

## “Providential Openings”: The Women Weavers of Nineteenth-Century Queens County, New Brunswick

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### Résumé

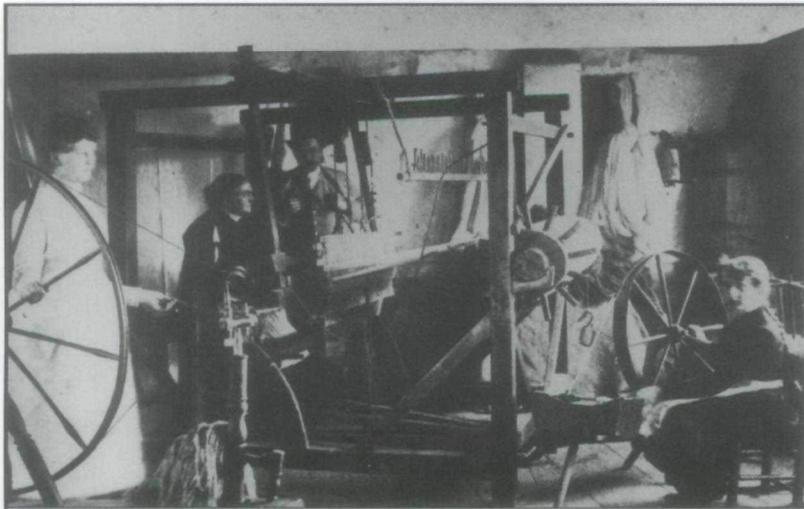
La présente étude de cas décrit comment les femmes qui habitaient une région rurale du Nouveau-Brunswick dépendaient du tissage à bras comme moyen de rehausser le revenu du ménage. Le rôle des produits textiles tissés à la main dans la vie des habitants était lié profondément à la vie économique de la communauté et du ménage.

Une analyse conjuguée des archives, des résultats de recensement et de la culture matérielle indique clairement que le nombre de femmes qui s'adonnaient au tissage comme source de revenu était nettement supérieur à ce que l'on a cru jusqu'à présent. Contrairement à l'opinion populaire, la production de haute qualité n'était pas le domaine exclusif des hommes. À l'intérieur du contexte domestique, les tisseuses échangeaient leurs talents contre des biens et des services, faisant partie ou non du réseau communautaire selon les besoins.

### Abstract

This case study demonstrates how women living in a rural region of New Brunswick depended upon handweaving as a means of supporting or supplementing the household income. The relationship of handwoven textiles to the lives of residents was deeply rooted in the economies of community and household. Upon combined analysis of archival material, census returns, and material evidence, it becomes clear that many more women were weaving for income than previous information would suggest; and contrary to any popular belief, high quality production was not exclusively a male preserve. Working within the context of household, the women weavers bartered their skills for goods or services, floating in and out of the community network as need required.

**Fig. 1**  
Spinning and Weaving,  
New Brunswick, ca 1885.  
(Provincial Archives of  
New Brunswick, Taylor  
Collection, P5-65)



*Just at this critical time, it occurred to me, I will commence the business of weaving. Accordingly, I set up my loom, and notified the neighbours, and I soon had plenty of work. I exerted myself to the utmost of my power. I took my pay in such trade as was suitable for our family's use, which made the payment easy for my customers. I soon got into the way of helping ourselves greatly. My labor was hard; but I was favoured with a good constitution, and I felt much encouraged and truly thankful for such a providential opening.<sup>1</sup>*

Mary Morris Bradley, 1849

When Mary Morris Bradley published her memoirs in 1849, she wrote of a time in her life when, newly married to David Morris in 1793, she found herself in difficult financial circumstances. Faced with near bankruptcy over a

lumber transaction, able to count on nothing she possessed as her own, and her husband left with "no way to earn anything in the winter,"<sup>2</sup> Mary became a weaver. Working out of her home, she received payment for her work in whatever form her customers could provide, and in this way was able to supplement their farm's meager production of milk, butter, potatoes and pork. While her husband's income — from whatever work he could find — was turned over to their creditors, Mary's weaving provided the mainstay for their household.

Such a scenario typifies the role of women weavers in the rural economy of mid-nineteenth century Queens County. As a case study analysis, this paper demonstrates the importance of handweaving within the seasonal life cycle of communities and households. Although not exclusively a female occupation, evidence suggests that within the County there were women who depended upon handweaving as a means of supporting or supplementing their family's income. In the majority of these cases their work may not have been recognized as a profession, yet it did constitute an intricate part of the community exchange network.

### **The Dual Economies of Community and Household**

Queens County is located in southern New Brunswick, approximately halfway between Fredericton and Saint John. The main waterway is the river St John, which flows centrally through the county, fed by the tributaries of Jemseg, Washademoak, and Canaan Rivers, as well as Grand Lake, and Washademoak Lake. It was along these waterways that settlements of Acadian, Colonial American, and British origin developed beginning as early as the seventeenth century. For both "New World" settlers from Colonial America and "Old World" settlers from France and Britain, textiles were very important factors in daily living. Indeed, they were central to survival and comfort.

By the mid nineteenth century, Queens County residents were by no means isolated from the outside world. In 1847 Abraham Gesner described the imports into the province as including "the necessaries and many of the luxuries of refined society."<sup>3</sup> He also expressed concern over the impact of the timber trade that continued to "bind the capital and enterprise of the country."<sup>4</sup> Many farmers, lured by the promise of cash, abandoned full time farming to work in the woods. As Lieutenant Colonel

Joseph Gubbins, a senior British officer serving as the Inspecting Field Officer of New Brunswick Militia had observed in 1811:

*Considerable improvements have been made on each side of the river [St John], every turn of which presented the richest views. The country would and indeed does, afford the necessaries of life and many luxuries where the least industry has been employed in cultivation, but the trading in timber has had a baneful effect. The labouring class devote much of their time to this lucrative employment, which would be better bestowed on their farms. They are generally paid at Saint John's for their timber ... in merchandise, principally in rum and tea and in cloths too fine for their situation in life. Agricultural pursuits are consequently neglected.<sup>5</sup>*

Similarly, Abraham Gesner reported in 1847, regarding the growing of flax and hemp:

*It is remarkable that they are not more extensively cultivated upon the dry intervales, which are admirably fitted for their growth. In the first settlement of the country, flax was raised by almost every farmer, and linens formed an important part of domestic manufacture; but since the introduction of cotton cloth, which is now so cheaply manufactured in Great Britain, the country females have laid aside their spinning wheels, and the good, durable linen tablecloths of their grandmothers are supplanted by the varnished cotton of their American neighbours.<sup>6</sup>*

Considering the amount of labour and time required to process flax into linen, it is not surprising that cotton imports would be preferred over domestic linen manufacture. Between 1840 and 1897 a variety of cotton and linen goods were advertised as arriving at the port of Saint John on vessels originating (most frequently) from Liverpool, London and Greenock.<sup>7</sup> Yet despite the availability of imports, woolen handweaving remained an important production activity within the province. As Alexander Monro reported in 1855:

*A country which raises as fine sheep as any that can be found on this continent...ought certainly to make its own cloth. Hemp has been successfully raised in many parts of the Province; and no one can call in question the capabilities of our soil for the production of flax. Notwithstanding these advantages, and the abundance of water power and of coal, the manufacture of these raw materials is principally confined to the females of our country, who make what is here called "homespun cloth", prepared in a variety of*

*ways, according to the purpose for which it is intended; and it is only due to them to say that for uniting the qualities of durability, appearance, warmth, and real utility, it is hardly exceeded by the manufacture of any country. Still, it appears that we have such a predilection for the productions of other countries, however good our own may be, however capable our artisans may be of working up our raw materials, (and they are hardly inferior to any in quickness of apprehension and ingenuity) as to prefer exporting our own produce, and often re-importing it, manufactured into articles for our own domestic consumption.<sup>8</sup>*

At provincial agricultural fairs, held triennially in various parts of New Brunswick, the participation of Queens County residents was consistently evident. At the Second Triennial Provincial Exhibition, held in Saint John in 1867, S. L. Peters<sup>9</sup> of Queens County was awarded in both the woollen blankets and woollen carpet category (with the notation "Colouring and style of this carpet excellent.")<sup>10</sup> That same year, Mrs. Lydia Coy, also of Queens County, received second place in the woollen carpet category (with judges' notation "The spinning and weaving very good, but combination of colors decidedly bad.")<sup>11</sup> Three years later, in 1870, S. L. Peters placed second in woollen blankets; and also in 1873, with a first in woollen carpets. In 1873 Mrs Jesse Clark and R. Slipp of Queens County received first in the respective categories of fulled cloth (woollen) and woollen cloth (not fulled).<sup>12</sup> Such fairs stimulated excellence and overt competition in textile production.

The existence of mills within the county for carding and/or fulling is yet another indicator of the extent to which handweaving activities existed as part of the community enterprise. A carding mill provided the community service of combing washed fleece into quilt batts or yard long strands for spinning. After cloth was woven it needed to be finished or "fulled" (matted and shrunk) to tighten the weave and produce a warmer fabric.<sup>13</sup> This could be accomplished at home, although it was a very slow and arduous operation, requiring the assistance of many hands.<sup>14</sup> A fulling mill provided a mechanical means of finishing. Depending upon the intended use for the fabric, further processing might involve dyeing, napping (brushing the fibres to raise the nap), shearing (trimming the raised fibres to create an even surface), dressing (applying size to smooth or weight the fabric) and/or pressing.<sup>15</sup>

These processes were sometimes included as part of a fulling mill operation which, in an ideal setting, could consist of a mill, a dye house, a dress house, a press shop and tenter yards. The equipment required for such an operation would include hot and cold presses and weights, pressing (or fullers') papers, furnaces, vats and kettles, napping tools, cloth (or fullers') shears, and tenter hooks or bars.<sup>16</sup> Thus a fulling mill required a substantial investment in structures and equipment, and considerable skill and knowledge in the operations. With the exception of one mill in the Parish of Hampstead in 1871, which reported fulling activity as well as carding, the extent to which Queens County mills were involved in fulling, as opposed to carding, is not known.

By 1851 six "weaving and carding establishments"<sup>17</sup> existed in Queens County within a total of nine parishes.<sup>18</sup> By 1861 the number had increased to eight (out of ten parishes,)<sup>19</sup> and by 1871 there were only six carding mills in existence<sup>20</sup> (all water driven). Three of the mills in 1871 employed females, and one was reported to be employing two girls under 16 years of age. The aggregate value of the carded wool ranged in value from \$2 000 to \$4 180; three were operated in conjunction with a grist mill, another with a fulling mill, and two as simply carding establishments.

The household activity of handweaving did not function in isolation — but was rather, on the levels of both production and exchange, an important part of the rural economy. The many stages of cloth production involved (to various extents) the farm family, the miller, the dyer, the spinner, the weaver, the fuller, the merchant, the tailor and the seamstress. Within the family itself the processes of raising and shearing the sheep, dressing the flax, washing, picking, dyeing and spinning involved the entire household.

As is evident from the chronicles of Queens County resident Janet MacDonald, the activities of home production were seasonally based, and structured around distinct gender roles. Janet MacDonald's diary demonstrates that women's work included picking, washing, greasing, dyeing, carding, and spinning wool; spinning and twisting flax; as well as quilting and sewing. Men's work involved shearing sheep, dressing flax, and socializing with the women at frolics. Such a division of labour was not uncommon in pre-industrial North American households, with primary production stages being the domain of male labour and intermediary and final stages that of females.<sup>21</sup>

The diary of Janet MacDonald, who lived at Central Cambridge (in the Parish of Cambridge), provides excellent insight into the daily life of a Queens County farm woman between the years 1857 and 1868. Her brief entries document the family role of a mother and wife in the advanced stages of her life (aged 62 to 73), and her relationship with the community around her. Born in New Brunswick in 1795, Janet MacDonald was of second generation Loyalist descent.<sup>22</sup> She married Alexander B. MacDonald at the age of 23 in 1818, and lived her entire married life on a portion of her family's farm, located at the junction of Washademoak Lake and the St John River, which she inherited.

The MacDonald diary describes a very active household economy that interacted with markets far beyond the immediate locale. Services in the form of spinning and sewing were exchanged informally between households, while there also existed a more formal interplay with traveling tradespeople. Of particular interest are the many references to peddlers stopping at the MacDonald farm.<sup>23</sup>

*June 22, 1857 — The music man is here today.*

*June 28, 1860 — Charlie Brown, the peddler, is here to dinner.*

*January 15, 1861 — Charlie Brown, the peddler, was here today.*

*February 20, 1861 — There was a peddler here today with jewellery.*

*February 21, 1861 — The peddlers, Charlie Brown and Bond, was here today.*

*February 22, 1861 — Mrs. Olmstead is here to dinner, and Cas. the peddler.*

Although it is not certain to what extent Janet MacDonald may have bartered handwoven goods for the itinerants' wares, her diary does show that visits from traveling salespeople were common and frequent; on February 22, 1861, Janet MacDonald writes, "The peddlers is quite plenty this week [sic]."<sup>24</sup> Even the availability of fashionable goods such as jewellery was not outside the realm of county residents:

*March 6, 1862 — This afternoon there came a man selling cement to mend earthen or glassware.*

*March 7, 1862 — One man that stayed all night, started this morning, but not without leaving some stock behind him. We had to wash all the bed clothes after him. He served Mr. Bulyea's beds the same.*

*February 2, 1865 — Mr. Bowser the colporteur was here.*

*February 9, 1865 — Mr. Bishop the colporteur came today and stayed all night.*

Throughout the spring and summer months the MacDonald household was busy preparing fleece (shearing, picking, washing, and carding), spinning wool, and dyeing yarn:

*June 2, 1857 — We began to spin today.*

*June 30, 1857 — We finished spinning today.*

*August 11, 1857 — Sally and Mary is twisting<sup>25</sup> yarn out in the barn.*

*August 18, 1857 — George and B. was up to Mr. McClarey's with their yarn. We colored black today.<sup>26</sup>*

*August 19, 1857 — We are coloring green today.*

*June 22, 1858 — Charlotte Watts came to spin this morning.<sup>27</sup>*

*June 24, 1858 — Charlotte Watts and Elinor Furlong is spinning. Mary is braiding splints. Sally is sewing. I have been spinning some today.*

*July 2, 1858 — This forenoon I was twisting thread and yarn.*

*May 2, 1861 — We washed wool today.<sup>28</sup>*

*May 9, 1862 — Washing black wool today.*

*April 20, 1863 — Donald shearing sheep. He did not finish, the shears broke. Fred went to Mr. Bulyea's for shears.*

*April 27, 1863 — We are picking wool.<sup>29</sup>*

*April 29, 1863 — Greased the wool and fixed it for the machine.<sup>30</sup>*

*May 23, 1865 — Commenced to spin today.*

In addition to wool, Janet MacDonald was also processing flax for thread and twine:

*May 25, 1858 — I was spinning flax today for thread.*

*March 11, 1859 — Father is dressing flax these days.<sup>31</sup>*

*March 18, 1859 — Sally and I winding twine today.<sup>32</sup> We finished it.*

*April 8, 1859 — I am spinning nowadays for a shad [fish] net.*

*April 23, 1861 — I am spinning flax today.*

*July 28, 1862 — I was spinning and running out my thread; I caught my foot and fell backwards; I put out my hand to save myself, and fell all my weight and broke my wrist.*

And as her grandson, William C. MacDonald later recalled:

*People raised their own flax and manufactured their own linen. Knowledge of the art was common. To raise flax, ret it, ted it, swingle it, hetchel it, and finally produce the pure fibers to weave into sheets, pillowcases, dresses, shirts, and all the things now made of cotton was common knowledge. I have seen Grandfather MacDonald carry out these pro-*

cesses and have seen Grandmother spin the flax from the distaff.<sup>33</sup>

Janet MacDonald does not refer specifically to weaving at any time, but does mention taking plaid to Joseph Hendry's, sending her son for the pressed cloth, the tailor finishing his work, and making shirts for her son. These activities suggest that she may have been producing cloth. Her interaction with peddlers suggests, as well, a barter link in which handwoven goods may have been exchanged for other goods. In addition, Janet MacDonald refers to sewing, quilting, frolics and purchasing fabric:

*December 26, 1857 — Malcolm<sup>34</sup> was over the lake after the pressed cloth.*

*September 27, 1858 — I took my plaid to Joseph Hendry's this evening.*

*September 30, 1859 — I put my quilting on the frame today.*

*March 2, 1860 — The tailor finishes this evening.*

*May 5, 1862 — Ruth is here helping to make Malcolm's shirts. He came home tonight and began to put up his things, he is going away.*

*December 19, 1866 — Mary has a sewing frolic today. She had Harriett, Emma and Anna Mott, Ruth, Susan and Elizabeth Hendry, Beckah and Adaline McDonald, Melissa Vale and Mary Jane MacDonald. The young men came at night; Douglas and Howard and Joseph Mott, Thomas Vale, Melvin Hendry and James McDonald.*

*July 7, 1862 — Aunt Charlotte, Ruth, Jane, Susan, and Mrs. William Mott come; they got it off before tea, my double chain. Aunt Betsy helped me piece it.*

*August 24, 1865 — I put a quilt on today in the old house.*

*August 17, 1865 — Mary has a frolic today hooking a mat.*

*January 22, 1868 — I was at the shop, got a pound of calico.*

Joseph Hendry of Lower Cambridge, to whom Janet MacDonald took her plaid on 27 September 1858, was operating the one (water powered) carding mill in the parish in 1871 and employed three people. Given the geographics, no doubt MacDonald was also referring to Joseph Hendry's operation in her diary reference to Malcolm going over the lake for the pressed cloth (26 December 1857). This statement suggests the existence of a press shop, which also constituted part of a fulling mill operation.<sup>35</sup>

## Weaving as Women's Work

A common assertion among Canadian textile historians has been that handweaving was predominantly a male profession in eastern Canada. This theory has been consistently reinforced by various publications on the topic of textile history in Canada.<sup>36</sup> In the landmark 1972 publication *Keep Me Warm One Night: Early Handweaving in Eastern Canada*, a fundamental distinction was established between domestic and "professional" handweaving: once production became part of the domestic duties of women within a household, it was no longer considered to be professional work.<sup>37</sup> The concept that handweaving was predominantly a male profession is based upon findings in the 1871 nominal census returns for Ontario in which historians found "some 3,000 weavers" listed, and all but 1 percent were men.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the weakness in this conclusion is that the authors do not appear to have closely analyzed returns for the Maritime Provinces. For Nova Scotia alone, it was stated that in the early nineteenth century a "number of men are listed in official records as professional weavers;" however, as was known to have happened in Cape Breton, these male weavers passed their knowledge on to their daughters rather than their sons.<sup>39</sup> For this reason, the authors concluded, weaving lost its status as a profession and became part of the regular domestic duties in almost every home. The authors seem to have attributed a lesser value to domestic work within the Maritime economy, and even go so far as to speculate that the gender transition in weaving from men's work to women's work provides an explanation for why "the more complex weaves died out in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick."<sup>40</sup> Considering the weaving traditions of New Brunswick, exemplified by the extant material evidence, one can question whether such relatively "complex weaves" ever really died out — but rather instead, the level of complexity remained unchanged.

In recent years, Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens have closely re-examined the role of women in cloth production by re-defining the term "profession." In so doing, they have discredited the myth that most professional weavers were men.<sup>41</sup> Based upon detailed statistical analysis of the 1870 reports of Manufactures for Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, Inwood and Roelens argue that as late as 1870, handweaving by women in their homes was an important

avenue for cloth production. In fact, domestic home weaving accounted for more than half of all cloth production outside of Ontario in 1870 (58 percent in Quebec, 60 percent in New Brunswick, and 78 percent in Nova Scotia; compared to only 16 percent in Ontario). Clearly these figures indicate that Ontario cannot be considered the norm for eastern Canada. In the words of Inwood and Roelens: "even as late as 1870 domestic production was too important to be ignored in Canada."<sup>42</sup> Unlike earlier historians, Inwood and Roelens recognize domestic production as professional work. And in striking contrast to previous conclusions, Inwood and Roelens have found that women dominated handweaving in both Ontario and the Maritimes (New Brunswick and Nova Scotia), comprising respectively 85 percent and 98 percent of the weavers.

In the Queens County census reports for 1861-1891, female weavers significantly outnumbered males by a ratio of 2.3 to 1. Between those years, only 9 of the 30 individuals listed in nominal census returns as weavers were male. Only in 1861 did males slightly outnumber females (8 to 5); by 1881, and thereafter, all weavers were female (Table 1). Of the 9 male weavers, 7 had been born in Ireland, while 18 of the 21 female weavers had been born in New Brunswick. These figures would indicate that even within the limited scope of nominal census returns, most professional weavers in Queens County were New Brunswick born women. Indeed, after 1871, all weavers were female. The differences in gender and birth origins among weavers reflect culturally based distinctions between Irish immigrant and native born populations.<sup>43</sup>

An analysis of the age of weavers listed in Queens County nominal returns suggests that among those with a reported occupation of weaving, there existed a characteristic of maturity. For 1861 and 1871 the mean age for male weavers was 55 years (median 55); while the mean for female weavers between 1861 and 1891 was 41 (median 43). Ages for males ranged from a mean of 49 in 1861 to 60 in 1871, with the youngest being 16 (in 1861) and the eldest 80 (also in 1861); ages for female weavers, all of whom were either single or widowed, ranged from a mean of 26 in 1861 to 52 in 1891, the youngest being 17 (in 1861) and the eldest 79 (in 1891) (Table 2). The mean age range over census returns is significantly wider among females than males; and the mean age variance among single status female weavers suggests a transitional trend from handweaving as a

	1861	1871	1881	1891
<b>Males</b>	8	1	0	0
<b>Females</b>	5	5	3	8

**Table 1**  
**Weavers by Gender, 1861-1891**

<b>Table 2</b> <b>Queens County Weavers by Gender, Age, Marital and Household Status 1861-1891</b>					
<b>Males</b>					
	1861	1871	1881	1891	Totals (mean)
<b>Age:</b>					
Mean	49	60			55
Median	54	60			58
<b>Marital Status:</b>					
Single	5	0			5
Married	3	1			4
Widowed	0	0			0
Sub-total	8	1			9
<b>Household Status:</b>					
Head	3	1	0	0	4
Dependent	0	0	0	0	0
Lodger	5	0	0	0	5
Co-habitant	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total	8	1	0	0	9
<b>Females</b>					
	1861	1871	1881	1891	Totals (mean)
<b>Age:</b>					
Mean	26	48	38	52	41
Median	23	53	37	53.5	41
<b>Marital Status:</b>					
Single	5	5	1	4	15
Married	0	0	0	0	0
Widowed	0	0	2	4	6
Sub-total	5	5	3	8	21
<b>Household Status:</b>					
Head	1	0	1	6	8
Dependent	2	1	2	2	7
Lodger	1	3	0	0	4
Co-habitant	1	1	0	0	2
Sub-total	5	5	3	8	21

younger woman's occupation in 1861 (mean 26) to a mature woman's (beyond child-bearing years) occupation in 1891 (mean 52).<sup>44</sup> This

profile is personified in William C. MacDonald's recollection of Betsey Starkey, a weaver his mother had "engaged" to do the family weaving circa 1870:

*Once at our house the loom was brought down from Grandfather's to do the family weaving as Mother had engaged Betsey Starkey from Thorntown up the lake to do alot of weaving. I believe Betsey was distantly connected to the Mott family by marriage.*

*Betsey was beyond middle age and had a very cantankerous disposition. She was a tea inebriate and required a special teapot and was provided with her own supply of tea. The teapot stood on the stove all the time and at intervals tea and water added and the pot allowed to boil. The decoction was used whenever Betsey's system demanded it. She drank nothing else. When in need of tea she became somewhat insane and did and said peculiar things. When one of us children passed the loom she would hit us a crack with the shuttle if it happened in its to and fro journey to be nearest us. At such times she was prone to make mistakes in the pattern. This did not matter much in plain weaving but on this occasion Mother was having some cloth made for suits for me. The pattern was not bad but as there were three colors in the design a mistake became terribly obvious. There seemed to be no way of undoing the mistakes so the web was finished and in due time the clothes were made, and exhibited here and there the record of Betsey's aberration...Until the clothes were worn out the effect was classically referred to as "Betsey's mistakes"...Betsey wove blankets, kersey for working clothes, carpets with wide rainbow stripes running along the middle of the web, fine goods for women's petticoats and panties, and both blue and red pieces for men's shirts and underwear."<sup>45</sup>*

When considered within the context of household status and family life cycles, the gender distinctions among Queens County weavers become even more clear. Within the family household, 5 (out of a total of 9) male weavers in 1861 and 1871 were lodgers, while 4 actually functioned as the head of the household. Among females the household status was more varied, in that 8 (out of a total of 21) functioned as the head of the household (main income), while 7 were dependents (providing supplemental income),<sup>46</sup> 4 were lodgers, and 2 were co-habitants (shared income); none were married (Table 2). This would suggest that all but four of the female weavers were providing sole or supplemental income support for the household. Coincident with the age transition

that took place among single females between 1861 and 1891, another transition also occurred from a young, dependent status in 1861, to a mature head of household status in 1891. Of the female heads of household, all but one were widows — the majority of whom had working age dependents living in the household. For these women, handweaving may have provided a supplementary, if not essential, avenue for survival in widowhood.

In 1851, in Queens County, approximately 1 in 4 families possessed a handloom (0.26 looms per family). The production average of cloth per family for that year was 34.35 yards (31.4 metres), with production per handloom being 130.57 yards (119.4 metres) (Table 3). This would suggest that in 1851 the 454 handlooms in the county were producing far more cloth than required within the household, and indeed, may have been servicing the needs of the entire county. By 1861 the ratio of handlooms neared 1 to 5 (0.21 looms per family).

**Table 3**  
**Queens County Handloom Production**  
**1851-1871**

	1851	1861	1871
Number of looms	454	432	n/a
Yards of cloth produced	59,283	n/a	75,581
Average yards per loom	130.57	n/a	n/a
Yards homemade linen	n/a	n/a	600
Number of family units	1,726	2,094	2,411
Production average/ family unit	34.35 yds	n/a	31.59
Number of weavers in nominal returns	n/a	13	6

Cloth production in 1861 was measured by cash value rather than yardage, which makes a comparative analysis difficult; however, returns indicate the average cash value of cloth and other home manufactures per loom was \$21.39. The average amount of cloth produced per family in 1871 decreased slightly from 1851 figures to 31.59 yards (28.9 metres). Given that between 1851 and 1871 cloth production (per family) did not change drastically, and also considering that the six weavers listed in the 1871 nominal returns could not possibly have produced the 76,181 total yards (69 660 metres) of cloth reported for the county, it is conceivable that the number of handlooms in Queens County in 1871 would have remained relatively high, in keeping with 1851 and 1861 figures.

The total number of handlooms reported in agricultural census returns for 1851 (454) and 1861 (432), compared to the total number of weavers reported in nominal returns for 1861 (13), would suggest that more individuals were handweaving than were listed as weavers in nominal returns (Table 3). Even if the possibility that not all of the households possessing a handloom were active in handweaving is taken into consideration, the vast differences in the ratio of weavers to looms cannot be explained by the existence of itinerants. It is also significant to note the advertisements for cotton warp and homespun cloth, which appeared in Saint John newspapers between 1840 and 1897, confirming that during this time there existed a domestic market for trade in both:

Andrew Hastings, Store, no. 3 Market Square  
(*New Brunswick Courier*, May 19, 1860):

*...Now in receipt of the balance of his spring stock; offered wholesale and retail at the lowest possible prices to meet the requirements of city and country purchasers. The country trade is invited to an inspection of the store.*<sup>47</sup>

Samuel Brown, 31 King Street, *New Brunswick Courier*, January 5, 1861):

*Bargains! Bargains!...Now offers to the public one of the largest and choicest stocks of fancy and staple dry goods ever offered in this city, - consisting in part of...The above goods will be sold cheap for cash in order to make a clearance! 1000 yds. homespun wanted; 100 doz. pair socks wanted; 100 doz. pair mitts wanted.*<sup>48</sup>

Known weavers, such as Mary Bradley (1793), Sybel Grey (1845), Julia Lynch (1849), Lydia Estabrooks (1853), and others, may not have been recognized by census takers as having an occupation because their handweaving was a secondary or (as in the case of Mary Bradley) temporary source of income. Nevertheless, all received outside reimbursement for their work, and, for all, weaving was a valued skill within the family as well as the community.<sup>49</sup> Given this scenario, the widowed females listed in nominal returns as weavers may very well have not taken up a new occupation in widowhood; but rather were continuing on with a skill in which they were already well experienced. Their widowed status may only have made the value of their occupation more apparent to census enumerators.

When Mary Morris Bradley of the Gagetown area turned to weaving in 1793, she was in her

own modest way providing the sole income for her family:

*I had the privilege of two cows' milk; one my husband brought home, and the other my father gave me; so that by an interchange of milk with my mother, I made plenty of cheese and butter for our own use. We raised potatoes sufficient for the family, and for fattening our pork; so that with these necessaries of life, milk and butter, potatoes and pork, with but little bread, we lived...We did not raise grain sufficient for our own use; but my weaving in the winter, when the dairy was out of the way, procured for us as much bread stuff as we needed.*<sup>50</sup>

As Marjorie Griffin Cohen points out, in such a situation household labour — specifically women's work — was critical to family survival:

*To the extent that women's productive efforts sustained the family in its basic consumption needs, male labour was free to engage in production for exchange on the market (through either commodity production or waged labour); to the extent that the total income from market production need not be expended on consumption, accumulation of capital in the family productive unit could occur.*<sup>51</sup>

Similarly, Sybel Grey was a Queens County "bluenose"<sup>52</sup> woman whose skill as a spinner and weaver contributed greatly to the household, as well as community, economy. In 1845, Mrs Francis Beavan, an English 'gentlewoman' who had lived at Long Creek (Queens County) for seven years, wrote that due to her own inability to meet her family's textile needs, and since wool production was an essential aspect of "backwoods life," she employed Sybel Grey to spin and weave for her:

*The manufacture of the wool raised on the farm is the most important part of the woman's work, and in this the natives particularly excel. As yet I knew not the mysteries of colouring brown with butternut bark, nor the proper proportion of sweet fern and indigo to produce green, so that our wool, on its return from the carding mill, had been left with this person — lady, "par courtesie," — who was perfect adept in the art, to be spun and wove: and the business on which I now call is to arrange with her as its different proportions and purposes. What for blankets, for clothing, and for socks and mittens, which all require a different style of manufacture, and are all items of such importance during the winter snows.*<sup>53</sup>

After having taken her fleece to the carding mill to be carded, Mrs Beavan left it with Sybel Grey to be spun, dyed, and woven into necessary goods for winter survival. Beavan herself was unable to perform this essential work<sup>54</sup> and appears to have been either unable or unwilling to purchase the required goods as imports. Thus, Beavan was dependent upon Sybel Grey, a weaver. Mrs Beavan considered Sybel Grey's work an essential service; and in turn Grey's weaving was a valued source of income to her family. In this case handweaving functioned as a significant element within the community economy. Indeed, considering the winter climate, it is understandable why Mrs Beavan regarded wool production as an important aspect of women's work.

Within the network of exchange, Queens County weavers bartered with neighbours and merchants for a range of goods and services. In so doing, these weavers may not have been seeking profits by participating directly in a wage market economy, but instead were simply attempting to better their condition indirectly by securing needed items and services. In the neighbouring county of Sunbury such was the case when Nathaniel Hubbard of Burton was acting as a middleman in cloth manufacture. Handweaving was functioning as a valuable commodity of trade — receiving and exchanging goods for goods:

*Nath'l Hubbard Esq. - Jas Bailey:*  
weaving 17 yards of homespun at 6 1/2 per yrd  
weaving 23 yards of homespun at 6 per yrd  
Maugerville, 13th Feby 1833

*N Hubbard Esq. - Wm. Lynch:*  
Oct 1850 - weaving 51 1/2 yds cloth at 15  
per yd  
Received from Nath'l Hubbard, the sum of  
two pounds shillings and six pence,  
being the full sum due...for weaving cloth  
up to this date 11th January 1849  
-Julia Lynch [signed]

*Nath'l Hubbard Esq - Currier and Turner*  
July 28/51 Carding 86 lbs wool  
extra carding  
paid to Aug 10th 1851  
Charles Hazen & James White

*Nathaniel Hubbard Esq. - Lydia A Estabrooks:*  
weaving 21 \_ yd of cloath [sic]  
weaving 13 yd  
Received payment  
-James Estabrooks [his mark] (April, 1853)

*Received from Nath'l Hubbard Esq. for  
Mrs. Wm Estabrooks:*

*The sum of twenty shillings for weaving,  
being in full up to this date 3d May 1854  
- Jas W Estabrooks [his mark]*

*N Hubbard - Mr Currier*  
Carding 61 lb wool at 2 1/2  
Received payment  
H Beckwith  
Oromocto July 25, 1855

*Garey Mills, Burton June 26th 1872*  
*Mrs S Henry Mitchel for Mr Hubbard*  
- Thomas E. Smith, Wool Carder, and  
Manufacturer of lumber of every descrip-  
tion carding 82 lbs wool<sup>55</sup>

Julia Lynch, Lydia Estabrooks, and Mrs William Estabrook, although obviously weaving for income, are not listed in the 1851 nominal returns as weavers by occupation; James Bailey, however, is listed. No doubt, given the quantity of looms which were in existence, there were many more women weavers in similar situations for whom archival documentation does not exist.

Many examples of handwoven textiles survive today in public and private collections<sup>56</sup> as material documentation of the handweaving traditions of Queens County. For many of the women to whom clear attribution can be made, their blankets and coverlets are the only remaining evidence of their work as weavers. If it were not for these artifacts, we would not know that the work had occurred. The Robinson women of Cambridge-Narrows are an example of this: neither Martha Elizabeth (Springer) Robinson, nor any of her four daughters are credited in census returns as weavers, although the material evidence exists to indicate that they were very skilled craftspeople.<sup>57</sup>

In 1847, Martha Elizabeth Springer of Jemseg married John Robinson of Cambridge-Narrows. In anticipation of the marriage, Martha Springer prepared her trousseau of bedding, which included at least two blankets on which she cross-stitched her initials "M. E. S."<sup>58</sup> By 1861, Martha and John Robinson were living on the Robinson family farm with John's parents and sister, and seven young children ranging in age from 3 to 11. Martha was not listed in the nominal returns as a weaver, and it cannot be determined as to how actively she was weaving; however, the family reported a cash value of \$25 worth of "cloth and other home manufactures" (slightly above the county average of \$21.39). Theirs was a wealthy farm of 600 acres (243 ha), with a cash value of \$4 000 (compared to the county average of 169 acres (68 ha) valued at \$1 331.27). Also

reported was one loom, 26 sheep, 10 lbs (4.5 kg) of wool, and 6 lbs (2.5 kg) of scrotched flax — somewhat substantial holdings in comparison to the county average of 9.13 sheep, 27.77 lbs (12.5 kg) of wool, and 0.11 lbs (0.05 kg) of flax.

A further indication of Martha Robinson's possible weaving activity (and/or the market for handwoven cloth within the region) is evident in the circa 1867 photograph of her two sons

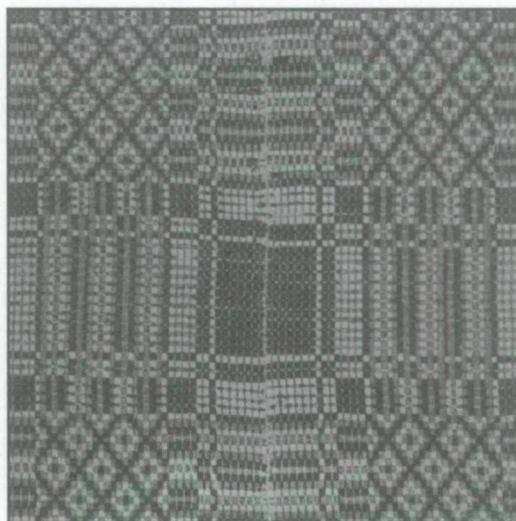


(Fig. 2), in which the eldest wears a pair of handwoven pants. By 1871, Martha Robinson's daughters Mary Ann, Martha Elizabeth, Rachel Jane, and Rebecca Amelia were aged 18, 16, 15, and 11 respectively. Martha Robinson was no longer living, however, in census returns for that year the household reported 20 sheep, 100 yards (91 metres) of homemade cloth and flannel, and 110 pounds (50 kilograms) of wool. These figures are extraordinarily high in comparison to county averages of 7.04 sheep, 31.59 yards (28.9 metres) of cloth and flannel, and 26.48 pounds (12 kilograms) of wool. Given such large amounts of reported cloth and wool, it is highly probable that the Robinson daughters were producing handwoven cloth even though they are not listed in the nominal returns as weavers. Any of the four may have been actively weaving the coverlets and blankets that are now in the Kings Landing Collection.

It could be argued that the handweaving of the Robinson women does not provide enough substantial proof of an occupational work ethic; the quality of the extant work, however, certainly dispels any doubts about their level of professional skill. An analysis of pattern weft angle, and centre seam variance supports the quality of work produced by the Robinson weavers to be far too precise for that of novices. Handweaving skill and experience can be measured by the accuracy of beating and pattern angles.

The final test of any handweaver's work is at the centre seam — particularly when using an advanced technique such as overshot or double weave, which produces distinct pattern images. Since handloom (as opposed to fly shuttle) weaving requires a centre seam on bedding measuring more than 85 centimetres in width, flaws in beating and weft counts become distinct when the two sides are joined at the centre. For the six Robinson overshot coverlets, all of which represent variations upon a single pattern, the pattern weft variance — that is to say, the widest point at which the patterns of the two sides do not match perfectly — range from 0.5 to 1.4 centimetres (Figs. 3 to 5). The work of skilled and experienced weavers, indeed.

It cannot be determined to what extent the Robinson women participated in a network of community exchange as weavers. Yet, the level of skill that is exemplified in the surviving examples of their work, combined with the 1861 and 1871 census reports on home manufacture, certainly suggest more than a self-sufficiency mode of production. Given that all six of the coverlets analyzed represent



**Fig. 2**  
John (left) and George (right) Robinson, children of Martha, ca 1867. Note handwoven pants worn by John Robinson. (Kings Landing Corporation, M91.12)

**Fig. 3**  
Coverlet, Robinson Collection. (Kings Landing Corporation, M78.3.23)

variations upon one overshot weaving pattern (Monmouth), combined with the level of quality production, it is apparent that these women made a conscious effort to master their craft. The variations in overall pattern designs were obtained by rearranging the tie-up and treddling sequences to produce pattern variations of tables, crosses, and stars (Figs. 3 to 5).<sup>59</sup> Such method of weaving is mathematical in nature and cannot be mastered easily or quickly. No doubt the Robinson women valued their weaving skill very highly; for as Francis Beavan observed of Sybel Gray in 1845:

*On the large airy-looking couch is displayed a splendid coverlet of home-spun wool, manufactured in a peculiar style, the possessing of which is the first ambition of a back-wood matron, and for which she will manoeuvre as much as a city lady would — Sybel has joined her's by saving each year a portion of the wool, until she had enough to accomplish this sure mark of industry, and of getting along in the world; for if they are not getting along or improving in circumstance their farms will not raise sheep enough to yield the wool, and if they are not industrious the yarn will not be spun for this much-prized coverlet, which despite the local importance attached to it, is a useful, handsome and valuable article in itself.<sup>60</sup>*

Just over 100 years later, on 11 February 1946, Rachel Jane Robinson celebrated her ninetieth birthday, and on the occasion she was photographed with her sister, Rebecca Amelia, cutting her birthday cake (Fig. 6). There, in the background, on Rebecca's bed, is displayed an overshot coverlet, nearly identical in pattern

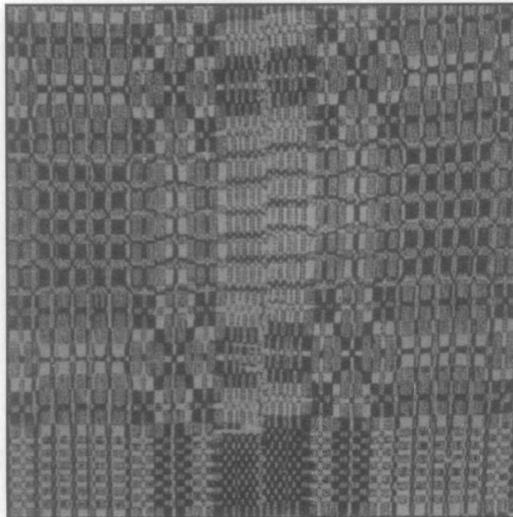
draft to one found in the Robinson Collection — a true testimony to the handweaving traditions of the Robinson family and the personal value placed upon the work of women weavers.

## Conclusion

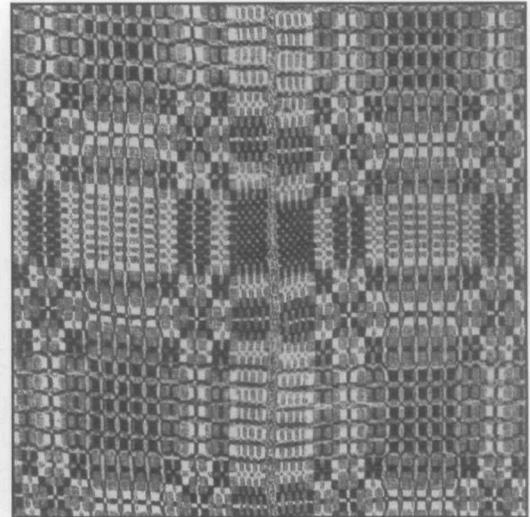
The relationship of handwoven textiles to the daily lives of Queens County residents was deeply rooted in the economies of community and household. As a case study analysis, this research paper demonstrates that county residents did not live in isolation from the outside world, but rather, in contradiction to any pioneer image of self-sufficiency, were clearly part of a larger consumer culture with access to many imported luxuries. Yet, within this context the production of handwoven goods within the home remained important throughout the century. As the operations of each household fluctuated between capital markets and subsistence farming, the women weavers bartered their skills, floating in and out of the community network as need required. In these instances the weavers may not have been seeking profits by participating in the wage market, but instead were attempting to better their family's condition indirectly by exchanging their specialized ability for market goods and services. Within this context, theirs was truly an occupation of 'providential openings,' directed by timely actions.

The household activity of cloth manufacture comprised many stages of production that involved the entire community. Services were exchanged informally between households, while there also existed a more formal interplay between households and community

**Fig. 4 (left)**  
Coverlet, Robinson Collection. (Kings Landing Corporation, M78.3.24)



**Fig. 5 (right)**  
Coverlet, Robinson Collection. (Kings Landing Corporation, M78.3.31)



commerce. Farmer, miller, dyer, spinner, fuller, merchant, tailor and seamstress all benefited from the enterprise of the household weaver. Within the home itself, the production of cloth was seasonally based and structured around distinct gender roles.

The Robinson collection of blankets and coverlets is but one study sample of the many handwoven textiles that survive today as artifactual proof of the weaving skill that existed in mid-nineteenth century Queens County. For women such as Martha Elizabeth Robinson, to whom clear attribution can be made, their blankets and coverlets are the only remaining evidence of their work as weavers.

Upon combined analysis of Queens County archival material, census returns, and material evidence belonging to the Robinson family, one fact becomes certain: many more women were weaving as an occupation than previous information would suggest, and contrary to any popular belief, weaving was not exclusively a male occupation (nor was high quality production purely a male preserve). In fact, the majority of known weavers in Queens County were females who depended upon their work as a supplemental or primary source of income.



The women weavers of Queens County, New Brunswick, provided a valued service to their community, and, regardless of whether they were officially recognized as working in a professional capacity, contributed substantially to the economic well-being of family and neighbours.

**Fig. 6**  
Rachel Jane (left) and Rebecca Amelia (right) Robinson, on the occasion of Rachel Jane's ninetieth birthday, 11 February 1946. (Kings Landing Corporation, M91.12)

#### NOTES

1. Mrs Mary Bradley, *A Narrative of the Life and Christian Experiences of Mrs. Mary Bradley* (Boston: Strong and Brodhead, 1849), 102.
2. Bradley, 102.
3. Abraham Gesner, *New Brunswick with Notes for Emigrants* (London: Simmonds and Wood, 1847), 307.
4. *Ibid.*, 304.
5. Howard Temperley, ed., *Gubbins' New Brunswick Journals 1811 and 1813* (Fredericton: Kings Landing Corporation, 1980), 5. Similarly, Abraham Gesner remarks: "Of the produce of agriculture the Province makes no export, but, on the contrary, imports largely from the United States, Great Britain, and the Colonies... This may seem an extraordinary fact, especially as the soil has been represented to be fertile and favourable for tillage; but it is in part the result of the timber trade, which has taken away the bone and muscle from husbandry, and rendered it incapable of supplying the rural population, the towns, lumbering parties, and fishermen." Gesner, 305.
6. Gesner, 241.
7. See Appendix 1.
8. Alexander Monro, *New Brunswick With A Brief Outline of Nova Scotia, And Prince Edward Island. Their History, Civil Divisions, Geography, and Productions; With Statistics Of The Several Counties; Affording Views of The Resources And Capabilities Of The Provinces, And Intended To Convey Useful Information, As Well To Their Inhabitants, As To Emigrants, Strangers, And Travellers, And For The Use Of Schools* (Halifax: Richard Nugent, 1855), 118–119.
9. Mrs Samuel L. Peters, Parish of Hampstead, is listed in the 1861 nominal returns as aged 57, born in New Brunswick, and Head of the Household with five dependents ranging in age from 14 to 85. New Brunswick Genealogical Society and Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, *Recensement 1861 Census Comté de Queens County Nouveau-Brunswick New Brunswick* (Fredericton: Province of New Brunswick, 1991), 1.
10. *Journals of the House of Assembly of New Brunswick, 1868* (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick), vol. 2, 91.
11. *Ibid.*, 91.
12. *Journals of the House of Assembly of New Brunswick, 1871, 1874* (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick).
13. Worn blankets were sometimes fulled to restore warmth.
14. See Beverly Gordon, *The Final Steps, Traditional Methods and Contemporary Applications for Finishing Cloth by Hand* (Loveland: Interweave Press, 1982) for descriptions of hand and foot

- fulling techniques; also, Robert Cunningham and John B. Prince, *Tamped Clay and Saltmarsh Hay (Artifacts of New Brunswick)* (Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, 1976), 155; and Harold B. Burnham and Dorothy K. Burnham, *Keep Me Warm One Night: Early Handweaving in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1972), 62.
15. For an analysis of the fulling process, as well as resources and skill required, see Adrienne Dora Hood, "Organization and Extent of Textile Manufacture in Eighteenth-Century Rural Pennsylvania: A Case Study of Chester County," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1988), 157-174.
  16. *Ibid.*, 161.
  17. See David P. Gagan, "Enumerator's Instructions for the Census of Canada 1851 and 1861," *Histoire Sociale — Social History* 7, no. 14 (1974): 353-365 for an explanation of this term.
  18. See Appendix 2.
  19. See Appendix 3.
  20. See Appendix 4.
  21. Carole Shammass, "How Self-Sufficient was Early America?," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13, no. 2 (Autumn 1982): 253.
  22. Marion Gilchrist Reicker, *Those Days are Gone Away: Queens County, New Brunswick, 1643-1901* (Gagetown: Queens County Historical Society, 1981), 118; Esther Clark Wright, *The Loyalists of New Brunswick* (Moncton: Moncton Publishing Company, 1955), 260, 291.
  23. MacDonald Diary (University of New Brunswick Archives).
  24. *Ibid.*
  25. See Appendix 5.
  26. Son George MacDonald and his wife Rebecca. Reicker, 118.
  27. Neighbour Charlotte Watts, aged 21 in 1858, one of six daughters of Diadamy Watts, widow and Spinstress by occupation. 1861 Census Returns, Parish of Cambridge, Queens County (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick).
  28. In preparation for spinning and dyeing, the wool fleece was cleansed in a hot solution of one part urine to two parts water. If the fleece was intended to be dyed, particular attention was required at this stage to be certain all natural oils were removed from the fibre. For detailed directions on the cleaning and dyeing process for wool, see J. and R. Bronson, *Early American Weaving and Dyeing: The Domestic Manufacturer's Assistant and Family Directory in the Arts of Weaving and Dyeing* (1817; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 40-45.
  29. This refers to the process of sorting the fleece by quality and size, as well as picking out any remaining dirt and knotted locks. See Alice Morse Earle, *Home Life in Colonial Days* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), 193-206, also J. and R. Bronson, 40-45, for a detailed explanation of the processing of wool.
  30. Process of restoring oils to the cleansed fibres. In preparation for the carding machines, the fleece was "greased" (or oiled) to avoid brittle fibres prone to breaking during the spinning and weaving stages. Bronson, 43-44, 152-153. This entry in Janet MacDonald's diary indicates that she was taking her fleece to a carding mill to be carded by machine.
  31. This reference is to Janet MacDonald's husband, Alexander. "Dressing" refers to the process of breaking and scutching the dried flax to separate the fibres and break away the outside bark. See Earle, 169-177 for a detailed explanation on the processing of flax.
  32. The tow (coarse) fibres from the flax plant were often used to make twine, while the finer fibres were well suited for thread. Shammass, "How Self-Sufficient was Early America?," 254.
  33. Dawn M. Bremner and Marion G. Reicker, eds., *Memoirs From the Pen of William C. MacDonald* (Gagetown: Queens County Historical Society and Museum, 1991), 16.
  34. Son, Malcolm MacDonald. Reicker, *Those Days are Gone Away*, 118.
  35. Hood, 161.
  36. Harold B. Burnham, *Canadian Textiles 1750-1900: An Exhibition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 20; Harold B. Burnham, *Handweaving in Pioneer Canada* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1971), 3, 10; Burnham and Burnham, *Keep Me Warm One Night*, 11, 179; Judith Buxton-Keenlyside, *Selected Canadian Spinning Wheels in Perspective: An Analytical Approach* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1980), 287; Dorothy K. Burnham, *The Comfortable Arts: Traditional Spinning and Weaving in Canada* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1981), 110.
  37. Burnham and Burnham, *Keep Me Warm One Night*, 10, 11.
  38. *Ibid.*, 11.
  39. *Ibid.*, 10.
  40. *Ibid.*
  41. Kris Inwood and Phyllis Wagg, "The Survival of Handloom Weaving in Rural Canada Circa 1870," *The Journal of Economic History* 53, no. 2 (1993); Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens, "Gender and Organization in the Canadian Cloth Industry, 1870," *Canadian Papers in Business History* 1 (1989): 1-2; Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens, "Labouring at the Loom: A Case Study of Rural Manufacturing in Leeds County, Ontario, 1870," *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 7 (1989): 216-217. Likewise, David-Thiery Ruddel observes in his study of the domestic textile industry in Quebec City: "Since only a few references to male weavers exist and none has been found to men spinning, these activities seem to have been reserved almost exclusively for rural women." David-Thiery Ruddel, "The Domestic Textile Industry in the Region and City of Quebec, 1792-1835," *Material History Bulletin* 17 (1983): 96.
  42. Inwood and Roelens, "Gender and Organization in the Cloth Industry," 6.
  43. As John Mannion found, the influx of Irish settlers to areas of British North America resulted in a rapid loss of their cultural traits:

*To prosper in a strange environment, all immigrants had to adapt to the pre-existing economic pattern and the rural economies eventually evolved by the Irish in the study areas frequently differed little from pre-inventory local patterns...The pattern of ethnic*

group settlement was more important than the physical environment but the differences in the rural economy between study areas were supreme in determining differences in the transfer and survival of homeland traits.

John Mannion, *Irish Settlement in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 171–174.

Likewise, Frances Beavan, writing about Queens County in 1845, cited a cultural distinction between New Brunswick and immigrant women:

*Sybel has the delicacy of appearance which the constant indoor occupation of the women gives them, differing much from the coarse but healthier look of those countries where the females assist in field labours. The "blue nose" considered it "ajin all nature" for women to work out, and none are ever seen so employed, unless it be the families of emigrants before they are naturalised.*

Francis Beavan, *Life in the Backwoods of New Brunswick* (St Stephen: Print n' Press, 1980), 2–3.

44. This age shift occurs despite the fact that the weavers, for the most part, are not the same individuals. Between 1861 and 1891 the instances for recurring name entries among weavers is very low. George Darrah appears in both 1861 and 1871 returns; Hannah Algee in 1871 and 1891. Consideration must also be given that these age transitions among *females* are only representative of single status weavers.
45. Bremner, *Memoirs From the Pen of William C. MacDonald*, 16–17.
46. In 1861, farm families reporting female weavers as dependents also reported real estate, livestock and produce holdings that were substantially above the county average.
47. *Atlantic Canada Newspaper Survey*, CHIN, Communications Canada, January 1996. Fabricated material=warps, blue, white (PARIS#12515).
48. *Ibid.*, (PARIS#23403).
49. The dependability of census information is seriously limited by the enumerator's ability to interpret the schedules and the subject. Census data is particularly problematic when analyzing female labour within the family unit. As Alan A. Brookes quotes one Kings County enumerator:
 

*I always as nearly as possible gave an estimated value of female labour, what I considered as actually employed, but in many cases this was a difficulty and in some cases I found more butter & c made by the wife of an individual farmer than in some houses where 3 or 4 women were employed but all where numbers of female labour came in question I calculated to the best of my ability to get the average value of those actually employed, in the family.*
- Alan A. Brookes, "Doing The Best I Can: The Taking of the 1861 New Brunswick Census," *Histoire sociale - Social History* 9, no. 17 (1976): 79–80.
50. Margaret Conrad, "Mary Bradley's Reminiscences: A Domestic Life in Colonial New Brunswick," *Atlantis* 7, no. 1 (Fall 1981): 93–94.
51. Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 8. See also 10, 60, 66–67.
52. Beavan, 27. This term refers to the native born descendants of United Empire Loyalists.
53. *Ibid.*, 26.
54. Considering Beavan's middle class status in English society, and the training that would have accompanied this status, it is not surprising that she did not possess the necessary skills. As Marjorie Griffin Cohen indicates, few middle-class English women had experience as farmers' wives and most were more capable of supervising the work of servants than of actually performing it themselves. Cohen, 69.
55. Hubbard Papers, (New Brunswick Museum).
56. My own survey to date totals forty-nine items.
57. The Kings Landing Collection, analyzed here, consists of fourteen blankets, six coverlets, and two winter sheets.
58. Robinson Collection, Kings Landing Corporation, M78.3.
59. For an explanation of treadling methods, see Mary E. Black, *The Key to Weaving: A Textbook of Hand Weaving for the Beginning Weaver* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1980), 268–274.
60. Beavan, 30–31.

### APPENDIX 1

References to cotton textiles within 7 016 Saint John newspaper advertisements, over nine-year groupings between 1840 and 1897:

	Annual Frequency	Vessel	Provenance
1840-49	4.7	Liverpool	22
1850-59	0.0	London	14
1860-69	5.1	Greenock	5
1870-79	5.0		
1880-89	6.1		
1890-97	3.3		

References to linen, over nine-year groupings between 1840 and 1897:

	Annual Frequency	Vessel	Provenance
1840-49	2.7	Liverpool	14
1850-59	0.0	London	11
1860-69	1.7	Greenock	4
1870-79	1.1		
1880-89	2.1		
1890-97	1.2		

*Atlantic Canada Newspaper Survey*, CHIN, Communications Canada, January 1996. New Brunswick data has been extracted from select Saint John newspapers for extant issues for the years 1800-1833, 1840, 1842, 1850, 1860, 1862, 1863, 1879, 1880, 1890, and 1897.

### APPENDIX 2

Weaving and carding establishments (compared with household looms and cloth production), Queens County, 1851:

Parish	W/C est'ts	Hands employed	Household looms	*Yards	**Avg/loom
Brunswick	0	0	23	790	34.34
Canning	0	0	48	5,293	110.27
Chipman	0	0	35	4,305	123.00
Gagetown	1	1	21	3,950	188.09
Hampstead	1	3	49	8,440	172.24
Johnston	1	2	80	10,428	130.35
Petersville	0	0	50	6,479	129.58
Waterborough	2	6	81	10,145	125.24
Wickham	1	2	67	9,453	141.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>59,283</b>	<b>130.57</b>

\* Total yards of cloth produced within households

\*\* Average yards of cloth produced per loom

### APPENDIX 3

Weaving and carding establishments (compared with household looms), Queens County, 1861:

Parish	W/C est'ts	Hands employed	Motive power	Household looms
Brunswick	0	0		39
Cambridge	1	3	water	72
Canning	1	2	water	20
Chipman	0	0		19
Gagetown	1	0	water	15
Hampstead	1	2	water	47
Johnston	1	n/a	water	91
Petersville	1	n/a	water	15
Waterborough	1	n/a	water	52
Wickham	1	n/a	water	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>water</b>	<b>432</b>

#### APPENDIX 4

Carding Mills (compared to household cloth production), Queens County, 1871:

Parish	Amount	Employees	Motive power	*Yards cloth	**Yards linen
Brunswick	0	0		2,319	72
Cambridge	1	3	water	8,359	86
Canning	1	2	water	5,497	112
Chipman	0	0		8,716	10
Gagetown	0	0		5,754	0
Hampstead	1	2	water	6,566	45
Johnston	1	3	water	11,960	85
Petersville	1	1	water	11,974	76
Waterborough	1	3	water	8,216	108
Wickham	0	0		6,220	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>water</b>	<b>75,581</b>	<b>600</b>

\* Yards homemade cloth and flannel produced within households

\*\* Yards homemade linen produced within households

Unfortunately, comparative data for the years 1881 and 1891 does not exist.

#### APPENDIX 5

Sally (wife of James) and daughter Mary. In 1861 the MacDonald household consisted of:

Name	relationship	age	occupation
Alexander B. MacDonald	husband	67	farmer
Janet	wife	67	
Donald	son	36	farmer
James	son	40	farmer
Sarah	wife	36	
Mary	daughter	12	
Susannah	daughter	10	
Frederic	son	8	
Robert	son	5	
Mary Smith	sister	38	
Thomas Lockey	lodger	67	teacher

Nominal Census Returns, Parish of Cambridge, Queens County, 1861 (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick). In this entry "twisting" refers to plying the yarn.