

Article

Textile Purchases by Some Ordinary Upper Canadians, 1808–1861

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Résumé

Ce que nous connaissons des textiles manufacturés, habituellement la plus grande catégorie d'importations coloniales, se rapporte surtout aux familles de l'élite et aux occasions spéciales. Cet article examine dix échantillons d'états de compte de familles ordinaires, principalement de fermiers et d'artisans, dans sept magasins de villages du Haut-Canada (le plus ancien remontant à 1808-1809, le plus récent à 1861). Près de 600 des 787 membres de l'échantillonnage ont acheté au moins un article textile ou produit connexe. Dans les états de compte, 53 étoffes, 36 vêtements de confection et 38 autres produits ont été sélectionnés. Dès le début, les cotonnades étaient ce qui se vendait le plus et les achats de produits de luxe, comme la soie, étaient rares. Les tendances fondamentales confirment pour le Haut-Canada ce que les historiens du textile ont découvert dans d'autres contextes coloniaux en consultant des inventaires de successions. Elles mettent cependant en doute la croyance répandue dans les récits généraux et les écrits de spécialistes sur le Haut-Canada, selon laquelle cette époque en était une de transition de l'autosuffisance à l'économie de marché.

Abstract

What we know of the manufactured textiles that were usually the largest single category in colonial imports relates mainly to elite families and special occasions. This paper uses ten samples of the accounts of ordinary families, principally farmers and artisans, at seven Upper Canadian village stores (the earliest in 1808–9, the latest in 1861). Almost 600 of the 787 sample members made at least one purchase of textiles or a related product. From their accounts, 53 fabrics, 36 readymade products, and 38 other products are selected. Cottons dominated from the beginning, and purchases of luxuries, such as silk, were rare. The basic patterns confirm for Upper Canada what textile historians have found, using estate inventories, in other colonial contexts. However, they challenge the story, which underlies most specialist and general accounts of Upper Canada, that there was a transition in this period from self-sufficiency to market engagement.

Fashion in the Countryside?

In the growing body of work on the history of consumption in Canada, the colonial era remains relatively under-explored.¹ In economic history, the orientation to staple production has made the pertinent consumption issues diets in southern Europe and Brazil, hat fashions in Europe, and the preferences of native consumers, not the food, clothing, and shelter (and standard of living) of British and French settlers and their descendants.² Other approaches do have more to say, if often implicitly. For example, we have learned much

more about women's market-related work; someone was hiring them or buying what they sold, and they in turn were spending the income they gained.³ Still, the most powerful image for the colonial period remains one of family self-sufficiency, and the long-term story a transition from self-sufficiency to market involvement. For textiles, as Hood and Ruddel have noted, there has been a "strong bias towards a 'homespun' or romanticized interpretation."⁴ Women made their families' clothes from fabrics they had themselves made, from wool and flax the family had itself

produced. As the standard history of women in Quebec puts it: "La plupart des femmes s'habillent en étoffe du pays qu'elles filent, tissent, teignent et coupent."⁵

For Upper Canada, K. B. Brett, one of the leading students of costume history, tells a similar story: "of necessity, clothing was produced from homespun as part of the largely self-sufficient domestic farm economy." She emphasizes actual physical scarcity, as "shipments were infrequent and popular items quickly ran short." Yet despite their remoteness from Britain, "Canadian women quickly followed every change, and wrote home for the latest fashion news." Somewhat contradictorily, but consistent with her discussion of homespun, Brett also says that women "in the rural areas, cut off from the outside world, had little time to bother with changes in style." By the mid-nineteenth century, that isolation had ended. Now improved communications made supplies "more readily available... [T]here were more ready-made goods in the shops [and] [t]he practice of making everything possible in the home, as well as making over and making do, were no longer a necessity..."⁶ Did better communication bring increased consciousness of fashion? Concluding her authoritative work on Canadian fashion in the nineteenth century, "Clothing Worn in Canada" (in the *Canada's Visual History* series, reissued on CD-ROM in 1994), Brett is skeptical. "It is unlikely that the majority of women in Canada, living active lives in towns, villages, and small communities, succumbed to the dictates of fashion, except for church on Sundays and special occasions. One could wish that more everyday clothing survived to prove this point."

Brett's work, like much of the best and most specific research on consumption in Upper Canada, is dominated by the need to represent the past visually, notably in museum and living history settings. Unfortunately, as such researchers know very well, surviving artifacts can be unrepresentative of what once was in everyday use.⁷ Written sources and visual images come mainly from elite levels of society and often from metropolitan centres (Brett uses *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Tailor and Cutter*, for example). Using them to understand ordinary people and everyday life requires

assuming that those about whom little is known followed trends in elite circles, albeit with a lag. An alternative to the fashion-based approach is to generalize over time on the basis of what is known only for a specific era. Thus, Brett's account of country clothing in nineteenth century Ontario uses paintings and photographs from the 1870s and 1880s and many artifacts from the period of improved communications and greater market access after 1850 (these include all the homespun dresses). For them to represent the whole settlement era, it is necessary to assume that costume was relatively timeless, changing little over a century.

To be more specific, let us consider the problem of the silk dress. The principal fabric on the *Canada's Visual History* CD-ROM, illustrated by more than half of the dresses and children's outfits pictured, is silk (yellow silk, figured silk, ribbon silk, tartan taffeta, etc.). Also extensively illustrated and discussed are such luxury fabrics as velvet, satins, and fine white muslin. Brett reconciles these with her account of pioneering in Upper Canada by making a silk dress, cleverly reworked from time to time, the representation of fashion in an otherwise largely homespun world. She depicts "busy and practical women [who] spent most of their time in simple and serviceable dresses, of gingham or printed cotton when available, but more often of homespun and handwoven wools and linens...which they made themselves. What thought they had for fashion was displayed in the best silk dress, the pride of every woman who owned one."⁸

This is an appealing image. And by mid-century, when useful trade figures become available, imports to the Province of Canada of silks, satins, and velvet were substantial, totaling \$780 000 in 1851 and \$920 000 in 1861.⁹ Those figures were, however, very much lower than for imports of cottons and woollens, which were worth \$3.9 million and \$2.9 million respectively in 1851 and \$5.7 million and \$4.3 million in 1861. Although Brett pays considerable attention to linen (and says most under garments were made of linen until after 1850), its imports were modest, \$450 000 in 1851 and \$340 000 in 1861. Nor was there much domestic production by then in Upper Canada; the 1851 Census reported less than 15,000 yards* of

* Because of the extensive number of citations of imperial units, and the historical context of the subject matter, individual metric conversions are not provided. If the reader wishes to convert any of the measurements, 1 in. = 2.54 cm; 1 ft = 30.48 cm; 1 yd = 0.91 m; 1 oz = 28.35 g; 1 lb = 0.453 kg. (Source: *Gage Canadian Dictionary*, 1997).

Table 1
The Samples

Year	Yonge Mills 1808-9	Yonge Mills 1828-9	Tett 1842	Choate 1851	Choate 1861
Abbreviation	YM08	YM28	T42	C51	C61
Proprietor	Charles Jones	same	Benjamin Tett	Thomas Choate	same
Location	Yonge Mills		Newboro	Warsaw	
Townships	Front of Yonge		South Crosby North Crosby	Dummer Douro	
County	Leeds		Leeds	Peterborough	
Waterway	near St Lawrence		Rideau Canal	Indian River	
Customers	204	218	456	235	344
Linked	140	143	178	157	226
Linked %	69%	66%	39%	67%	66%
Sample households	73	77	114	75	70
Farm	29	36	30	33	40
Other	19	14	28	19	30
Unlinked	25	27	56	23	0
Total sales to sample	\$2,436	\$899	\$1,716	\$944	\$1,394

Notes

For Yonge Mills and some Tett customers, farmers are defined as those having five or more acres in cultivation.

Unlinked (included in all but three samples) include some not linked because of duplication of names; for Choate 1861, duplicates are both farmers.

Members of one household are combined in the samples.

All sales for twelve-month periods (except Choate 1851 data lacking July sales and Fowlds 1861 data lacking January sales).

All values converted from Halifax currency (\$1.00 = 5/-), except for Choate, Fowlds, and Sherin in 1861.

linen production in the whole province, and not even 500 yards in the two counties discussed in this paper.¹⁰ That millions of dollars worth of fabrics were imported fits Brett's image of greater abundance in provincial shops. Unfortunately, trade data do not further specify fabrics, equivalent data are not available earlier, and imports cannot say who purchased which fabrics.

Faced with this problem and the limitations of literary and visual sources, many students of consumption in the colonial era have turned to estate inventories, which record what people possessed when they died.¹¹ For all their value, inventories can be inconsistent in coverage,

and a number of assumptions are required to relate an inventoried stock to the flow of transactions during a lifetime. Moreover, the best that can be said for these documents in Upper Canada is that their quality has yet to be tested. Hence this paper explores what another type of routinely generated source, country store accounts, can contribute to the discussion of consumption. Its premise is that even if clothing and other textiles do not survive, we can at least know more about the fabrics that went into them. From this evidence, there is reason to doubt that the luxury fabrics emphasized in Brett's account actually were common in the countryside. That is, it confirms

Table 1 cont'd

Fowlds	Fowlds	Sherin	Scovil	Darling
1854	1861	1861	1861	1861
F54	F61	Sh61	Sc61	D61
Henry Fowlds	same	John Sherin	S. S. Scovil	Thos Darling
Hastings		Lakefield.	Portland	Darlingside
Asphodel		Douro	Bastard	Fronts of Escott and
Percy		Smith		Leeds and Lansdowne
Peterborough,		Peterborough	Leeds	Leeds
Northumberland				
Rice Lake,		Otonabee River	Rideau Canal	St Lawrence
Trent River				
361	714	206	491	166
187	424	138	351	124
52%	59%	67%	71%	75%
88	73	59	102	56
30	28	24	44	27
34	45	35	36	19
24	0	0	22	10
\$3,328	\$2,852	\$2,258	\$1,873	\$1,856

Sources

Archives of Ontario, Toronto [AO], Yonge Mills Records, Daybook No. 3, 1808-9, MU 3165; Daybooks 1828, 1828-9, MU 3171-2.

Queen's University Archives, Kingston, Tett Papers (#2247), vols. 27-8, Daybooks, 1841-2, 1842-4; Darling Family Papers (#2303.28),

Daybooks, vols 4-5, 1857-61, 1861-4; Scovil General Store Accounts (A.Arch 2217), series I, vols. 21-2, Daybooks, 1861-2.

Trent University Archives, Peterborough, Choate Family Papers, B-77-026/1, Daybooks 1-3, 1850-52, 1861; Sherin Papers, B-71-002, Daybooks 1-2, 1860-62; Fowlds Papers, B-72-001, Accounts, vol. 3, Ledger, 1853-5; vol. 6, Daybook, 1861.

Linkage is to manuscript census of same year, except as follows.

Yonge Mills to 1808 and 1809, 1828 and 1829 assessments and list of households for Elizabethtown and Yonge (AO Ms 262).

Fowlds 1854 linked to 1851 manuscript census.

Tett: manuscripts unavailable for adjacent Frontenac County.

Census for 1842 lists household heads only.

her skepticism about extrapolating from the fashion concerns of a handful of elite members to the larger society. On the other hand, purchases of imported fabrics also qualify the images of homespun that often dominate the story.

The Country Store Study So Far¹²

The evidence in this paper comes from ten samples from seven different stores, five in 1861 and five from earlier (1808, 1828, 1842, 1851, 1854; see details of samples and of their textile purchases in Tables 1 and 2). The samples were prepared in an effort to make

systematic use of country store accounts as a pathway into the rural economy of Upper Canada. The procedure was to seek the names of all customers who appeared in the retail accounts during a year in the nominal and agricultural census manuscripts for nearby townships. From those who could be identified, samples were structured to represent both farm households and others in the local economy, and their transactions during the year were recorded. Except for the Fowlds and Sherin stores in 1861, farmers were a substantial majority of the clientele who could be linked to the census and are a majority in seven of the linked samples. There was, however, a smaller

Table 2
Summary of Textile (and Related) Purchases, by Store

	YM08	YM28	T42	C51	F54	C61	Sh61	F61	Sc61	D61
Number of buyers of any textile product	65	59	82	62	58	55	47	45	72	51
Number of buyers of fabrics	54	48	69	47	48	45	41	42	63	43
Number buying 40 or more yards	3	1	21	3	9	9	11	21	13	22
Number of varieties of fabrics sold	18	22	33	23	27	28	33	41	26	31
Total yards sold to sample	797	552	2,081	631	1,218	949	1,178	2,764	1,741	2,208
Maximum yards by one buyer	68.8	40.0	133.0	49.5	255.8	81.5	147.0	300.3	249.1	198.0
Median yards, buyers only	14.3	7.0	21.0	8.0	11.5	12.1	9.5	43.6	14.0	40.0
Number of varieties, maximum buyer	10	7	13	8	14	8	9	16	14	10
Most varieties by one buyer	10	7	17	8	14	12	16	24	14	17
Total value of fabrics sold	\$653	\$175	\$562	\$127	\$424	\$217	\$291	\$848	\$352	\$410
Maximum value, one buyer	\$61.56	\$24.06	\$32.30	\$11.80	\$68.40	\$20.80	\$33.84	\$86.65	\$40.00	\$41.70
Median value	\$9.70	\$2.30	\$5.80	\$1.70	\$4.85	\$2.80	\$2.76	\$11.34	\$3.22	\$5.98
Cotton as % of fabric values	48%	53%	55%	74%	41%	60%	46%	37%	53%	56%
Woolens as % of fabric values	37%	32%	31%	5%	42%	19%	36%	46%	21%	22%
All fabrics as % of all sales	27%	19%	33%	13%	13%	16%	13%	30%	19%	22%
Value of notions and clothing sold	\$247	\$68	\$208	\$93	\$249	\$166	\$209	\$297	\$148	\$236
Total value all textile related	\$900	\$243	\$770	\$220	\$673	\$382	\$500	\$1,145	\$550	\$646

Note

Total values at YM08, C51, F54 include some pieces (not reported in yardage).

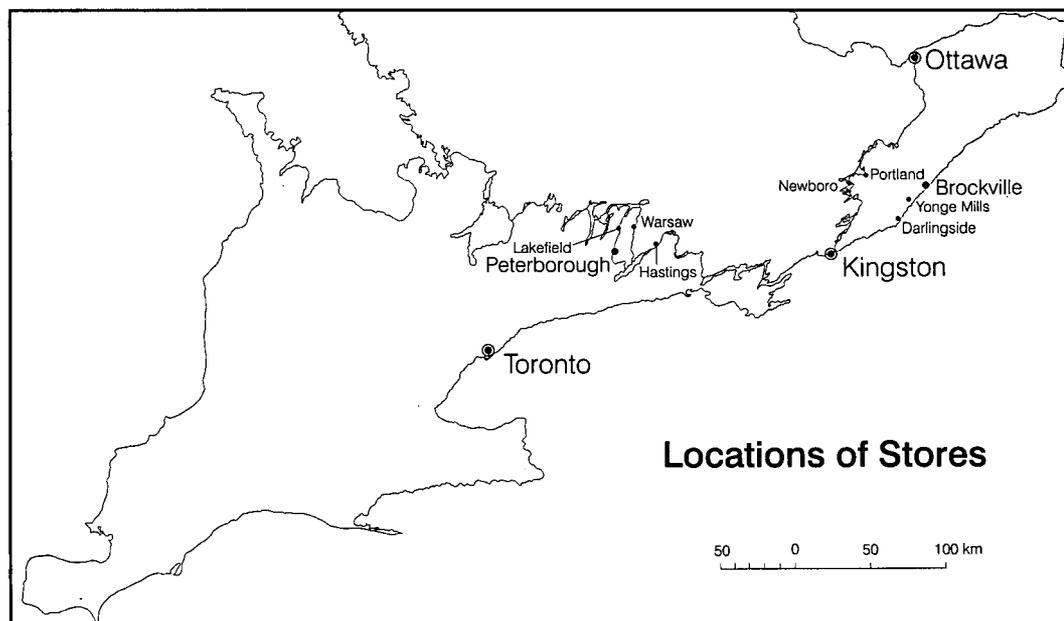
chance that any particular farm household would be in a sample than a non-farm household. Most of the samples also include some unlinked customers, for whom we have only the information available in their accounts; a number of them were women.

The stores were located in two counties in the eastern half of the province, where the rural economy was based on forest products as well as farming. The earliest samples are from Yonge Mills, located in Leeds County near the St Lawrence River west of Brockville, and Newboro, a village at the rear of Leeds, on the Rideau Canal (see Fig. 1 for location of stores). Two of the 1861 samples are also from Leeds, one from the front and the other from the rear of the county. The samples from the 1850s and three from 1861 are from Peterborough County, where settlement began almost forty years after the first Loyalists arrived in Leeds. The decision was made to base the study in 1861 and work backwards because there was a good census and an abundance of high quality accounts for that year. If late in the settlement era, it predated the development of ready-made clothing and consumer brands and most of the diffusion of the sewing machine. Farming was by far the dominant occupation in the province, and although the proportion of the population living in an urban centre was rising, only one in six Upper Canadians lived in a centre of 1000 or more (as compared to one-half of Ontarians fifty years later). Of the five communities sampled in 1861, the population of Hastings

was 500; Warsaw, Lakefield, and Portland each had populations of less than 200; and Darlingside, a landing on the St Lawrence River, was not a village at all. None were on a railway even after a decade of railway building in the province, and all were at least eight miles from a major town. All ten stores were part of a more diverse set of local enterprises, including flour and saw mills, timber shanties, carding and fulling, and potash production. For example, Yonge Mills had a carding mill in 1808 and in the 1820s was one of the province's largest grist mills (and only incidentally a local mill at the same time), Choate in 1851 and Fowlds in 1861 had carding and fulling mills, and Darling sold firewood to passing steamboats.

All the stores sold dry goods, footwear, groceries, hardware, housewares, some finished clothing, notions, and some local produce; a number also supplied local artisans with inputs to their own production. There were variations among the stores in scale and emphasis, and in how associated operations appear in their accounts. Thus, fabrics accounted for between one-eighth and one-third of total sales (all totals refer to sample customers only), and total sales ranged from \$900 (at two stores) to more than \$3,000 (in one Fowlds' sample). At the latter store, produce purchased by non-farmers (flour from the mill, pork, and beef in particular) often appeared on accounts, but this store also had the largest textile sales, 2,764 yards in 1861, worth over \$800. Earlier work on these samples has found very wide variation in the quantities

Fig. 1
Locations of stores (Map courtesy Steve Gardiner)



purchased by individual households, even of everyday essentials. Thus, about one-third of the sample bought no fabrics at all, and some others bought very little. It is not possible to infer lack of consumption from an absence of purchases, however, because few bought all their needs at a single store. That is, we cannot know what proportion of any household's consumption was represented by its purchases at one store.

Fabrics and Related Products

Textiles were needed for much more than clothing. Bedding, draperies, towels, table linens, and floor coverings were essential in daily living, as were bags, covers, and other products used in farm and other work. All, of course, were subject to wear, at varying rates. In addition, those who followed fashion or had more disposable income had other reasons to buy fabrics. Estimating demand for fabrics depends, therefore, on the assumptions made. For clothing, a convenient figure is Adrienne Hood's careful, lower-bounded estimate that 45 yards per year was "the yardage required annually to meet some minimal clothing requirements" for a household of six persons in eighteenth century Pennsylvania.¹³

For this paper, evidence has been extracted on purchases of fabrics and of ready-made and textile-related products such as handkerchiefs, dyes, buttons, and thread. The names of fifty-three fabrics are included in Table 3, which is organized by the type of fibre and by the year each fabric first appears in the samples.¹⁴ Information is given on the total number of stores that sold the product (and the number of stores in 1861), the total yards ever sold, and the total number of buyers. With the exception of some homemade cloth (see wool), all of the material was imported from Britain. Assigning fabrics to categories has arbitrary elements: the same name might be used for fabrics made from different fibres; some names may be alternatives for, inclusive of, or subsets of others; standard references sometimes disagree on the implications of a term; usage changed; and account entries are sometimes illegible or ambiguous. Fortunately, main patterns would change little if different assumptions were used. In general, categorization follows the language of the accounts. For example, cotton (the fabric, not the category) includes all transactions in which this term was used, even if an occasional adjective such as stripe or check might have led to including it with fabrics called just "stripe" or "check."¹⁵ Because most woollens were recorded as "cloth," a few transactions mentioning

WARSAW
SP17
1861
C
UG

Friday July 26th 1861

Sarah Dunford: Dr. per self

1/2 Castile Soap 5.	65
2 Pm Stockings @ 17¢	34
5 1/2 yds. Buff Cotton 20	1 10
Dr. Stays 100. Shawl 90	1 90
Laen 4 1/2 Lorn 12	16
2 1/2 yds pink 28 Cotton 5	57
1/2 shoes 75.	45
	<u>\$4.81</u>

Index

WARSAW
SP17
1861
C
UG

Tuesday September 17th 1861

Miss Willoughby Dr. per Mrs

2 Wool Hobos 50 57¢	1 17
1/2 Small Shoes 50. 125¢	62 1/2
1 Soda 15. Soap 10¢	25
2 yds Flanne (L) 10	1 10
4 yds Print @ 17. 170¢	42
5 yds Check @ 25. 125¢	1 47
38¢ Knives 7¢	17
2 yds Cassimere @ 150.	3 75
2 yds Fine Cloth @ 95	2 37 1/2
1 Blk Wool Hat	1 40
9 yds Print @ 17¢ 2 1/2 yds	1 92
10 yds Stripe Skirting @ 17	1 74
8 yds Cotton 107¢	1 07
1 Tea. 1/2 Dg. Spoons.	1 23
6 yds Print @ 17-	1 00
1 Clock 5-75. Wash Board 25	4 00

Patrick O. Downey Dr. per Mrs

paid 25. Soap 125¢	
2 yds Cotton @ 14 53 yds	
1/2 Soda	

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Fig. 2 (left, top)
Extract from Choate
daybook, 26 July 1861

Fig. 3 (left, bottom)
Extract from
Choate daybook,
17 September 1861

Fig. 4 (right)
Extract from
Sherin daybook 1,
9 February 1861

15 1/2	buff cotton	20¢	90
2 1/2	"pink" cotton	18¢	13
<i>Fig. 3 (left, bottom)</i>			
52	yards of fabric		\$15.00
2	yards of flannel		
19-3/4	yards of print		
5	yards of check		
1-1/2	yards of stripe		
2-1/2	yards of cassimere		
10-1/2	yards of shirting		
8	yards of cotton		
2	wool hoods		
1	pair of socks		
6	needles		
1	black wool hat		
1	wash board		
<i>Fig. 4 (right)</i>			
5	yards of delaine	18¢	13
1	yard of steam loom	50¢	50

broadcloths such as fearnought, kerseymere, coating, and trousering are also included in that group. Fowlds' store in 1861 was the only one selling both calico and print; either they were close substitutes for one another or usage had tended to merge the terms.

Several 1861 transactions on sample members' accounts serve to illustrate these issues and the character of the documents. For example (Fig. 2), at Choate's in Warsaw on Friday, 26 July, Sarah Dunford purchased 5-1/2 yards of buff cotton at 20¢ per yard and 2-1/2 yards of "pink" (cotton assumed, on the basis of price of 18¢). Among her other purchases that day were two pairs of stockings at 17¢ each, a pair of stays (\$1.00), a shawl (90¢), and some buttons (6¢). On Tuesday, 17 September (Fig. 3), Mrs Thomas Willoughby bought eight different fabrics totaling almost 52 yards (and valued at \$15.00): 2 yards of flannel, 19-3/4 yards of print (in 5 pieces ranging from 1 to 9 yards), 5 yards of check, 1-1/2 yards of stripe, 2-1/2 yards of "cassimere," 2-1/2 yards of fulled cloth, 10-1/2 yards of stripe shirting (which was recorded under shirting), and an 8-yard piece of cotton (for \$1.07). She also bought 2 wool hoods (at 70¢ and 37-1/2¢), a pair of socks (12-1/2¢), 6 needles (7¢), a black wool hat (\$1.40), and a wash board (25¢). Later that day (farther down the page and not shown here), she also purchased 2 crinoline sets at 60¢ and 80¢. Also shown on 17 September are Mrs Patrick O'Donnell's purchases, which included 2 yards of cotton (at 14¢) and 5 ounces of indigo (not priced here, but estimated at 12¢ per ounce on the basis of other entries in Choate's accounts). Two other examples (Fig. 4) are transactions on 9 February at Sherin's store in Lakefield. Elizabeth McDonald purchased 5 yards of delaine (18¢ per yard) and 1 yard of steam loom (13¢) for Maria "Sadiler" and a yard of steam loom, a set of "kane hoops" (50¢), and 1-1/2 yards of "riben" (25¢ per yard) for herself.

These transactions would be of no more than anecdotal interest without the context supplied by other information.¹⁶ From the census, we know, for example, that Maria Sadler (aged 16) and Elizabeth McDonald (aged 15) were members of the Church of England, born in Upper Canada. They were "serving maids" in the household of Robert Strickland, a 31-year-old farmer (and nephew of Catharine Parr Traill), with three young children. Sarah Dunford was an English-born Bible Christian, married to labourer Stephen Dunford. Aged 51 and 52 respectively, they lived in Douro, with a six-year-old boy. Thomas Willoughby was a 24-year-old farmer, a Protestant born in Ireland, with 100 acres in the backwoods of Dummer six kilometres northeast of Warsaw. He was, evidently, a pioneer farmer, with just 1-1/2 acres in cultivation (and another 30 in pasture). He had a horse, 2 oxen, 3 steers, 4 milk cows, and 1 pig, but reported no sheep or wool production. His wife Sarah, who made these purchases, was 28 years old. They had no children, but 15-year-old Ann Pomeroy was also living with them when the census was taken.

More important for this study is the context of these families' accounts over the year, and of purchases by others in the samples. Sarah Willoughby's large and diverse set of purchases on 17 September (almost all the textile-related purchases charged to their account over the whole year) proves to have been among the largest one-day orders of the entire sample. Still, as we will discuss further below, the Willoughbys very much reflected Choate's principal textile buyers; in fact, they ranked seventh in yardage and second in value. Similarly, Mrs O'Donnell's purchases during the year of 42-1/2 yards of fabric ranked her ninth in yardage. Her modest purchase of indigo was also typical.¹⁷ It is not clear why Sarah Dunford, a married woman, had an account in her own name; in any case, there is no indication that her husband ever used this store. The delaine purchased for Maria Sadler and the hoops bought by Elizabeth McDonald were both relatively common purchases in 1861 (Elizabeth, in fact, had bought 2-1/2 yards of delaine for herself four days before). On the other hand, in the entire sample, besides Sarah Willoughby, only one person purchased cashmere, only one bought a crinoline set, and only two bought hoods; besides Sarah Dunford, only three bought stays.

Customers in the first sample, at Yonge Mills in 1808-9, bought 18 different fabrics (see

Table 3
Textiles Sold to Sample Members, 1808-61

Fabric	Number of stores	Stores 1861	Total buyers	Total yards	First sold in	Number of prices 1850s	Prices (in cents/yard)						Notes
							1808-9 Range		1842 Range		1861 Range		
							Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	
Cotton													
calico	4	2	94	1,024	1808		40	65			13	34	
check	7	3	37	87	1808	1	50	93			15	67	
cotton	10	5	311	4,272	1808	6	37	80	9	23	5	50	
fustian	3	0	11	23	1808		50		20	25			
muslin	10	5	84	198	1808	5	110	240	30	55	13	68	
sheeting	7	3	38	151	1808		27	90	20	35	30	60	
ticking	8	5	38	218	1808	3	80	110			15	65	
shirting	8	5	67	504	1828	4			9	23	13	39	
jean	6	4	28	50	1828	2					15	50	
turkey	4	3	5	13	1828	4					15	30	
gingham	6	4	27	114	1842	5			18	28	13	20	cotton, linen
moleskin	6	3	37	117	1842	4			25	57	30	77	
print	7	4	191	2,345	1842	14			11	25	8	31	
factory	4	3	47	374	1851						7	30	
steam loom	5	4	53	285	1851						10	30	
stripe	6	4	52	389	1851	1					13	25	
regatta	2	1	3	22	1854	1					20		
denim	3	3	8	33	1861						15	25	
Total				10,219									
Linen													
cambric	9	4	75	369	1808	3	50	130	15		8	25	
linen	10	5	82	273	1808	2	70	95	18	30	8	79	
holland	4	3	12	47	1842	1			50		10	30	linen, cotton
osnaburg	1	0	8	37	1842				18				
silesia	7	5	23	53	1842				13		8	20	linen, cotton
toweling	4	3	9	21	1842				23		13	18	
derry	4	4	25	95	1861						15	25	
Total				895									
Luxury													
bombasine	2	0	5	29	1808		55						silk and worsted
velvet	8	5	28	25	1808	6	110		50	60	8	250	silk, cotton
crepe	7	4	16	27	1828	2			95	160	13	75	silk*
satinet	8	5	22	63	1828	5			75		40	125	wool, cotton, silk
silk	4	1	15	22	1828	2			50	110	100		silk
alpaca	3	2	7	16	1851						20	40	mixed
lustre	3	2	11	25	1854						20	85	wool
mohair	2	1	3	4	1854						20	30	wool*

Table 3 cont'd
Textiles Sold to Sample Members, 1808-61

Fabric	Number of stores	Stores 1861	Total buyers	Total yards	First sold in	Number of prices 1850s	Prices (in cents/yard)						Notes
							1808-9 Range		1842 Range		1861 Range		
							Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	
Luxury cont'd													
satin	3	2	3	3	1854					32	100	silk	
cashmere	2	2	2	6	1861	1				150		wool*	
sarsenet	3	3	4	5	1861					25	200	silk*	
Total				225									
Mixed													
drill	8	5	50	232	1842			50		13	75	linen, cotton	
orleans	7	5	29	164	1851	1				20	45	cotton and worsted	
cobourg	5	4	33	222	1854	1				20	50	worsted and cotton	
Total				618									
Other													
imitation	1	0	5	16	1808		70						
plaid	8	5	29	124	1828	2				17	75		
bagging	2	0	10	43	1842	2		30					
canvas	8	5	41	57	1842	1		30		10	30	hemp, flax	
vesting	2	1	8	26	1842	4		30	35	50			
Total				266									
Wool													
cloth	9	5	128	466	1808	9	37	330	50	510	20	400	
flannel	9	4	88	458	1808	3	30	80	35	50	17	85	also cotton
baize	2	0	7	25	1808		65	70	77				
homemade	2	1	16	50	1842	2			40	110	75	100	also "Canadian," fulled
merino	1	0	14	61	1842				40	65			
saxony	1	0	6	21	1842				40	80			
serge	2	1	5	29	1842				40		50	65	and worsted
tweed	4	3	45	184	1854	2					13	240	
delaine	4	4	23	190	1861						13	50	wool, cotton
Total				1,484									
Total 53 fabrics			500	13,707									

Notes

Fabrics sold at two or more stores; or if at one store, at least ten yards or five buyers.

Price ranges in 1861 cover all prices at five stores.

Number of prices is from inventories, either Tett 1851 or Darling 1858 (whichever is higher).

Sources: Queen's University Archives, Tett Papers, vol. 73, inventory, October 1851; Darling Family Papers, Box 6, Stock Inventory Book, April 1858.

* Indicates other fibres were also used in fabrics called by the same name.

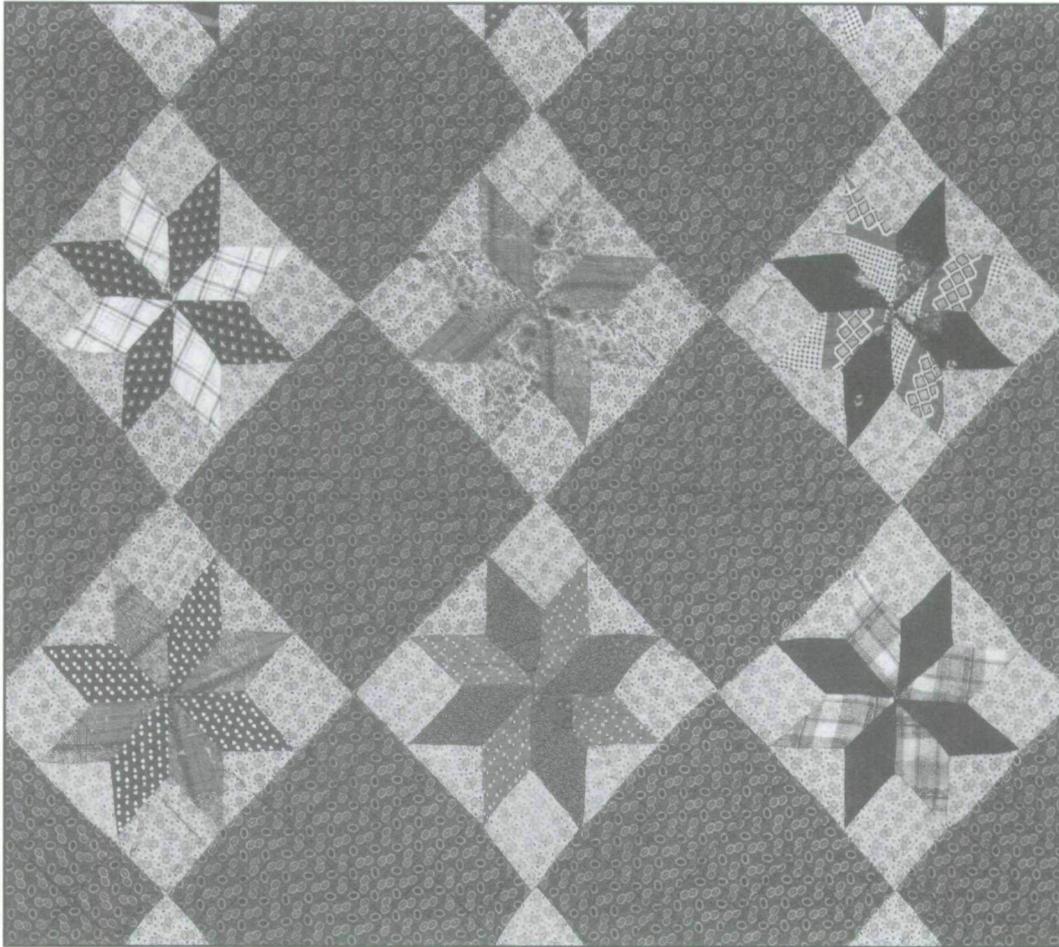


Fig. 5
Pieced quilt, made at Penetanguishene, Upper Canada, ca 1850–60 (detail). Contemporary quilts can help us visualize the range of materials available to pioneer women. In this quilt, the catalogue description notes, “the majority [of materials] are small prints. Most of these are cotton, but there are some wools and some union fabrics (cotton warp, worsted lustre weft).” (Royal Ontario Museum, 967.169, negative 74TEX303)

Table 2; 15 of these are listed in Table 3).¹⁸ These included fabrics in every category in the table except the “mixed” group; among them were cotton, calico, muslin, cambric, linen, cloth, and flannel, all still important in 1861. In total, sample members purchased more than 800 yards of material, including over 500 yards of cotton products, 180 yards of wool and flannel, and less than 80 yards of linens. The cotton was worth about \$300, almost half the value of all textile sales, and the woolens over \$230.¹⁹ As is evident from Table 2, this pattern resembled those of later samples. In terms of values, cotton was the principal fabric at most stores and accounted for over half the value of fabrics sold at six of them. In terms of yardage (Table 3), cotton was by far the leading fabric. Of the 13,700 yards of fabrics purchased by sample customers at the ten stores, over 10,000 were cotton. In all, 500 different households are represented here; only print (sold at 7 stores) and cotton were purchased by as many as half of all buyers; calico (sold only at 4 stores) was bought by almost as high a proportion. Next most important were woolens,

at about 1,500 yards. Generally much more valuable on a per-yard basis, woolens ranked second in value to cotton at seven stores, and first at two. Wool cloth also ranked next behind the main cottons in terms of numbers of buyers. Other textile purchases were 895 yards of linen, about the same amount of “mixed” and other fabrics, and 225 yards of what are here called luxury fabrics.

Each succeeding sample adds new fabrics to the list. Thus, 7 appear among the 22 kinds sold at Yonge Mills in 1828–9, despite lower total yardage and values than in 1808; another 14 among the 33 fabrics sold by Tett’s store in 1842; 11 from the two samples in the 1850s, and 5 from the samples in 1861. The greatest variety of fabrics sold at one store was the 41 sold by Fowlds in 1861. Among the additions were several fabrics new in the nineteenth century, such as tweed (1825), delaine (the 1830s), orleans (1837), alpaca (1841), and cobourg (the 1840s). All but delaine appear in Table 3 in one of the 1850s samples. On the other hand, some fabrics disappear during the period, such

as bombasine and fustian (last seen in 1828 and 1842 respectively) and osnaburg, merino, and saxony (all seen only at Tett's in 1842, and not on its inventory in 1851). The wide variations in numbers of buyers and in yardage make clear that some fabrics were very much more important than others. On the other hand, country merchants stocked a substantial variety of fabrics; if people did not buy more of those sold in small amounts, it seems unlikely to have been because they were not available.

Among the fabrics listed in Table 3 are many that Brett discusses. For example, 15 households bought a total of 22 yards of silk (from four stores), 3 bought a total of 3 yards of satin (from three stores), and 28 bought 25 yards of velvet (from eight stores). There were no purchases of taffeta, however. Obviously these yardages were not dress-sized pieces: the largest individual piece of silk was 2.5 yards. Of the luxury fabrics, only satinet (not mentioned by Brett) was sold in at all substantial amounts (63 yards sold to 22 buyers at eight stores). Several others were more common. For example, 27 households bought a total of 114 yards of gingham (including five pieces of five yards or more) from six stores; and 84 bought muslin, a total of 198 yards, from ten stores. Most of the muslin was, in fact, purchased in 1861, after it had fallen sharply in price. The 43 buyers between 1808 and 1854 purchased only 50 yards, and only one piece over 5 yards in length. As for cotton print, said by Brett to be used "when available," 191 customers bought a total of 2,345 yards. (See Fig. 5, detail of a quilt, in which more than a dozen different pieces are visible, many of them printed cottons.)

As students of textile history know, there were variations in quality and character, often very wide ones, within many specific fabrics. These are suggested in Table 3 by the price ranges in 1808–9, 1842, and 1861 and by the number of distinct prices in one or other of two store inventories from the 1850s. For example, Tett's 1851 inventory has 14 different print prices and 9 different prices for cloth. The actual prices in the table are the lowest and highest price per yard in each year. In some cases, a remnant or a very small piece may have produced an unusually low or high price per yard. In others, the price range may actually cover distinct products. In particular, the emphasis on luxury fabrics in some of the literature made it important not to omit any transactions in crepe, velvet and silk; the lower priced transactions were more likely for trim,

not pieces of cloth, or even for imitations. Between 1808–9 and 1842, prices fell sharply for cotton and linen. The high end of the range for both muslin and linen in 1842 was just half the low end of the range for these products in 1808. Most of the decline, in fact, had already occurred by 1828. The change was real: at the prices paid for wheat by Yonge Mills, a bushel of wheat would have bought about twice as much calico or cotton in 1828–9 as in 1808–9.²⁰ By contrast, prices of many woolens did not fall. The best woolen cloth in all three years cost well over \$3 per yard, more even than silks (although broadcloths, at 54 inches, were at least half again as wide as other fabrics).

In addition to textiles, these stores sold many ready-made textile and related products (Table 4). With one exception (corsets), only products sold at two or more stores are included. The most commonly purchased were handkerchiefs, hats and caps, gloves and mittens, socks and stockings, shawls, and braces, most of which were already available in 1808. Here too there were wide ranges in quality, as the many prices for handkerchiefs and shawls suggest. Most of these products were general necessities, subject to wear, yet even the most frequently purchased were bought by only a minority of the sample. It is evident that people had other sources of supply besides these stores. Apparently, most of the shirts, pants, socks, and mitts that were sold came from local makers.²¹ Some transactions represented direct exchanges between maker and buyer, settled through the store, but others involved purchase and resale by the merchant. That many of these products first appear in and after 1851 supports Brett's view on when ready-made began to be available in the province. But even in 1861, few products were complete garments, and quantities sold were limited.

Another 38 textile-related products are listed in Table 4. Most were already sold in 1808. Buttons, thread, ribbons, needles, and pins were among the most commonly purchased of all products, although none were purchased by as many as half the sample members. As the variety of units and the number of distinct prices suggest, there was variation in type and quality also within many of these products. For example, Tett's inventory in 1851 had buttons at twelve different prices. Among the products are eight dye and chemical products, for which volumes are given as well as numbers of buyers. The most widely purchased was indigo, a total of 251 ounces by 76 different

Table 4
Sales to Sample Members of Textile-Related Products, 1808–61

Product	Unit	Number of stores	Stores in 1861	Total buyers	Total volume	First sold in	Number of prices 1850s
Clothing and Related Products							
blanket	n	5	3	11	38	1808	1
gloves	pr	9	5	66	91	1808	9
handkerchief		10	5	164	262	1808	10
hat		10	5	86	110	1808	1
mitts	pr	10	5	55	75	1808	2
shawl		10	5	58	75	1808	9
socks	pr	9	5	67	134	1808	1
stockings	pr	8	4	32	41	1808	2
vest		8	5	27	28	1808	6
braces		9	5	62	82	1828	4
cap		9	5	61	80	1828	3
dress or frock		5	2	7	7	1828	
hat, straw		3	2	12	21	1828	
pants and trousers		8	5	21	24	1828	
blanket, horse	n	5	3	16	24	1842	1
bonnet		3	1	8	8	1842	
drawers	pr	3	2	3	3	1842	1
shirt		6	3	21	44	1842	1
comforter		3	2	5	5	1851	
necktie		6	4	37	49	1851	1
coat		6	5	37	38	1854	10
hose	pr	4	3	24	33	1854	2
muffler		3	2	6	6	1854	
belt		5	5	27	36	1861	3
cape		2	2	6	7	1861	2
collar		4	4	13	20	1861	2
corsets	pr	1	1	1	2	1861	
cravat		3	3	3	6	1861	1
crinoline set		2	2	2	3	1861	
gauntlets	pr	2	2	4	6	1861	1
hairnet		5	5	11	15	1861	
hood		3	3	3	4	1861	1
overalls		2	2	2	8	1861	
scarf		3	3	6	10	1861	1
turban		2	2	4	4	1861	
victorine		2	2	3	3	1861	
Notes	n = number pr = pair	pc = piece ppr = paper (standard unit for pins and needles)		na = not available			

Table 4 cont'd
Sales to Sample Members of Textile-Related Products, 1808-61

Product	Unit	Number of stores	Stores in 1861	Total buyers	Total volume	First sold in	Number of prices 1850s
Other Textile Related Products, Selected							
alum	lb	6	3	36	55	1808	
binding	stick, yd	8	5	33		1808	3
button	dz, n, na	10	5	215		1808	12
copperas	lb	9	5	37	24	1808	1
cord, bed		8	5	25		1808	1
edging	yd, pc, na	9	5	35		1808	2
hook, hook and eye	dz, card, n, na	8	5	52		1808	2
indigo	oz	9	4	76	251	1808	1
lace	yd; various kinds	9	5	56		1808	6
laces	pr	3	2	20		1808	2
lining	yd	8	4	54		1808	1
needles	n, ppr, set; knitting	10	5	112		1808	
net	yd, na	8	4	24		1808	
pins	dz, ppr, bunch, oz	10	5	117		1808	2
ribbon	yd, n, na	10	5	182		1808	2
silk	skein	10	5	88		1808	4
spool	n, dz	8	5	178		1808	2
tape	bunch, pc, roll, yd	10	5	56		1808	3
thimble		10	5	49		1808	4
thread	ball, bunch, hank, lb	10	5	247		1808	2
trimming		8	5	57		1808	5
twist	yd, stick	7	3	48		1808	
blue	lb	8	5	31	14	1828	
cord	yd, bunch, n	5	3	15		1828	
pattern, dress		5	4	6		1828	1
slack		2	1	31		1828	
yarn, warp	bunch, lb, bundle	8	4	39		1828	
logwood	lb	5	3	21	14	1842	
madder	lb	4	3	16	19	1842	1
redwood	lb	6	3	19	21	1842	1
batting	ball, bunch, sheet	6	5	28		1851	
braid	bunch, pc, skein, na	8	4	46		1851	
stays		3	2	4	4	1851	3
wadding	pc, sheet, yd	5	4	17		1851	
elastic		4	4	14		1861	
hoop	n, set	5	5	28		1861	
ochre	lb	2	2	10	28	1861	
whalebone		2	2	3		1861	

buyers from 9 stores. These quantities would have served to dye only a tiny fraction of the plain materials that families bought or the wool and flannel that they made. For example, at Scovil's store, 8 buyers bought 12 pounds of madder, 11 bought 8 pounds of logwood, and 13 bought 37 ounces of indigo. In total, 23 different buyers (about a third of all fabric purchasers) are represented here, including half of the leading buyers of fabrics and ten who reported making a total of over 500 yards of cloth. One standard account suggests that anywhere from one to eight ounces of indigo were needed to dye a pound of wool (i.e. from 1 to 2 yards of wool cloth), and that eight ounces of madder (red) or logwood (black) should be allowed for a pound of wool or cotton.²² On the most generous of assumptions, purchases of these three dyes at Scovil's would have dyed not much more than 100 yards of cloth. Perhaps people were finding natural dyes locally, though finding and preparing them was time-consuming. But a mordant was needed for dyeing with most barks and flowers. Alum, a standard mordant, was certainly sold in Upper Canada, but the 55 pounds recorded as sold to 36 buyers at 6 stores (Scovil's, as it happens, not included) would have been enough to treat only 220 pounds of wool (and alum had other uses besides dyeing). Based on this evidence at least, home dyeing was quite common, but only for small pieces of fabric. Colour was something one bought, in calico, print, stripe, check, plaid, red flannel, etc.; in accessories such as handkerchiefs, shawls, cravats and neckties; and in ribbons, braid, and other trim.

Taken together, Tables 3 and 4 amply confirm standard stories: families were sewing, or having others sew. What they were sewing has to be inferred from our understanding of clothing, from the fabrics and supplies that people bought, and from other indicators such as piece sizes. For example, although one nineteenth-century source says "a perfectly plain dress for a figure of medium size requires twelve yards of material," less than 150 pieces of material of 12 or more yards were purchased (and some of them 30 yards or more in length). One, as it happens, was precisely 12 yards of "material for dress."²³ But most women never bought a piece of this length, and at least half of those long pieces were the plainest of cottons. Another 100 pieces of 10 or 11 yards were purchased, and over 700 pieces of between 5 and 9 yards; many of these must have become dresses. Among about 950 pieces of dress size, only 6

were fabrics in the "luxury" group (3 bombasine, 2 satinets, and 1 alpaca).

Whether and how garments followed fashion are more difficult matters. At least we know that relatively current fabrics were sold in the stores. Some other products also suggest that fashion mattered. Most striking, because these reflected a recent trend, are crinoline sets (first introduced in 1856 and sold at two stores in 1861) and hoops and hoop sets (to 28 buyers at all five 1861 stores).²⁴ It is more difficult to read modest sales of other products whose buyers were perhaps following fashion. It would be interesting, for example, to know more about the dress patterns that were occasionally sold. The sales (3 buyers, 2 stores) of victorines, a fur-edged neck tippet first introduced in England a decade earlier and fashionable in Montreal in the 1860s, show at least that this style was known.²⁵ Sales of corsets (2 pairs to one family), stays (a total of 4 buyers at 3 stores), and whalebone (3 buyers at 2 stores) tell us at least that they were available at country stores. Almost all of the 16 yards of jean sold to 14 buyers at Darling's store was described as "jean, corset." What is not obvious in these sales are the silk dress or equivalent luxuries. That very few women in these samples bought silk cannot prove that they did not have silk dresses. But if, for example, they shopped for silk and velvet in larger towns, patronizing what Errington has described as a growing "indigenous fashion industry,"²⁶ or if they were able to have someone in England send such fabrics to them, that tends to contradict the images of scarcity and deep isolation that are part of most standard accounts of pioneer rural life.

Cloth Makers and Buyers

Although all these stores sold woolens and blankets, total quantities were far from sufficient to have kept people warm in the long Canadian winter. But of course many families made cloth and flannel at home (or had it woven for them). Although sheep are not recorded on the tax assessments of 1808 or 1828, clearly there was much woolen production in Leeds then; indeed, this was an area notable later for the extent of its weaving, even as home production was declining elsewhere.²⁷ That Yonge Mills customers themselves produced wool is indicated by charges for carding on 14 of 73 sample accounts in 1808-9 (including five unlinked customers, three of them women); these included, at one extreme, the largest buyer

Table 5
Cloth Making and Buying, 8 Samples

	T42	C51	F54	C61	Sh61	F61	Sc61	D61	Totals
Number making cloth	32	32	18	27	10	18	37	24	198
% of farmers making	70%	79%	53%	60%	38%	64%	70%	74%	64%
Total yards made	1,126	1,245	645	876	261	706	1,640	780	7,279
Number also buying fabrics	26	22	8	16	6	8	26	21	133
Total yards bought	757	269	434	344	121	196	522	1,411	4,054
Number of other buyers	44	25	39	29	35	34	37	22	265
Yards bought	1,324	362	784	605	1,057	2,568	1,219	797	8,717
Total yards bought	2,081	631	1,218	949	1,178	2,764	1,741	2,208	12,770

Notes

Data on textiles made, sheep owned not available for 1808, 1828 samples.

Some of those listed as making bought no textiles at all.

Other buyers include unlinked (of whom some may also have made cloth).

Thirty-four makers were not farmers (including several counted as "widows" in the census but living on farms).

Four Tett customers reported making a total of 56 yards of linen; none were farmers.

F54: one maker = 60% of bought for that group

of fabrics and, at the other, four who bought no textiles.

The three censuses, 1842, 1851, and 1861, report that in the relevant counties combined, annual outputs of woolen cloth totaled over 100,000 yards. That was equivalent to around three yards per capita in 1842, and less thereafter; even the highest level was less than half of the usual estimates of per capita cloth consumption. In addition, 19,000 yards of linen were produced in the Johnstown District in 1842 (or just over 1/2 yard per capita).²⁸ The Census data on production of fulled cloth and flannel are summarized in Table 5. In total, about forty percent of all linked customers at these stores, including almost two-thirds of farmers, reported making cloth, from as little as 6 or 7 yards to over 100 yards in a very few cases; among them, they produced more than 7,000 yards of cloth. It is likely also that, as at Yonge Mills, some of the unlinked members of samples made cloth. For example, 4 of 29 customers who were debited for carding and/or fulling at the Choate store in 1851 were unlinked, although in two cases the problem was duplication of farmers' names in the census. Among those who made cloth, about two-thirds also bought at least some fabrics. The total purchased, 4,000 yards, includes 1,400 yards at the Darling store alone; there, 21 of 24 makers

also bought cloth, many in large quantities. One customer at Fowlds' store in 1854, whose purchases of 256 yards made him by far the largest buyer of fabrics, had also reported making 40 yards on the 1851 census; the other 7 who had made cloth then bought only about 180 yards among them. Elsewhere too, makers tended to buy less in total than they made. Especially at Choate's in 1851 and at Scovil's, far more cloth was made than bought. In fact, woolens represented only five percent of the value of Choate's sales of fabrics in 1851, and all fabrics were only thirteen percent of sales (Table 2). Here it is important to note that among the early settlers around Warsaw were a number of weavers.²⁹

Sheep owning and cloth making were often but by no means necessarily connected. Every sample included some farmers (including a few who made cloth) who owned no sheep, and some sheep owners who did not report any cloth production. At Sherin's, for example, about half of the sheep owners were in this group; they reported more sheep, and more wool produced, than the cloth makers. At Choate's in 1861, about one-third of sheep owners did not produce cloth. By then, Upper Canada had a growing export trade in wool.³⁰ Variation is also implied by data on the purchasers of cotton yarn or warp, presumably

for weaving. Of the 39 buyers at 8 stores (Table 4), 29 were linked to the Census; 13 (including 10 farmers and 2 weavers) reported cloth production, while 16 (including 8 farmers) did not. That is, there was variation both among and within communities; not all farm households were engaged in identical mixtures of activities.

Trends and Variations

In each sample, there was wide disparity between the leading and the median buyer in volumes and values purchased (Table 2). Because those who bought very modest supplies at one store might have been large buyers elsewhere, however, the median is of limited value in representing overall textile consumption patterns. It is at least possible that those who bought more at one store were less likely to have bought extensively elsewhere; hence, and somewhat arbitrarily, the ten leading buyers at each store have been selected for closer scrutiny (Table 6). These accounted for from 41 percent (at Tett's store) to over 70 percent (at

Sherin's) of all the fabrics purchased. Not surprisingly, there was considerable correlation between leading textile buyers and the largest accounts overall, and about half of these buyers were among the stores' ten largest accounts. But it was possible to have a large account without buying many fabrics, and vice versa. About 40 percent of the leading buyers (at stores for which the information is available) also owned sheep and/or made cloth. Indeed, eight of Darling's leading buyers also produced cloth, a total of 252 yards. All ten buyers at Darling's, in the countryside, were farmers; by contrast, in 1861 seven of the ten at Fowlds' store, in the largest of the villages, were artisans.

Given the price levels early in the century, it is not surprising that the average value of purchases by the leading customers at Yonge Mills in 1808, \$28.61, was the second highest of the ten samples. In terms of volumes and varieties, however, that and the next Yonge Mills sample, along with Choate's in 1851, were at the low end of the range. At all three, in fact, the median for even the principal buyers was

Table 6
Fabric Purchases by Principal Buyers, Individual Stores
(Ten leading purchasers by yardage only)

	YM08	YM28	T42	C51	F54	C61	Sh61	F61	Sc61	D61
% of all yards purchased	48	50	41	58	69	58	72	67	55	62
average yards/buyer	38	28	85	37	84	55	85	185	96	137
average varieties/buyer	5.7	4.8	9.7	4.5	7.5	6.8	11.2	16.8	8.7	10.2
average value/buyer	\$28.61	\$8.83	\$18.88	\$6.69	\$22.87	\$11.43	\$19.60	\$56.22	\$16.68	\$23.48
Number of farmers	4	5	2	5	7	7	5	1	4	10
Number of artisans	na	na	5	0	0	1	3	7	5	0
Number of other linked	5	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	0
Number of unlinked	1	4	3	4	2	1	na	na	0	0
Number of women (see note)	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
Number making cloth or owning sheep	na	na	4	6	3	4	4	1	4	8
Number among ten largest accounts by value	5	4	5	2	4	5	6	7	8	7

Notes

These women are also counted either in other linked or in unlinked.

In most households the principal fabric purchasers were women.

Farms at Yonge Mills are defined as those having five or more acres cultivated.

na = not applicable.

considerably less than the 45 yards suggested by Hood as the minimum annual needs for a family of six. Indeed, the largest amount purchased at Yonge Mills in 1828–9 was just 40 yards.³¹ Almost all indicators of consumption were very much higher at Choate's in 1861 than they had been in 1851, and the same was true from one Fowlds' sample to the next. On the other hand, it is striking that the average of 85 yards per leading buyer at Tett's in 1842 is closely comparable with means at three later samples, Fowlds' in 1854 and Sherin's and Scovil's in 1861. Two 1861 samples had very much higher averages (137 yards at Darling's and 185 at Fowlds').

In terms of values, Fowlds' leading buyers were in a class of their own, with an average of \$56.22, compared to \$23.48 at Darling's. One reason for the difference was that Fowlds' buyers on average purchased 31 yards of woolens, compared to 10 at Darling's. In total, the value of Canadian fabric imports (discussed above) was equivalent to about \$4.50 per capita in both 1851 and 1861. That was the cost to the

wholesaler, not to the eventual retail buyer. It is all the more striking, therefore, that most sample households bought less than this on a per-person basis; in fact, the purchases of just 18 of the 50 leading buyers in 1861 summarized in Table 6 (nine of them at Fowlds') attained this threshold.³²

To suggest the range of variation even among these principal buyers, the ten leading buyers in four of the samples are further considered in Table 7. There is a wide gap in every case between the lowest and highest figure, i.e., between the smallest and largest households, farms, accounts, and amount of cloth made. On every variable other than the volume of textile purchases, in fact, these households represent the range of the clientele rather than the high end of the distribution. Because the two 1861 stores with highest sales are included, there is a rising trend in yards purchased and frequency of transactions; still, ranges overlapped among the stores. The 69 yards purchased by the largest buyer at Yonge Mills in 1808 would have been seventh on the

Table 7
Variation Among Leading Buyers
(Ten principal purchasers, four stores)

	YM08		T42		D61		F61	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Household (N)	2	9	3	9	2	16	4	15
Acres cultivated	0	50	6	70	13	51	34	
Tax assessment	\$20	\$596						
Farm value			na		\$100	\$2,000	\$1,800	
Total store account	\$38	\$175	\$15	\$172	\$34	\$215	\$34	\$365
Value of fabric purchases	\$14	\$62	\$10	\$32	\$11	\$42	\$17	\$87
Value, other textile products	\$1	\$24	\$2	\$16	\$3	\$28	\$5	\$35
Total yards purchased	24	69	62	133	95	198	97	300
Total yards made, makers only	na	6	69	17	46	14		
Number of days fabrics purchased	3	11	4	29	1	27	12	41
Mean number of days	6.1	13.0	15.1	24.9				

Notes

See also Table 6.

Fowlds 1861 one farm only.

Household and farm data for linked customers only.

spectrum at Tett's, for example; the 133 yards of the largest buyer at Tett's would have ranked fifth at Darling's and ninth at Fowlds'.

In the eight samples for which occupations are known, there were about thirty men with what could be called bourgeois occupations (merchants, teachers, clergymen, doctors, engineers, and lumber men). None were among the leading buyers; indeed, 13 bought no fabrics and another 9 bought minuscule amounts. A partial exception is Dr James Bingham, whose 24 yards purchased from Choate's in 1861 ranked him sixteenth. Among his purchases were 7 yards of woolen cloth valued at \$1.10 per yard, a piece of cloth worth \$6.80, and the most expensive linen sold at any store in 1861 (2.4 yards at 79¢ per yard). On the basis of value (\$20.80), his was actually the leading Choate fabric account. It is possible that his purchases of such high value goods at this store reflected his growing links to the family; at any rate, he would marry Thomas Choate's daughter in 1862.³³ Bingham aside, all of these leading buyers were ordinary Upper Canadian families. Their purchases suggest that other such families might have been buying similar amounts at other stores, or at the very least that they could aspire to this level of textile consumption.

Because the identity of the buyer is often specified in accounts, it is possible to say that most fabrics were purchased by women, even if charged to a household account in a man's name (husband, father, employer, etc.). In setting up the samples, special attention was given to ensure that women who had their own accounts were well represented. Among them was Catharine Parr Traill, whose writings are of course a key source on this topic. Respectfully accorded the occupation of "lady" in the census, she had an account at Sherin's that resembled those of the bourgeois men; the only fabric charged to her was a small piece (2.75 yards) of grey flannel, purchased by her son Walter. Like hers, many of the women's accounts proved to be very small. On the other hand, there are six women among the leading buyers in Table 6; four, like Phebe Murray, who purchased 25 yards of fabrics (valued at \$5.20) from Yonge Mills in 1828-9, were in the samples with the lowest averages, however. At stores where leading customers had larger volumes, another nine women made purchases of 24 or more yards.³⁴ Only six of the fifteen women were linked, but several are further identified in the accounts. Seven of the fifteen were likely

widows; most of the others, Murray included, were servants. Her purchases represented half the value of her account; for the other five represented in Table 6 and most of the other women, textiles and textile-related purchases represented a considerably higher proportion of their accounts than that.

Some of the women in the sample must have earned some of their living by sewing, spinning, or weaving. A glimpse of this work is the account of James Bush, a 50 year old listed in the 1861 census as a labourer. His family of nine included five others who appeared in Fowlds' accounts: his wife (age 47), two sons, and two daughters. Among them, they purchased more than 171 yards of fabrics (one valuable piece was of unknown length), of 24 kinds, on 41 days between March and December 1861. At \$85.10, this was the second ranked textile account among all 500 buyers in terms of value. Bush was credited with 16-1/2 days work for Fowlds at \$1 per day and his son James Jr (age 24) with almost 7 months work at \$18 per month. Mrs Bush was credited with \$23.75 by making 4 pairs of drawers, 6 pairs of overalls, 26 pairs of pants, 19 shirts, and 3 vests; daughters Roselia (age 22) and "Miss" Bush (age 26) were also credited for smaller amounts of sewing. The phrasing of these credits clearly distinguishes them from the textiles they purchased. There is no way of knowing, however, if the Bushes were transforming some of their fabrics into clothing for sale to others, or sewing in part to be able to afford to have such fabrics for themselves.³⁵

In fact, retail accounts offer only the briefest of glimpses of market-related sewing, because those hiring a seamstress, dressmaker, or tailor purchased fabrics and other material themselves and paid only for the work done with the materials. This is most clearly visible in the account of Christopher Chant, a tailor whose 133 yards, valued at almost \$32, made him the leading buyer of fabrics (by volume and value) at Tett's. His account was also debited a total of \$7 for thread, tape, pins, and other supplies. Such purchases seem far from sufficient for a year of work and could have been for his own family of nine. Made on twenty-seven different days, sometimes in very small pieces, almost all the transactions were by his wife, daughters, or a son. In addition, he or a member of his family charged sixteen yards (in as many pieces) to the accounts of six other customers in the sample, along with thread, buttons, tape, binding, and padding. Among the credits on his account

were \$25 for making various garments, including four coats, a vest, a suit, some "clothes," and a pair of trousers. Of the other six tailors in the samples, only one had a substantial account. This was Kenneth Urquhart, a 27-year-old bachelor who bought 30 yards of fabric worth \$13.68 at Sherin's store and \$1.32 worth of buttons in occasional small purchases. He also bought 21 yards of materials on one other customer's account. No doubt some of the material purchased by sample members was transformed by someone working for pay, but at this stage of research it seems unwise even to guess at orders of magnitude.

Conclusion

Few of the specific details of textile purchases in rural Upper Canada are likely to surprise specialists in the history of textiles elsewhere in colonial North America. Even so, the information from systematic use of a routinely generated source offers a sense of proportion in reading, and sorting among the conflicting images in, the extensive anecdotal literature on consumption. When taken together, moreover, the data produce a story very different from the one Brett (and many others) tell. In particular, the underlying idea that there was a transition from self-sufficiency to market orientation is wrong. Rather, and fundamentally, the story involves markets from the beginning.³⁶ In a rural world that has been conceptualized as not being about markets, all the products discussed here had prices. So did many locally provided goods and services, such as those of the artisans who appear prominently among the leading buyers. Almost everywhere in Upper Canada respondents to Robert Gourlay's 1817 statistical survey could report, for example, the wages of women for housework and spinning, the prices of sheep, the yield of wool per sheep and the price of wool per pound.³⁷ From the range and quantity of fabrics sold at Yonge Mills, it is clear that the principal kinds of fabrics were available in the countryside even in 1808. In allocating their time and resources, including those devoted to producing for their own consumption, settlers surely were guided by their knowledge of, and expectations about, such market matters. More than fifty years later, there had been no apparent trend away from cloth making; that is, it seems doubtful that families in the province's early years made any more cloth than those we have met in 1842, 1851, and 1861. Nor was ready-made clothing a major part

of the business of any of these stores in 1861. Even the Fowlds family, whose store had such large textile sales in 1861, also operated a carding and fulling mill.

Our image of the settlement era has been shaped in part by the conventions of various genres. One of them is the nineteenth-century reminiscence; whether speaking of hardship personally experienced or paying tribute to those who lived through privations, the author contrasts an earlier time with a later one, often exaggerating both the virtues and the difficulties of the earlier time.³⁸ Another genre is history: historians are conventionally interested in change. Thus it is common in the literature on consumption to find sharply contrasting images of before and after as a way of highlighting a "revolution" in whatever period is chosen for study.³⁹ Although it serves dramatic purposes to contrast isolation and a "largely self-sufficient" economy with the world of modern communications and, eventually, mass marketing, that phrasing diverts our attention from markets, consumption, and communication that already existed. To speak deterministically, as Brett does, of "necessity" is to miss the actual choices that women had.

Almost all the fabrics that the people (mainly women) in these samples were choosing at the country store fall into the middle ground between the often-emphasized extremes, homespun and high luxury. At every store individual cotton products were, in terms of yardage, the principal fabrics sold; in terms of values, cottons as a whole led by a wide margin, except at Fowlds'. Knowing that this was the era of the Industrial Revolution, we might have expected this, but cotton has been strangely absent from narratives based on anecdotal evidence.⁴⁰ In a story of harsh Canadian winters and the need for warmth, we have underestimated the heat of the Ontario summer (or have assumed that linens took care of that, without demonstrating that there was sufficient domestic production in Upper Canada). As can be seen from the variety of colours and patterns in the pieces in surviving quilts, when women went to a store, they chose among products whose differences were visible. We can readily imagine them to have been as practical as Brett suggests, with an eye to value, in terms of price, quality and purpose. That is not inconsistent with having an eye for fashion, in the context of their lives, in colour, in fabric, in what they intended to make (or have made), in trim and accessories, and even in line and shape. During

the period, more kinds of fabrics became available, stores found it paid to stock a greater number of fabrics, and quantities purchased rose. Particularly striking, because the example comes from well before the mid-century boom, is the level of consumption of leading Tett customers in 1842. But the rise in consumption was selective; many rural Upper Canadians continued to make woolen cloth (or have it made) and thus avoided buying too many expensive woollens.

From these records, we are not able to see why some bought little at a particular store or whether those who bought a great deal also bought textiles elsewhere. Some of the leading buyers were artisans (such as Eb Heath and Baptiste Touro [sic] the coopers who in 1861 were the leading buyers in terms of yardage at Scovil's and Fowlds' respectively). They, like the Chants and the Bush family, had close and complex relationships with the merchant. At Darling's, five leading buyers were also major wood suppliers, delivering in total almost 700 cords of wood in 1861; four of them had credits far exceeding the value of goods charged to their accounts. But many other large accounts did not have this character. The other five leading buyers at Darling's did not supply wood, and some large wood suppliers bought many fewer textiles.

These purchasers were, as we have seen, representative members of rural and village society. Some at least were buying very large amounts of textiles. These could be expensive, but for most families, on a per capita basis, the purchases that these accounts allow us access to were lower in value than the provincial average in 1861. Of those who exceeded the average, more than half were customers at Fowlds' store, in the largest village studied. That reminds us that consumption was strongly structured by class and was likely to be both greater and different in urban centres.⁴¹ It seems altogether unlikely, in fact, that the standards of the urban elite, on whom fashion historians have often relied, are a reliable indication of textile consumption by the vast majority of early and mid-nineteenth century Upper Canadians who lived outside the main centres. Specialists in textile history would undoubtedly read much more than I have from what is (and is not) contained in the account books discussed here.⁴² The first step is to recognize that such sources exist. Even if the everyday products made from the textiles have not survived, there is much more information about the fabrics used in Upper Canada than we have hitherto recognized.

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NOTES

1. A notable exception is Louise Dechêne, *Le partage des subsistances au Canada sous le régime français* (Montreal: Boréal, 1994).
2. See, e.g., the images of European hats in Graham Taylor and Peter A. Baskerville, *A Concise History of Business in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford, 1994), 105.
3. See the discussion of women's work in, e.g., Alison Prentice et al, *Canadian Women: A History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 69–79. See also Elizabeth Jane Errington, *Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada, 1790–1840*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), e.g., 98–9, 199.

4. Adrienne D. Hood and David-Thierry Ruddel, "Artifacts and Documents in the History of Quebec Textiles," in *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture*, ed. Gerald L. Pocius (St John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University, 1991), 88.
5. Le collectif Clio [Micheline Dumont et al.], *L'histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles* (Montreal: Le Jour, 1992), 120. A more complex presentation, less dominated by homespun, is Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 75–85.
6. These and subsequent quotations are from Katharine B. Brett, "Country Clothing in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," in *Fourth Annual Agricultural History of Ontario Seminar Proceedings*, ed. Alan A. Brookes (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1979), 40; K. B. Brett, "Clothing Worn in Canada: Changing Fashions in the Nineteenth Century," *Canada's Visual History*, CD-ROM (Ottawa: National Film Board of Canada, Canadian Heritage Information Network, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994 [1980]), not paginated; and K. B. Brett, *Women's Costume in Early Ontario*, What? Why? When? How? Where? Who? Series (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1966), 3, 4. On the importance of the *Canada's Visual History* study, see Jacqueline Beaudoin-Ross and Pamela Blackstock, "Costume in Canada: An Annotated Bibliography," *Material History Bulletin* 19 (Spring 1984): 67.
7. Elizabeth Severin, "Muslin Gowns and Moccasins," in *The Capital Years: Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1792–1796*, ed. Richard Merritt, Nancy Butler, and Michael Power (Toronto: Dundurn, 1991), 140.
8. *Women's Costume in Early Ontario*, 3. Cf. *Canada's Visual History*, where Brett writes, "Many women in rural communities had only one good dress, whenever possible a silk one." The silk dress is, however, omitted altogether in the account of "Country Clothing." For a similar emphasis on silk, lace, velvet, etc., see, e.g., Christina Bates, "Beauty Unadorned": Dressing Children in Late Nineteenth Century Ontario," *Material History Bulletin* 21 (Spring 1985): 25–34.
9. Province of Canada, Legislative Assembly, *Journals*, 1853, Appendix A, Schedule 18; and *Sessional Papers*, 1862, no. 2, Schedule 2. The provincial population was 1.8 million in 1851 and 2.5 million in 1861.
10. Upper Canadian linen production was 37,000 yards a decade later; in total just over 100 yards were produced in Peterborough and Leeds.
11. See, e.g., David-Thierry Ruddel, "Consumer Trends, Clothing, Textiles and Equipment in the Montreal Area, 1792–1835," *Material History Review* 32 (Fall 1990): 45–64. A rich and subtle account of issues and methods is Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
12. As will be evident, this is a large, long-term project, which I summarize only briefly here. Additional discussion and further details on all but two of these samples (Choate 1851 and Fowlds 1854) can be found in other papers on this project, including "The Needs of Farm Households: Farm Families' Purchases from Two Upper Canadian Stores in 1861" in *Espace et Culture/Space and Culture*, ed. Serge Courville et Normand Séguin (Ste-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995), 355–67; "Retailing in the Countryside: Upper Canadian General Stores in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Business and Economic History* 26: 2 (Winter 1997): 393–403; "Consumption Stories: Customer Purchases of Alcohol at an Upper Canadian Country Store in 1808–9 and 1828–9," *Cheminevements – Conférences*, research communication series of Centre interuniversitaire d'études québécoises (Quebec: CIEQ, 1999), 11 pp.; and "Consumption Stories: Some Evidence on Consumer Buying in Rural Upper Canada," presented to Conference on Canadian Economic History, Kananaskis, Alberta, 23–25 April 1999. As Table 1 indicates, all the accounts drawn on here, except for a ledger used for the 1854 sample, were daybooks.
13. Adrienne Dora Hood, "Organization and Extent of Textile Manufacture in Eighteenth-Century, Rural Pennsylvania: A Case Study of Chester County" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 1988), 191–3. The estimate is based on 20 yards per man, 13 yards per woman, and 3 yards per child. For a set of bed curtains, valances, covers, and window curtains, 50 yards of fabric might be needed.
14. Other fabrics sold at one store only and in very modest amounts include damask, diaper, duck, linsey-woolsey, nankeen, and tarlatan.
15. It is thus evident that volumes for some of the specific cottons are lower-bounded. That does not mean the general category is over-estimated, because lots for which yardage was not given (and which could not be reliably estimated) are not included; some were obviously small, from the value of the transaction, but others were full pieces of unknown length. The object of the table is, in any case, to identify fabrics and provide orders of magnitude.
16. This is the dimension lacking in most earlier studies on Upper Canada that have cited accounts, nearly all of which have been essentially anecdotal. See, e.g., Pearl Wilson's 1944 article, "Consumer Buying in Upper Canada," reprinted in *Historical Essays on Upper Canada*, ed. J. K. Johnson, The Carleton Library, 82 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 216–25.
17. It was not possible to determine which of the two Patrick O'Donnells farming in Douro was Choate's customer.
18. The other three were corduroy (1 buyer, 4 yards), divinity (2 buyers, 5 yards), and russell (1 buyer, 9 yards); divinity might be dimity, but does not seem to be spelled that way. Another product sold by the yard was "quality," for which I have not discovered a definition. Its price (an average of about 6d/yd) was too low for any fabric; I have assumed it belongs in the category of notions.
19. At least four purchases were of cotton sold in pieces of unknown length; they are not included in the total of 797 yards given in Table 2 but their value is included in the values in the table. As the

tables note, values have been converted from Halifax currency to dollars.

20. At the midpoint of price ranges in all cases, a bushel of wheat during 1808–9 (6 shillings, or \$1.20) equaled over 2 yards of calico or cotton. In 1828–9, a bushel of wheat (5.25 shillings, or \$1.05) would have bought 4 or 5 yards of either fabric. See Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784–1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 336–7.
21. For example, at Tett's store, four customers were credited with homemade cloth (from 2.5 to 9 yards), two with mitts (3 and 4 pairs), and one with socks (18 pairs). Invoices at Tett's in the mid-1830s show some mitts being bought from a wholesale supplier as well. See also discussion of the Bush family, below.
22. Rita Adrosko, *Natural Dyes and Home Dyeing: A Practical Guide with over 150 Recipes* (New York: Dover, 1971), 17, 68–9, 88–95; Elijah Bemiss, *The Dyer's Companion*, reprint of 3rd ed., ed. Rita Adrosko (New York, Dover, 1973 [1815]), 9–13. Moreover, some recipes required both madder and indigo.
23. J. S. Robertson, *Guide to Dressmaking and Fancy Work* (Whitby: J. S. Robertson & Bros, ca 1876; reprint, ed. Eileen Collard, Burlington: E. Collard 1977), 13. The specified length is for cloth of 32 inches width. The customer was Mrs George Shields, at the Sherin store. For the figure of 5 to 9 yards, see *The Account Book of Richard Latham 1724–1767*, ed. Lorna Weatherill, *Records of Social and Economic History*, n.s. vol. 15, published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press (Oxford, 1990), xxvi. See also Nathalie Rothstein, ed., *Barbara Johnson's Album of Fashions and Fabrics* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987) for variation in yardage requirements for dresses in early nineteenth-century England, from 6 to 14 yards; only some of the variation was a function of fabric widths. (My thanks to Dr Alexandra Palmer for this reference.)
24. See, e.g., Loretta M. Taylor, "Fabric in Women's Costume from 1860 to 1880: A Comparison of Fashion Periodicals and Selected Canadian Museum Collections," (M.Sc. thesis, University of Alberta, 1990), 26–7.
25. See Jana Bara, "Cradled in Furs: Winter Fashions in Montreal in the 1860s," *Dress* 16 (1990), 44; and illustration in C. Willett Cunningham, Phillis Cunningham, and Charles Beard, *A Dictionary of English Costume, 900–1900* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), 229.
26. Errington, *Wives and Mothers*, 200–202.
27. On the local sheep economy in 1817, see Robert Gourlay, *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*, abridged ed. The Carleton Library, 75 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 263–268, 277–8. For a later period, see Janine Roelens and Kris Inwood, "'Labouring at the Loom': A Case Study of Rural Manufacturing in Leeds County, Ontario, 1870," *Canadian Papers in Rural History* VII (1990): 215–235.
28. Data were reported at the district rather than county level in 1842, i.e., for the Johnstown and Colborne Districts. For the former, see summary in Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 394–5.
29. Jean Murray Cole, *Origins: The History of Dummer Township* (Township of Dummer, 1993), 69–71, 75.
30. On the provincial wool economy in this period, see Kris Inwood and Phyllis Wagg, "The Survival of Handloom Weaving in Rural Canada Circa 1870," *Journal of Economic History* 53 (1993): 346–58. See also McCalla, *Planting the Province*, 322–5.
31. Allowing for variation in household sizes, in the case of linked customers, does not affect the argument here. Ann Graham, the largest buyer in 1828–9, could not be linked to local population and assessment lists.
32. In addition, four lower-ranked buyers at Fowlds' and three at other stores exceeded this threshold. One, Dr Bingham, is discussed below.
33. See Cole, *Origins*, 217–18. On some Tett invoices from the 1830s for goods supplied by wholesalers, a few hats and gloves stand out at the high end of prices for these goods; they are in fact identified as being for members of the Tett family, not resale.
34. In total, they purchased 586 yards of 33 different textiles, 78 percent of total yardage being cottons. Thus, their average was 39 yards and in most respects their patterns resembled those of the larger sample.
35. By value, their purchases of about 40 yards of woolens represented more than half their purchases; in yardage, cotton dominated (97 yards). They spent \$4.40 on "luxuries" ($\frac{1}{8}$ of a yard of "silk velvet," a small square of lustre, and 2.5 yards each of satin and mohair). They also had a carding and fulling account of \$1.50.
36. See Jan de Vries, "Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods: Understanding the Household Economy in Early Modern Europe," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 107–8. The significance of this point is recognized by Cohen, *Women's Work*, 76–81; but in arguing (p. 81) that there was "a fairly rapid decline in reliance on homespun," she reinforces another part of the traditional story.
37. For Leeds, see his *Statistical Account*, 262–70, 284–5. On domestic service, see Errington, *Wives and Mothers*, chapters 4 and 5.
38. See Cohen, *Women's Work*, 76–7 for two such tales, one of which Cohen fully and appropriately discounts. On the "malleable" quality of reminiscences, see also Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 37.
39. For example, Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Europa, 1982); T. H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain': The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 119 (May 1988): 73–104. Even the best Canadian textbook on this topic, Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel, with Cornelius Jaenen, *History of the Canadian Peoples*, vol. I, *Beginnings to 1867*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1998), 227–8, offers

a highly stylized contrast between an earlier world of "barter and mutual dependence" and a later one of "individualism, monetary exchange, capital accumulation, wage labour, and rigid work schedules."

40. In contrast to literary sources, systematic work on inventories has already established the importance of cotton. See, e.g., Hood and Ruddel, "Artifacts and Documents in the History of Quebec Textiles," 65. For longer term background, see Beverly Lemire,

Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800 (Oxford: Pasold Research Fund: Oxford University Press, 1991).

41. Cf. fig. 11 in Ruddel, "Consumer Trends ... in the Montreal Area, 1792-1835," 59.
42. For example, some purchases note colour, such as black, with its implications of mourning. Whether types and quantities make sense in terms of our understanding of custom in the province would require a specialist's knowledge.

Material History Review **Student Writing Award for 2000**

The Editors of the *Material History Review* and the Canada Science and Technology Museum are pleased to announce the winner of the *MHR* Student Writing Award for 2000: Pat Tomczyszyn, for her essay "Sifting through Papers of the Past: Using Archival Documents for Costume Research in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Quebec." The paper will appear in *Material History Review* 55 (Spring 2002).

Ms Tomczyszyn graduated from the University of Manitoba in 2000 with a Master of Science in Clothing and Textiles. Her thesis topic was "Le costume traditionnel: A Study of Clothing and Textiles in the Town of Quebec, 1635-1760."

Prix du meilleur texte étudiant 2000 de la *Revue d'histoire de la culture matérielle*

La rédaction de la *Revue d'histoire de la culture matérielle* et le Musée des sciences et de la technologie du Canada ont le plaisir de révéler le nom de la lauréate du Prix du meilleur texte étudiant 2000 de la *Revue*: Pat Tomczyszyn, auteure de « Sifting through Papers of the Past : Using Archival Documents for Costume Research in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Quebec ». Ce texte paraîtra dans le numéro 55 de la *Revue* (printemps 2002).

M^{me} Tomczyszyn a obtenu une maîtrise en sciences du vêtement et des textiles de l'Université du Manitoba en 2000. Sa thèse s'intitulait « Le costume traditionnel : A Study of Clothing and Textiles in the Town of Quebec, 1635-1760 ».