): 136 and 137.
9. See for example Brett's study, *Clothing Worn in Canada: Changing Fashions in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 41 of *Canada's Visual History* (Montreal and Ottawa: National Film Board and National Museum of Man, 1979). Brett's bibliography exists at the Royal Ontario Museum. Information on the articles and collection of the pioneering Laval University ethnographer, Madeleine Doyon-Ferland, can be found in Christine Godin's very positive evaluation of her work, "L'œuvre pionnière de Madeleine Doyon-Ferland," *Canadian Folklore canadien* 10, nos. 1 and 2 (1988): 13-33.
10. "À la Canadienne: Some Aspects of Nineteenth Century Dress" and "A Dress", in *Dress. The Annual Journal of the Costume Society of America*, vols. 6 and 7 (1980 and 1981). See also her article in *Canadian Folklore canadien* (1988), mentioned below.
11. *Le costume paysan dans la région de Québec au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Ottawa: Leméac, 1980).
12. Since Séguin's approach is the classic one used in Quebec ethnography, it is not surprising that recent studies continue to follow his lead. See Hélène de Carufel, *Le lin* (Montreal: Leméac, 1980). This author based her work on interviews of people involved in the production of linen; Jocelyne Mathieu, *Faire ses tapis à la mode de l'Île d'Orléans* (Montreal: Jean Basile, 1980);

- Bernard Audet's study, mentioned earlier; and Judith Buxton-Keenlyside's study of a large number of artifacts, *Selected Canadian Spinning Wheels in Perspective: An Analytical Approach*, esp. 263–265. See also the well-documented exhibit catalogue produced by the Musée du Québec in 1974, *La fabrication artisanale des tissus : appareils et techniques* (Quebec: Ministère des Affaires culturelles, 1974), and Angéline Saint-Pierre, *Émélie Chamard, tisserande* (Quebec: La Liberté, n.d.).
13. The following description of articles appearing in the *Canadian Folklore canadien* 10, nos. 1 and 2 (1988) and *Cap-aux-diamants* (Summer, 1988) do not include those dealing with the twentieth century. The emphasis on household fibre and its relatively unchanging nature in early Quebec are mentioned respectively in Christine Godin, "L'œuvre pionnière de Madeleine Doyon-Ferland," *Canadian Folklore canadien*, 19 and Jocelyne Mathieu, "Au sujet des rapports entre le costume traditionnel et la mode : le cas du costume canadien", 39. In his well documented study of the hooded coat, Francis Back shows how this item of clothing evolved in different countries, its use by sailors and farmers and ways in which it was worn and decorated. The author's sketches of historical costumes makes this article particularly interesting. See "Le capot canadien, origines et évolution", 99–127. A detailed study of the clothing of two sixteenth-century Basque sailors found during the underwater archaeology project at Red Bay is the subject of Élise Dubuc's "Costumes des gens de mer du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle trouvés dans l'estuaire du Saint-Laurent : un bon exemple de hardes de marins au temps de la découverte du Nouveau Monde", 129–154. A study of form and fashion in Quebec rural dress through an examination of iconographical sources is the object of the essay by Jaqueline Beaudoin Ross, "The Influence of Fashion on Folk Costume", 79–97. Military coats are discussed by René Chartrand in, "The Winter Costume of Soldiers in Canada", 157–181. Chartrand's well illustrated overview of military clothing from the seventeenth to the late nineteenth century includes a description of the French King's late seventeenth century decision to have colonial troops dressed in coats which imitated the *coureurs des bois*, as well as the existence of hooded coats in the British Army, 156–159. Coats and clothing worn by fur traders and Indians are discussed in Pamela Blackstock's article, "Nineteenth Century Fur Trade Costume", esp. 195–199. Francis Back and Luce Vermette provide a discussion of artifactual, iconographical, primary and secondary sources for the study of costume in their article, "Sources pour l'histoire du costume au Québec", 209–226. This description of sources complements an earlier bibliography published by two of the volume's contributors, Jacqueline Beaudoin-Ross and Pamela Blackstock, in *Material History Bulletin* 19 (Spring 1984): 59–92. Finally, Jocelyne Mathieu also edited a special number of *Cap-aux-diamants*, a review focusing on Quebec City, on the subject of costume. Professor Mathieu and a number of the authors mentioned above also published short articles for the general public on various aspects of clothing. See, for example, Jocelyne Mathieu and Monique Dumas, "Une garde-robe du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle", 69; Andrée Paradis, "L'avènement d'un costume canadien", 11–15; Monique Dumas, "L'enfant, ce petit adulte...", 29–33; Francis Back, "Des petits messieurs au capot bleu", 33–37; René Chartrand, "Le costume militaire à Québec", 37–41.
  14. These subjects are, however, described in Louise Dechêne's classic study of Montreal in the seventeenth century, but since cloth production was relatively insignificant during this period, the author does not discuss it in detail. See, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Montreal: Plon, 1974), 151, 152. According to the author, the appearance in the early eighteenth century of sheep, cards and spinning wheels, as well as the planting of flax crops marks the habitants' capacity to ensure their basic needs. Instead of expansion, this diversification depicts a progressive strengthening of existing agricultural practices, 320, 328.
  15. Early textile establishments are noted in the following works of authors writing in the first part of the twentieth century, J.N. Fauteux, *Essai sur l'industrie au Canada sous le régime français*, vol. 2 (Quebec, 1927), 465–470; P.E. Renaud, *Les origines économiques du Canada* (Namère: Érault, 1928), 385–395; and Émile Salone, *La colonisation de la Nouvelle-France* (Trois-Rivières: Réédition Boréal Express, 1970), 329. See also Jacques Rouillard, *Les travailleurs du coton au Québec, 1900–1915* (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1974), 9–15 and Stanley Bréhaut Ryerson, *Le capitalisme et la confédération* (Montreal: Parti pris, 1972), 240, 241. See also my attempt to synthesize much of the existing information on the history of early textile production in colonial Quebec in, *Quebec City, 1765–1832*, 83–99.
  16. Because the household fabrication of cloth is only part of the family economy, the former subject has been treated even less than the latter. An early article on this subject was written by Germain Lesage, "Notre économie familiale avant 1840," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, 63–83. Gilles Paquet and Jean-Pierre Wallot described the detailed types of study needed to analyze the family economy in "Les inventaires après décès à Montréal au tournant du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle : préliminaires à une analyse," *RHAF*, (September 1986): 195–197. Early studies of this subject were undertaken by the Québec sociologist Léon Gérin. See for example his classic work: *L'habitant de Saint-Justin* [1897] (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1968), 51–128. Two recent studies which include information on textiles and the household economy were written by Luce Vermette and Yvon Desloges. They are respectively, *Les donations 1800–1820 : activités domestiques et genres de vie* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, n.d.) and *Une ville de locataires : Québec au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (forthcoming monograph to be published by Parks Canada, Quebec).
  17. In their discussions of agricultural productivity, historians provide data on different aspects of domestic textile history. Information concerning the number of sheep per inhabitant can be found in Jacques Mathieu, "Un pays à statut colonial," ed. Jean Hamelin, *Histoire du Québec* (Saint-Hyacinthe: Edisem, 1977), 196, 197 and in

- Fernand Ouellet, *Histoire économique et sociale du Québec, 1760-1850* (Montreal: Fides, 1966), 86, 342. Statistics and policies related to hemp production are given in Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Le Bas-Canada sous l'administration de Craig (1807-1811)" (Ph.D thesis, University of Montreal, 1965), 115; Maurice Séguin, *La nation «canadienne» et l'agriculture (1760-1850)* (Trois-Rivières: Boréal Express, 1970), 122-125; and Vernon C. Fowke, *Canadian Agricultural Policy: The Historical Pattern* (Toronto, 1978), 73-77. By providing a wealth of data on the consumption of imported textiles and on sheep, crops and agricultural tools, Gilles Paquet and Jean-Pierre Wallot have built a framework for the analysis of both clothing and textiles during the early nineteenth century. See for example their article, "Structures sociales et niveaux de richesse dans les campagnes du Québec," *MHB* 17 (Spring, 1983): 25-44. Agricultural implements and textiles tools have also been part of the recent work of Christian Dessureault and John Dickinson. See especially their unpublished paper presented at the New France/New England Dublin seminar at Deerfield, Conn., July, 1989: "Farm Implements and Husbandry in Colonial Quebec, 1740-1840." Domestic cloth production has been the object of some analysis in the publications of Serge Courville, an historical geographer. See for example, "Le marché des «subsistances»: l'exemple de la plaine de Montréal au début des années 1830: une perspective géographique," *RHAF* (Fall, 1988): 233, fn. 46. "Étoffes" or homemade cloth, is also mentioned in the discussion of the family economy and the local market in a synthesis on rural life in Quebec, written by Courville and Normand Séguin, *Le monde rural québécois au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, CHA brochure no. 47 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Society, 1989), 10, 12.
18. See for example, the references to clothing in marriage contracts in Hélène Dionne, *Les contrats de mariage à Québec, 1790-1812* (Ottawa: Musée national de l'Homme, 1980), 54-82 and the references to clothing in apprenticeship contracts in Jean-Pierre Hardy and David-Thierry Ruddel, *Les apprentis-artisans à Québec, 1660-1815* (Montreal: Les Presses universitaires de l'Université du Québec, 1977), 49, 50, 141-143; and the discussion of clothing in Claudette Lacelle's study of domestics, *Urban Domestic Servants in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1987): 46-48. Lacelle mentions one of the historian's most serious problems in describing early clothing: the lack of sources. See also Luce Vermette's study of *La vie domestique aux Forges du Saint-Maurice* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1982), 99-110.
  19. See the brief discussion of this subject in Ruddel, "The Domestic Textile Industry in the Region and City of Quebec, 1792-1835," *MHB* 17 (Spring, 1983): 110-120. Recent monographs, such as those found in the 1988 editions of *Canadian Folklore* and *Cap-aux-diamants* (Summer), suggest that these topics are beginning to be explored. Because of the important amount of work done on military costume, it is a prime subject to be examined for its symbolic significance. For some preliminary suggestions, see René Chartrand and David Ross, "Guidelines for Cataloguing Military Uniforms," *Gazette* [Canadian Museum Association Quarterly] (Spring 1977): 25.
  20. Although he was not overly concerned with periodization, Jean Provencher's work on traditional life in the Saint Lawrence valley exploits the ethnographical information on both the fabrication of cloth and clothing. See for example, *C'était l'hiver: la vie traditionnelle dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent* (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1986), 62-65. See also, Sophie Laurence Lamontagne, *L'hiver dans la culture québécoise* (Quebec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1983), 89, 90, 94-97.
  21. According to Janine Grant and Kris Inwood, "The contribution of women to post Confederation textile manufacture has been under-estimated by historians...." Given the amount of material written by ethnographers on this subject, this is indeed surprising. See, "Gender and Organization in the Canadian Cloth Industry, 1870," *Canadian Papers in Business History* 1 (1989): 17-33, in which the authors discuss economic historians' perceptions of this subject. See also their forthcoming article in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, "Labouring at the loom: A Case Study of Rural Manufacturing in Leeds County, Ontario, 1870."
  22. Although weavers are not identified, per capita estimates of yards of household textiles are given for Lower Canada in the 1827, 1842 and 1852 censuses and for Upper Canada in those of 1842 and 1852. For a comparison of these figures see my article, "Domestic Textile Industry," *MHB* 17 (Spring, 1983): 101, 102.
  23. Work undertaken by Anna Marie Tarrant, cited in A. Hood and D.-T. Ruddel, "Artifacts and Documents in the History of Québec Textiles," in *Living in a Material World*, ed. Gerald Pocius (St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, forthcoming 1990). See also my discussion of colonial weavers and textile establishments in *Quebec City, 1765-1832*, 98.
  24. The American data is from the 1810 report on American manufactures, cited in R.M. Tryon, *Household Manufacturers in the United States, 1640-1860* (Chicago, 1917), 166. Although Tryon's pioneering work does not appear to have been replaced by more recent studies, his information about the early nineteenth century needs to be verified to ensure it is not inflated.
  25. Data from the census can be found in the five volume series, *Censuses of Canada, 1665-1871* (Ottawa: I.B. Taylor, 1876).
  26. A. Hood and D.-T. Ruddel, "Artifacts and Documents."
  27. Urbanites had a reputation for following current styles and buying imported cloth and clothing. For a discussion of textiles in an urban context, see Ruddel, "Domestic Textile Industry."
  28. Peter Kalm, *Travels into North America (1740)*, trans. J.R. Forster (Barre, Mass.: The Imprint Society, 1972), 450, 465; George Heriot, *Travels Through the Canadas* (Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1807, 1813), 268, cited in Sophie Laurence Lamontagne, *L'hiver dans la culture québécoise*, 90; Pierre Sales de Laterrière, *Political and Historical Account of Lower Canada* (London, 1830).
  29. Thus H.A. Innis and A.R.M. Lower reproduced

- an 1846 article which mentioned that rural inhabitants continued to be clothed in homemade fabric. See, *Select Documents in Canadian Economic History, 1783-1885* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1933), 305. By 1846, making household fabric had become current in rural homes. Numerous sources prior to this date exist, however, which suggest that this activity was almost non-existent during the French regime and that even in the nineteenth century, an anglophone observer maintained that French-speaking women should spend more time learning the art of wool-spinning. See Catharine Parr Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada*, (1836; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966), 29. See also, her *The Canadian Settler's Guide* (1855; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), 8. For earlier historical references, see footnote 26 and Ruddel, "Domestic Textile Industry". Moreover, a comparison of census returns for Quebec and Ontario in the mid-nineteenth century shows that although Quebec families were producing far more linen than their Ontario counterparts, the latter were making twice as much wool as the former.
30. For example in *'Keep me warm one night'* the Burnhams conclude that "...wool, home grown flax and later the inexpensive cotton yarns...clothed the families of rural Quebec and supplied almost all of their textile needs throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth," 9. Dorothy Burnham makes a similar point when she states that the "pioneer and his family... produced almost all the necessities of life by their own hard work." *Pieced Quilts of Ontario* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1975), 10.
  31. See the discussion of this subject in A. Hood and D.-T. Ruddel, "Artifacts and Documents in the History of Quebec Textiles."
  32. Louise Dechêne, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal*, 152.
  33. See the Burnhams, *'Keep me warm one night,'* 8, 9 and Séguin, *La civilisation traditionnelle de l'«habitant»*, 494. In *The Comfortable Arts*, Dorothy Burnham suggests that the colony became more self sufficient after the "bottom dropped out of the beaver market" in the eighteenth century, 54.
  34. David-Thierry Ruddel, "The Domestic Textile Industry in the Region and City of Quebec, 1792-1835." *Material History Bulletin* 17 (Spring, 1983): 96. Information from this article is used for this discussion of gender during the colonial period.
  35. Bernard Audet, *Le costume paysan dans la région de Québec au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 29, 30. See also, Louise Dechêne's *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 151, 152. An indication of the importance of imported fabric can be found in a reference to the importation from France of 1000 ells of blue coat cloth in Francis Back's article "Le capot canadien," *Canadian Folklore canadien*, 120.
  36. Information for the Saint-Hyacinthe area comes from an unpublished paper given by Christian Dessureault and John Dickinson, "Farm Implements and Husbandry in Colonial Quebec," at the New France/New England Dublin seminar at Deerfield, Conn., July, 1989. The Montreal data comes from a paper I presented at the same conference, "Consumer Trends, Clothing and Textiles in the Montreal Area, 1792-1835."
  37. See the discussion of this subject in Adrienne Hood, "Organization and Extent of Textile Manufacture in Eighteenth-Century Rural Pennsylvania" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, 1988), 96-111.
  38. Moreover, in a re-examination of gender roles in the production of colonial textiles, Adrienne Hood and I, "Artifacts and Documents" came to the conclusion that the material, products and technology involved in Quebec textiles all strongly suggest that women did most of the weaving.
  39. Regional variants obviously played an important role both in family sizes and domestic production. For information on sizes of families in the Quebec City area, see Ruddel, *Quebec City, 1765-1832*, 26, 27. More work is needed on gender ratios before definitive conclusions can be drawn about the availability of young girls capable of helping their mothers make cloth.
  40. Michel Vovelle, *De la cave au grenier... : de l'histoire sociale à l'histoire des mentalités* (Quebec: Serge Fleury, 1980), 408.