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**"Getting a Grand Falls Job:" Migration, Labour Markets, and Paid Domestic Work
in the Pulp and Paper Mill Town of Grand Falls, Newfoundland, 1905-1939**

by

©Ingrid Botting

**A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
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Abstract

While it has been generally understood that domestic service was an institution of particular importance to working-class women and to middle-class householders in North America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, we still know little about the interwar years, a period during which the occupation declined in overall importance, but still defined many women's working lives. In the 1920s and 1930s, a vast majority of women who grew up in Newfoundland's coastal communities, where household production and the family fishery remained the mainstay of the economy, spent part of their lives performing domestic tasks for pay.

To begin to understand the historical and cultural significance of domestic service to women's lives in Newfoundland, this dissertation uses a case-study approach. It focuses on the pulp and paper mill town of Grand Falls, where there was a steady demand for domestics by mill workers and their families, the town's elite, and hotels and boarding houses during the 1920s and 1930s. One of a number of single-resource towns supported by Newfoundland's economic diversification policies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Grand Falls was built in the interior of the island by the Harmsworth brothers of Britain in 1905. By tracing domestics' lives and experiences from countryside to company town, into the household -- as workplace -- and then into their married lives, the study explores themes relating to the gendered nature of uneven development. For instance, many Grand Falls employers shared much in common with the women they hired, in terms of religion, ethnicity and social origin, which raises interesting questions about the gender

and class dimensions of an employer/employee relationship that has traditionally been characterized as one of domination and subordination. It also considers that relations of gender and class within the company town were formed in conjunction with factors such as migration patterns, pre-existing concepts of the gender division of labour within household production, company paternalism, and social stratification within the workplace, the household and the town. The ways in which these factors overlapped and shaped the lives of domestics forms the backdrop of this study.

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It would have been impossible to complete this study without the assistance and support of many individuals. I am, however, especially grateful to the women and men who agreed to be interviewed. Without their willingness to share their past experiences with me, the project could never have been done. I would like to thank my co-supervisors, Dr. Linda Kealey and Dr. James Hiller, as well as Dr. Greg Kealey -- the third member of my dissertation committee -- for their ongoing support and encouragement. I am grateful to Sean Cadigan for his advice during the project's inception, and to Dr. Bernard O'Dwyer of the English Department at Memorial University for allowing me to read his interview transcripts. I also owe a great deal of thanks to Fran Warren, Ruby Banfield, and Beverly Evans-Hong of the History Department at Memorial University, and to Joan Butler of the Women's Studies Department. I acknowledge the assistance of the archivists and librarians at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies and the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, and that of the Grand Falls Heritage Society. I received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the School of Graduate Studies at Memorial University, the Institute of Social and Economic Research, and the J.R. Smallwood Foundation, for which I am appreciative.

I owe much gratitude to my parents Karen and Dwight Botting, and to my sister Carla, who supported this project in so many ways that it is impossible to list them all. Without Rick Rennie's sustained patience, encouragement and humour, and Marianne's enthusiasm, this project would never have been completed. I thank them both profusely.

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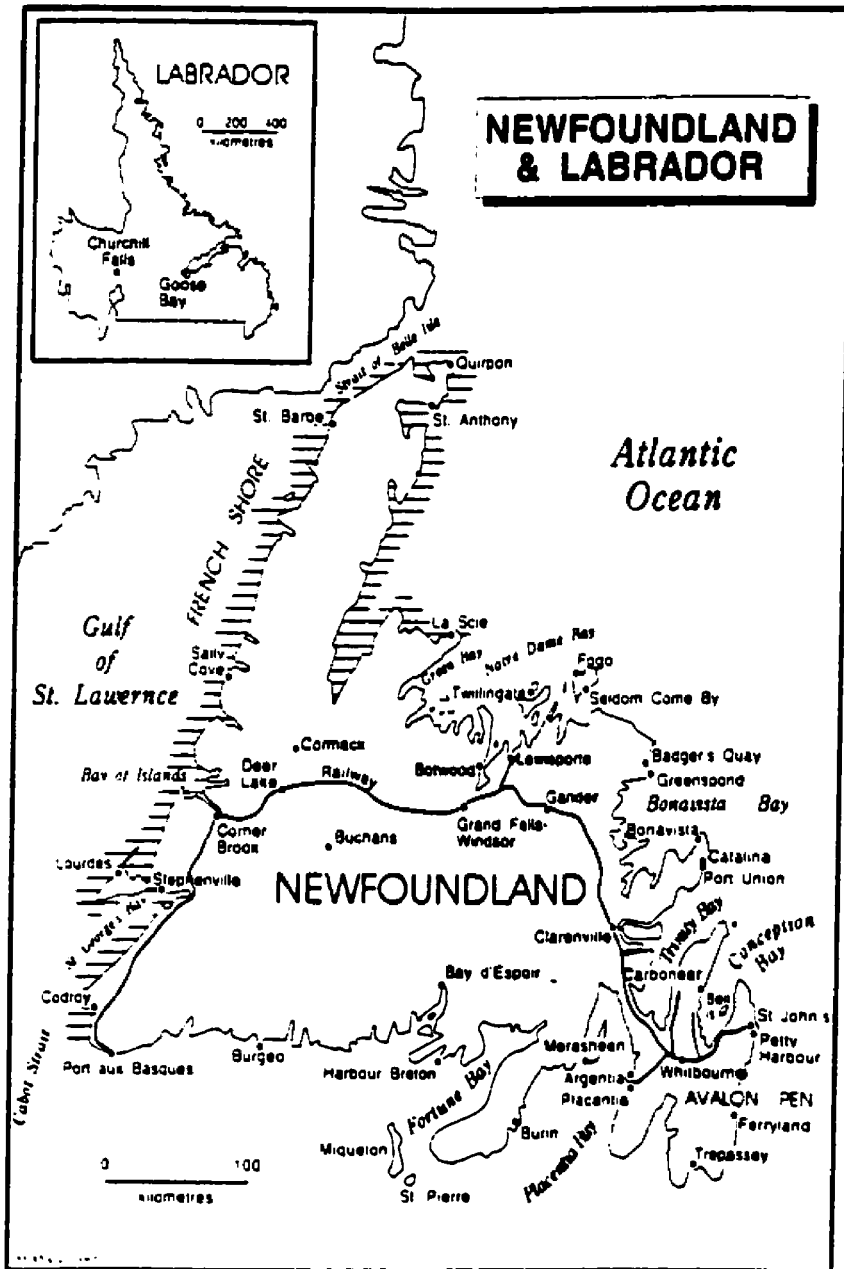
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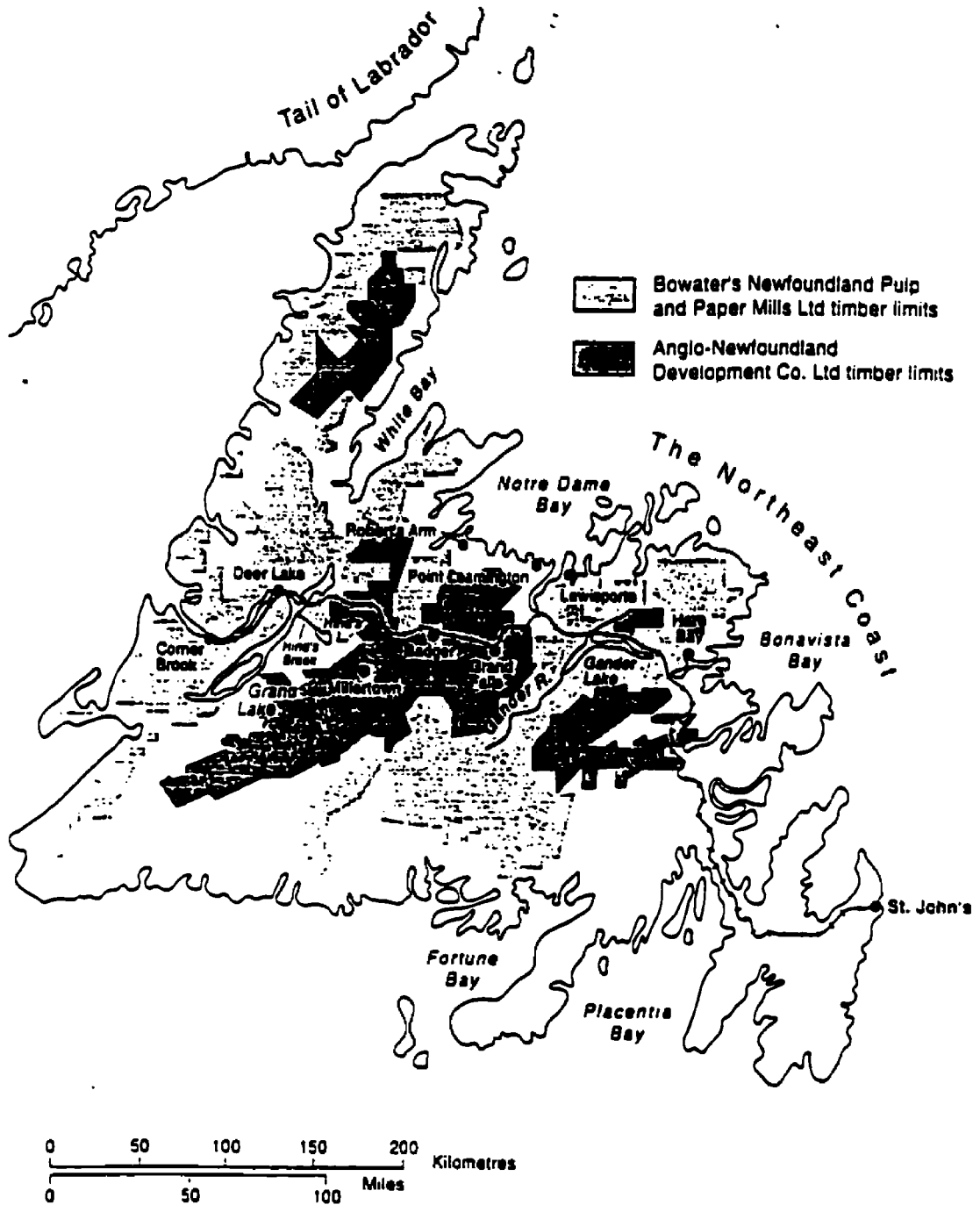
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Figure 1: Map of Newfoundland Showing the Railway Line



Source: James Hiller and Peter Neary eds., *Twentieth Century Newfoundland: Explorations* (St. John's: Breakwater, 1994) 10.

Figure 2: 1940 Land Holdings of the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company and Bowater's Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd.



Source: W. J. Reader, *Bowater: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 132.

Chapter One

Introduction

On 3 August 1999, mother of eight, grandmother of thirty-one, and great-grandmother of thirty-one Martina L. died at the St. Clare's Mercy Hospital in St. John's, Newfoundland, at the age of 92.¹ Born in the northeast coast Newfoundland fishing community of Fleur de Lys, White Bay in the early 20th century, Martina L.'s life, like that of so many women of her generation, revolved around her paid and unpaid caregiving and domestic work – as a daughter in her parents' house, in paid work before marriage, and within her married life. Typically, she spent many of her formative years working in a number of rural households, where she performed various fishery-related and domestic tasks, as well as duties associated with household production in exchange for room and board, and payment in kind. In this period of her life, one of the employment situations she found was in Grand Falls -- a pulp and paper mill town built by a British concern starting in 1905. There, families lived in company houses, participated in company-sponsored leisure activities, and purchased goods for consumption in company stores. There were street lights, a movie theatre, hotels, and restaurants. A large number of the Newfoundland-born core permanent workforce and their families employed live-in domestics, whom they generally paid in cash. When Martina L. arrived in Grand Falls, she

¹Martina L.'s stories form an integral part of this thesis. She and her family were cooperative and supportive over the course of the research component. It was with great sorrow that I learned of her death.

probably did not realize the extent to which that move would change her life.² After working as a domestic there for three years, she met her husband and they moved to his home in Bonavista Bay, hundreds of miles away from where she had grown up. There, she continued to work in the household -- first in the household of her in-laws, and after their deaths in her own household where she and her husband raised six children.

Martina L.'s experience was representative of that of other young women of her generation who grew up in fishing households in the 1920s and 1930s. Migration and domestic work formed an integral part of many of these women's lives before marriage, and at one point or another many of them moved to urban centres in Newfoundland or elsewhere, where their labour was in demand. Sometimes these moves were temporary and other times they were permanent.

In North America, by the late 19th and early 20th centuries domestic servants were primarily female, and represented the largest group of women wage earners. In 1891, around 41 per cent of all wage earning women worked as domestics in Canada, a percentage that dropped to around 18 per cent in 1921, rising again slightly during the 1930s.³ Most of these domestics were single working-class women, many of them were immigrants from Britain and continental Europe, and indeed others were rural migrants.

²Interview with Martina L., St. John's, Newfoundland, September 1996.

³Paul Phillips and Erin Phillips, *Women and Work: Inequality in the Canadian Labour Market*, Revised Edition (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Publishers, 1993) 17.

While we know that the number of domestics in the labour force varied at different times and regionally, depending on the supply and demand, the availability of alternative forms of wage work, and the perceived need for household help, our overall understanding of these processes remains vague and incomplete.⁴ One of the largest gaps in our understanding of domestic service concerns the interwar years, a period during which the occupation declined in overall importance, but still defined many women's working lives. During this period domestic service was also generally understood to be both a "respectable" occupation for working-class daughters, and one of the least preferred jobs for young women. More research is required, however, to understand the ways in which the various groups of women who did this work perceived their experiences within specific economic and cultural realities.

In early 20th century Newfoundland, the percentage of live-in domestics in relation to the entire female labour force was relatively high. In 1935, the earliest year for which domestics were included in government's census tabulations, 53 per cent of the female labour force worked as domestic servants. Though the percentage decreased to 27 per cent in 1945, domestic service continued to remain a more prevalent form of women's

⁴Marilyn Barber, "The Women Ontario Welcomed: Immigrant Domestic Workers For Ontario Homes, 1870-1930," Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff eds., *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History*, Vol. II (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985); Varpu Lindström Best, *Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1988); and D.A. Muise, "The Industrial Context of Inequality: Female Participation in Nova Scotia's Paid Labour Force, 1871-1921," *Acadiensis*, 20, 2 (Spring, 1991).

paid work in Newfoundland than in other jurisdictions.⁵ With a few exceptions, live-in domestic service, the content and definition of which has varied historically and regionally on the island, has rarely been studied by Newfoundland social historians.⁶ Most of what we know stems from reminiscences of growing up in coastal communities and through stories told by women of the interwar generation. Scholars have made little effort to make sense of these experiences in relation to larger questions about the historical, cultural, and social relevance of domestic service to many Newfoundland women's lives.⁷

⁵Department of Public Health and Welfare, "Table 8: Number Reporting Earnings by Sex and Industry Groups for Year Ended June 30th, 1935, for Newfoundland and Labrador," *Tenth Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1935* (St. John's: The Department, 1937); Government of Newfoundland, "Table 44: Gainfully occupied, 14 years of age and over, by occupation and sex," *Eleventh Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1945* (St. John's: The Office, 1947).

⁶One of the first scholars to describe domestic service as an aspect of women's work in Newfoundland was Ellen Antler in "Fisherman, Fisherwoman, Rural Proletariat: Capitalist Commodity Production in the Newfoundland Fishery," unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Connecticut, 1981) 127-45. For one of the few existing accounts of domestics' work experiences in St. John's, see Nancy Forestell, "Women's Paid Labour in St. John's Between the Two World Wars," unpublished MA thesis (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1987), especially Chapter 4; see also, Shelly Smith, "A Better Chance in the Boston States: An Ethnographic Account of Migratory Domestic Service Among Newfoundland Women, 1920-1940," unpublished honours dissertation (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1984); and for an example of a sociological study which makes reference to domestic service; see, Barbara Neis, "From 'Shipped Girls' to 'Brides of the State': The Transition from Familial to Social Patriarchy in the Newfoundland Fishing Industry," *Canadian Journal of Regional Science: Revue canadienne des sciences régionales*, 16, 2 (Summer/été, 1993) 190-195.

⁷See for example, Stella Gladys (Oxford-Hewlett) Ryan, *Outport Girl: Growing Up in a Newfoundland Outport* (Lewisporte: Outport Publishing, 1992); and Hilda Chauik Murray, *More than Fifty Percent: Women's Life in a Newfoundland Outport* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1979); and Aubrey M. Tizzard, *On Sloping Ground: Reminiscences*

Through a case study approach, this dissertation seeks to add to our understanding of these factors by exploring the work and migration experiences of women like Martina L., who moved to Grand Falls to work as domestics during the interwar years. Who were these women? From which communities and regions did they originate? How did they perceive their work and migration experiences, and how did these in turn shape the decisions they made for the rest of their lives? In what ways did their lives and experiences intersect and diverge from those of the Grand Falls families who hired them? In considering questions such as these, the present study seeks to achieve two general objectives: to provide a profile of Grand Falls domestics by tracing them from countryside to company town, into the household – as workplace – and then into their married lives, and to underscore the social and economic diversity of Newfoundland communities in a historical perspective by examining the development of class and gender relations in this single-industry town.⁴

of Outport Life in Notre Dame Bay, Newfoundland (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1994) for references to domestic service. The primary investigators of a research project on the popular medical culture of Newfoundland found that so many of the women they interviewed referred to working as domestics, that they initiated a separate project on the subject. This project was funded by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The transcripts of the "Girls in Service Project" are complete but still remain a work in progress. For a published version of the medical culture oral history study, see R.R. Anderson, J.K. Crellin, and B. O'Dwyer, *Healthways: Newfoundland Elders: Their Lifestyles and Values* (St. John's: Creative Publishers, 1998).

⁴Here, gender is understood as the social and cultural definition of what it means to be a woman (or a man) in a given society and social status (or class) is inextricably linked to constructions of gender. Class is also recognized as a complex process, especially

1.1 The context: Newfoundland's underdevelopment

In order to understand the emergence of Grand Falls within the general historical context, it is necessary to have some understanding of the issues of economic development and underdevelopment within the history and the historiography of Newfoundland. In the 16th century, a number of European countries, including England, France, Spain, and Portugal began using the island as a fishing station from which to prosecute the lucrative cod fishery. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, these various powers, especially England and France, vied and battled for control of the island. British sovereignty had been established and recognized by 1713, and Britain officially recognized the island as a settled colony in 1824. Increasing permanent population, especially throughout the 19th century, naturally gave rise to the issue of diversifying the economy and developing the island's resources. Not surprisingly, then, much of the historiography of Newfoundland has been concerned with the question of development and underdevelopment. This problem might be briefly stated as: Why has Newfoundland's economy apparently lagged

when women's domestic labour is the focus. See Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong's overview of the theoretical debates about class and domestic labour in their *Theorizing Women's Work* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1990) 68-77. Few historians have explored community life in single resource towns from a gendered perspective. For an exception, see Nancy Forestell, "All that Glitters is Not Gold: The Gendered Dimensions of Work, Family, and Community Life in the Northern Ontario Goldmining Town of Timmins, 1909-1950," unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Toronto, 1993). For a non-academic example of social history in the pulp and paper sector in Newfoundland, see The Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club of Grand Falls, *The Forest Beckoned: Recollections of a Town and Its Times, Grand Falls, Newfoundland, 1905-1960*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Falls-Windsor: Robinson Blackmore Printing, 1997).

behind that of other regions of North America and Europe? And did Newfoundland pursue the right options in response to this question? Many of the theories advanced have centred on Newfoundland's supposed over-reliance on the fisheries and the role of the political and business class in the formulation of a development policy. These interpretations have generally dealt with Newfoundland's economic ills in a localized context; they have been guided by the overarching concern to explain why Newfoundland was so poor and unsuccessful as a country.

One of the most influential responses to the underdevelopment question was that offered by historian David Alexander, who argued that instead of focusing on the role of the presumed over-reliance on the fishery in Newfoundland's underdevelopment, scholars should instead look at the ways in which neglect of the fisheries contributed to Newfoundland's economic decline in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and how this in turn led to Newfoundland's economic and political integration into continental North America.⁹ In other words, Alexander suggested that rather than a weakness to which

⁹David Alexander, "Development and Dependence in Newfoundland, 1880-1970," *Acadiensis*, 4, 1 (Autumn, 1974); "Newfoundland's Traditional Economy and Development to 1934," *Acadiensis*, 5, 2 (Spring 1976); and *The Decay of Trade: An Economic History of the Newfoundland Saltfish Trade, 1935-1965* (St. John's: ISER, 1977). William G. Reeves challenged some of David Alexander's assumptions about government neglect of the fisheries in "'Our Yankee Cousins': Modernization and the Newfoundland - American Relationship, 1898-1910," unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Maine at Orono, 1987), and subsequently in W.G. Reeves, "Alexander's Conundrum Revisited: The American Dimension in Newfoundland Resource Development, 1898 to 1910," *Newfoundland Studies*, 5, 1 (1989). For a more recent assessment of fisheries policy in the post-Confederation period, see Miriam Wright, "Newfoundland and Canada: The Evolution of Fisheries Development Policies, 1940-1966," unpublished PhD

Newfoundland clung for too long, the fisheries were in fact its great strength, and one which was for various political, ideological and short-term economic motivations, tragically neglected. Historian Shannon Ryan has suggested that instead of internal political and economic policy decisions, the answer to the question of underdevelopment lay in the international realm. Ryan argued that throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Newfoundland's primary industry, the saltfish trade, was under constant and increasing threat from producers in other nations and from shifts in technology and market conditions, much of which was perhaps beyond the control of Newfoundland producers.¹⁰ The collapse of the salt fish trade, according to Ryan, was a key factor in the political and economic crisis which gripped Newfoundland in the 1920s and 1930s, and led to the suspension of elected government and the appointment of a Commission of Government in 1934 on the recommendation of a British-appointed royal commission.¹¹

thesis (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1997).

¹⁰Shannon Ryan, *Fish Out of Water: The Newfoundland Saltfish Trade, 1814-1914*, (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1986); and *The Ice Hunters: A History of Newfoundland Sealing to 1914*, (St. John's: Breakwater, 1994).

¹¹Lord Amulree (Chair), *Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1933 Report*, "Report Presented by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Parliament of His Majesty, November, 1933" (London: HM Stationary Office, 1933). Hereafter cited as Amulree Report. For a political interpretation of these events, see S.J.R. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), and more recently, Peter Neary, *Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World, 1929-1949* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

Explanations of Newfoundland's underdevelopment which focus on the fishery often concentrate on the role of the merchant class, which has generally been viewed as either passively or actively discouraging industrial development and alternatives to the cod fishery in order to ensure continuation of its own economic and political domination.¹² One of the most provocative scholars to have taken this line was Gerald S. Sider, who sought to explain the relationship between the unique and allegedly autonomous cultural practices of rural Newfoundlanders, and the system of commodity production and exchange within which they lived and worked.¹³ Through a combination of cultural anthropology and Marxist theory he argued that relations of dominance, reliance, and resistance in rural Newfoundland, which he saw manifested in folk traditions, had been

¹²The role of merchants in the social, political, and economic history of Newfoundland has been a central issue in the literature for more than a century. The standard interpretation was that merchants stymied the settlement and subsequently the economic development of the fishery and other resources. The number of scholars who have contributed to a better understanding of the role of the merchants and by extension merchant capital in Newfoundland is too long to list here. For the standard 19th century interpretation, see D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial and Foreign Records* (1895), (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1976). Gerald Sider, *Culture and Class in Anthropology and History: A Newfoundland Illustration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986); Sean Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland, 1785-1855* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); and Rosemary Ommer, *From Outpost to Outport: A Structural Analysis of the Jersey-Gaspe Cod Fishery, 1767-1886* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991) and the essays in Rosemary Ommer ed., *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990). Most recently see, Robert G. Hong, "An Agency For the Common Weal': The Newfoundland Board of Trade, 1909-1915," unpublished MA thesis (Memorial University, 1998).

¹³Gerald Sider, *Culture and Class in Anthropology and History*.

reproduced and reinforced over time within the merchant credit system. Sider thus viewed Newfoundland's underdevelopment as arising primarily out of the merchant class's interest in perpetuating a system which to him obviously maintained their economic domination.

The most vigorous, sustained refutation of Sider's conception is that offered by Sean Cadigan, who has explicitly rejected Sider's account of the presumed conservative character of the merchant class and its role in underdevelopment. In Cadigan's view, the weakness of approaches such as Sider's has been a failure to consider adequately the role of Newfoundland's natural environment and the limit which it set on what was economically possible.¹⁴ The crux of Cadigan's argument is that there was a relative lack of agricultural development in Newfoundland, because of the island's poor climate and soil conditions, which meant that it could not succeed in making the transition from merchant capital to industrial capitalism in the same ways as other regions of North America.¹⁵ The inability of producers to accumulate capital within less than ideal historical and geographical conditions meant that the household-based fishery and the truck system prevailed into the mid 20th century. Subsequent efforts at land-based development failed to diversify the island's economy in a sustainable way.

¹⁴Sean Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay*.

¹⁵Sean Cadigan, "The Merging of Farm, Fishery and Wage Labour in Rural Newfoundland: A Long-term Perspective," unpublished paper presented to the Social Science History Association (Chicago, 1995).

An undercurrent in much of the literature on underdevelopment in Newfoundland, and most relevant to the present discussion, is the story of the attempts at land-based industrialization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is commonly recognized that in this period government and others made various attempts to steer the economy away from an over-reliance on the fisheries and toward railway building and the development of land-based resources, such as agriculture, minerals and pulp and paper – an approach which has been termed Newfoundland’s “National Policy.” The land-based industries which arose during the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, including the copper mines of Notre Dame Bay, the iron ore mines of Bell Island, and the pulp and paper mills at Grand Falls, Bishop’s Falls, and Corner Brook, the lead and zinc mines at Buchans and the fluorspar mines at St. Lawrence, point to one of the less understood aspects of the so-called underdevelopment question: the rise of industrial enclaves and uneven development within Newfoundland itself. The fact that many of these enclave industries were based upon resource extraction and export, and were often encouraged by generous concessions of land and favourable royalty regimes granted to foreign-based concerns, has meant that in many cases these industries have provided little more than employment for a certain period of time and have not led to much in the way of sustainable development in the regions affected. The long-term effects of such policies have been a loss of local control of the resource base, and an underdeveloped economy dependent on external capital and

markets.¹⁶ While there have been several attempts to analyze such industries within the context of political economy and regional underdevelopment,¹⁷ there has been little in the way of detailed, empirical, historical studies of the specific industries, communities and workforces involved.

One of the most fundamental and least understood historical aspects of these development initiatives was that these industrial enclaves co-existed with another, more traditional economy based upon a mixture of fishing, subsistence agriculture, small-scale lumbering, hunting and trapping, and the household production of foodstuffs and other basic necessities. It is important to recognize that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries many workers moved back and forth between two social and economic contexts. The co-existence of wage labour and the more “traditional,” often cashless fishing economies has meant that the question of the formation of an industrial working class in early 20th

¹⁶In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Maritime provinces of Canada turned to promoting capital intensive resource extractive industries in forestry to offset declining conditions in the manufacturing industries and in the mining sector. See the essays in L. Anders Sandberg ed., *Trouble in the Woods: Forest Policy and Social Conflict in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1992). For a discussion of the long-term impacts of these development policies in the region, see Gary Burill and Ian McKay eds., *People, Resources, and Power: Critical Perspectives on Underdevelopment and Primary Industries in the Atlantic Region* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1987).

¹⁷With regard to underdevelopment and the forestry sector see, John A. Munro, “Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland,” unpublished PhD dissertation (University of British Columbia, 1978). See also, James Hiller, “The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland” *Acadiensis*, 11,2 (Spring, 1982) and James Hiller, “The Politics of Newsprint: The Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Industry, 1915-1939,” *Acadiensis*, 19, 2 (Spring, 1990).

century Newfoundland is a complex and as of yet unresolved one. Questions such as these are only beginning to receive attention by scholars of the Atlantic region.¹⁸

Newfoundland labour historians have generally explored the emergence of industry-specific labour organizations. Rolph Hattenhauer and Bill Gillespie, for example, have examined the historical evolution and development of the labour organizations of mill workers, miners, longshoremen, and other male industrial workers, as well as the emergence of institutions such as the Newfoundland Federation of Labour.¹⁹ Others, such as Peter McInnis and Jessie Chisholm, have looked at the particular historical and cultural contexts within which workers in certain industries organized unions and collectively confronted their employers. In her study of the emergence of the Longshoremen's Protective Union (LSPU) Chisholm shows how older, more experienced unionized St. John's dockworkers viewed their position in the labour market as threatened by labourers from the rural fishery, who worked seasonally for low wages.²⁰ Peter Neary has stressed

¹⁸Daniel Samson ed., *Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800-1950* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994). The essays in this volume show how historically farming, fishing, and logging families of New Brunswick, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland confronted economic development issues on a daily basis, widening our understanding of working-class experience in the region.

¹⁹Rolph Hattenhauer, *A Brief Labour History of Newfoundland* (Prepared for the Royal Commission on Labour Legislation in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1970); Bill Gillespie, *A Class Act: An Illustrated History of the Labour Movement in Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's: Creative Publishers, 1986).

²⁰Jessie Chisholm, "Organizing on the Waterfront: the St. John's Longshoremen's Protective Union, 1890-1914," *Labour/Le Travail* 26 (Fall, 1990); Peter McInnis, "All Solid Along the Line: The Reid Newfoundland Strike of 1918," *Labour/Le Travail* 26

the ways in which the labour force at the Bell Island iron ore mines combined waged work with other seasonal economic activities, moving in and out the fishery, and confronting the industrial system in distinct ways.²¹

Dufferin Sutherland's doctoral thesis on Newfoundland loggers stands as one of the few social historical studies on uneven development in the forestry industry.²² Focussing on the woods labour force of the Anglo Newfoundland Development Company (AND Company), owners of the Grand Falls mill, and Bowaters, the owners of the Corner Brook mill, Sutherland argued that forest capital's reliance on seasonal outport labour in its woods operations propped up merchant operations in the inshore fishery. Sutherland pointed out that instead of sealing, or fishing on the Labrador to supplement their incomes, throughout the 1930s fishers logged for the large pulp and paper interests and integrated their meagre wages into the seasonal round. By focussing on the emergence of the loggers' unions in the late 1930s, Sutherland concluded that this process of merging logging with more traditional patterns of work prohibited the formation of a rural proletariat. This work moved the fishery to the backdrop of the discussion and

(Fall, 1990).

²¹Peter Neary, "'Traditional' and 'Modern' Elements in the Social and Economic History of Bell Island and Conception Bay," Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers* (Ottawa: 1973).

²²John Dufferin Sutherland, "'We are only Loggers;' Loggers and the Struggle for Development in Newfoundland, 1929-1959," unpublished PhD dissertation (Simon Fraser University, 1995).

demonstrated that dominant companies shifted labour demands within seemingly “traditional” societies, contributing to the perpetuation of underdevelopment in the affected regions. Few studies have explored the lives and experiences of those workers within their families and communities. In the past, scholars have far too often portrayed Newfoundland communities (outside of the urban centre of St. John’s) as static, unchanging and untouched by the modern world.²³

1.2 Grand Falls as a case study

There are several reasons why Grand Falls is an ideal setting in which to explore how such factors as uneven development, labour force migration, and the intersection of paid and unpaid labour shaped people’s experiences of life and work. Because it was planned and built from the ground up, where no permanent community or industry had previously existed, Grand Falls presents a rare opportunity in the Newfoundland context to examine both formal and informal labour recruitment strategies, and how these interacted with migration patterns and social stratification. Also, because a large portion of those who went to Grand Falls to work were women from outport Newfoundland who

²³Much of ISER’s sponsored sociological and anthropological research of the late 1960s and 1970s dwelled on the island’s seemingly “pre modern” cultural and economic characteristics. Notably, these studies have been readily used in subsequent research. Examples of these community studies include, Tom Philbrook, *Fisherman, Logger, Merchant, Miner: Social Change and Industrialism in Three Newfoundland Communities* (St. John’s: ISER, 1966); Jim Faris, *Cat Harbour: A Newfoundland Fishing Settlement* (St. John’s: ISER, 1966); Melvin Firestone, *Brothers and Rivals – Patrilocality in Savage Cove* (St. John’s: ISER, 1967).

were hired as domestics, it provides an opportunity to study one of the most important and least understood dimensions of these historical processes: the gendered dimension. Since for the most part, these men and women who hired domestics shared much in common with the women they hired in their households, in terms of religion, ethnicity and social origin, it presents an important opportunity to explore issues of gender and class within an employer/employee relationship that has traditionally been characterized as one of domination and subordination.

In addition, the AND Company operated Grand Falls as a closed company town from 1905 to 1961, when it was incorporated as a municipality. Therefore throughout the period under consideration, the town's population was relatively self-contained and hovered around four thousand. The fact that it was a fairly rigidly hierarchical town facilitates an analysis of class and gender divisions. The company also controlled who gained access to the town, which meant that these divisions were more clear cut and obvious than those in larger centres. Its small size also enabled me to gain a certain level of understanding of domestics' work arrangements within an array of households. The introduction of single-industry towns such as Grand Falls into rural Newfoundland created new hierarchies of gender, class, religion, ethnicity, region and migration status as well as a segregated labour market for wage work. It is only through a local study that such social relations can be understood.²⁴ Relations of gender and class within the company

²⁴For an argument in favour of a regional focus and for the integration of women's and men's work in the household and in the labour force for understanding gender and

town were formed in conjunction with factors such as migration patterns; pre-existing concepts of the gender division of labour within household production, company paternalism, and social stratification within the workplace, the household, and the town. The ways in which these factors overlapped and shaped the lives of domestics forms the backdrop of this study.

The present study begins in 1905, the year construction began on the Grand Falls mill, and it ends in 1939 with the onset of World War II. It focuses, however, on the interwar years. This time frame was chosen for reasons both external and internal to the historical development of Grand Falls. The 1920s and 1930s were characterized by deteriorating social and economic conditions, lack of social services, a reliance on the household based- fishery by most Newfoundlanders, and a surplus of male and female labour. In the 1930s in particular there were considerable barriers to outmigration, which meant that internal migration was many people's only option. Women's paid and unpaid domestic work was crucial to sustaining families throughout this time of instability and crisis. It was also from the post World War I period of inflation and recession to the 1930s that the core population of Grand Falls began to stabilize. Throughout that time, the AND Company operated the mill at close to full capacity and the social and economic

class relations in Atlantic Canada see, Pat Armstrong and M. Patricia Connelly, "Feminism and Political Economy: An Introduction," *Studies in Political Economy*, 30 (Autumn, 1989) 6. This argument is also made by Martha MacDonald, and M. Patricia Connelly, in "Class and Gender in Fishing Communities in Nova Scotia," *Studies in Political Economy*, 30 (Autumn, 1989) 62.

status of Grand Falls residents and those of the outlying regions diverged more sharply than ever before. The study ends in 1939 because World War II was a time of drastic social and economic change on the island, the labour market for women's work opened up with the military base construction boom, and the demand for domestic servants declined.

1.3 Women's domestic labour and the family fishery

To understand the particularities of women's patterns of work in domestic service in Newfoundland, and the reasons why there was female surplus labour on the island by the early 20th century, it is necessary to examine the emergence of the family fishery in the 19th century. Domestic service was inextricably linked to Newfoundland's relatively slow and sporadic settlement process.²⁵ From the 17th century onward, many of Newfoundland's early women settlers first came from England and Ireland to work as

²⁵Early settlement in Newfoundland is a well-researched area of study. See, for example, John Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study in Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974); Gordon Handcock, *Soe longe as there comes noe women: Origins of English Settlement in Newfoundland* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1989); C. Grant Head, *Eighteenth Century Newfoundland* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976); Gillian Cell, *English Enterprise in Newfoundland, 1577-1660* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969); John Mannion ed. *The Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography* (St. John's: ISER, 1977); Keith Matthews, "A History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery," unpublished D.Phil. dissertation (Oxford, 1968); and Peter Pope, "The South Avalon Planters, 1630-1700: Residence, Labor, Demand and Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Newfoundland," unpublished PhD dissertation (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1992).

domestic servants, but their numbers were small.²⁶ In the late 17th century, women comprised only about 12 per cent of the permanent population. Most of these were women who had either arrived with their husbands or fathers, single women who came as servants, or female descendants of the above.²⁷ Over time, merchants, agents, clerks, and tradesmen who over-wintered in Newfoundland, brought their wives and families, and it became more and more common for them “to employ female domestics in the same way as families of similar status did in England.”²⁸ According to Gordon Handcock, these patterns persisted both qualitatively and quantitatively for more than a century.²⁹ Compared with men, women migrants (those who came as domestics, those who came with their families, and widows) were far more likely to marry and stay in Newfoundland, because men outnumbered women throughout this period, and because many men were sailors and left the island as part of wider fishery-based migrations. By around 1830 the

²⁶Little research has focussed on the lives of women migrants. An exception is Peter Pope, who for example, has shown that through their work in the fishery, in farming, and in brewing and baking, women contributed substantially to the 17th century planter colonies on the Avalon Peninsula. Peter Pope, “The Southern Avalon Planters.” See also Linda Kealey ed. *Pursuing Equality: Historical Perspectives on Women in Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's: ISER, 1993) 9-10, for a discussion of the development in the literature on women in early settlement. This theme is also discussed in, Carmelita McGrath, Barbara Neis, and Marilyn Porter eds., *Their Lives and Times: Women in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Collage* (St. John's: Killick Press, 1995) 22.

²⁷Gordon Handcock, *Soe longe as there comes noe women*, 92.

²⁸Gordon Handcock, *Soe longe as there comes noe women*, 95.

²⁹Gordon Handcock, *Soe longe as there comes noe women*, 92.

gender balance became more even.³⁰ It would have been around this time that the transatlantic migration of domestics to Newfoundland ended, because the settled population would have been able to draw upon the daughters of fishing families to fulfill their labour requirements.

Until the first half of the 18th century, the fishery was migratory, based on labour hired by some form of fixed-wage or share payment. Over the course of the second half of the 18th century, the resident fishery increased in importance. Coinciding with this development, planters -- those settlers who possessed property and equipment to produce fish -- began to rely increasingly on family labour to produce salt cod.³¹ This "retreat from wage labour" was due in part to dramatic population increases and soaring costs of provisions during the Napoleonic Wars, and economic depression afterwards. Thereafter, planters generally "used hired labour to supplement not supplant that of their families."³²

³⁰Handcock suggests that despite the relatively even gender balance in 1830s, excess men still accounted for around 25 per cent of the winter population in some regions of the island. Gordon Handcock, *Soe longe as there comes noe women*, 98.

³¹For more on the evolving definition of Newfoundland planter; see, Sean Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay*, xi.

³²Sean Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay*, 38. There has been some debate about the nature of the transition from a planter fishery to a family fishery based on the truck system. See Shannon Ryan, "The Newfoundland Cod Fishery in the Nineteenth Century," unpublished MA thesis (Memorial University, 1971). Recent case studies show that the transformation was complex and uneven in nature. See in particular, Robert Lewis, "The Survival of the Planters' Fishery in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Newfoundland," and Patricia Thornton, "The Transition from a Migratory Fishery to the Resident Fishery in the Strait of Belle Isle" in Rosemary Ommer ed., *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective*.

The shift to a family-based fishery occurred earlier in the longer established regions of the island such as Conception Bay, where families could generate their own labour requirements. In other northeast coast districts, the transition was slower.³³ However, by the late 19th century it was generally considered more economically viable to rely on women and children to tend to the flakes and prepare the fish for market than paying fishing servants.³⁴

In the 19th century as well, the independent planter fishery declined and the truck system rose to dominance. In the truck system fishers dealt directly with merchants, who in turn advanced supplies to them each spring in return for a promise of the catch in the fall.³⁵ Little cash changed hands and the household economy became the most prevalent mode of production in a precarious economy which fluctuated widely from season to season and from year to year. To survive these vagaries, throughout the decades of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, fishing households engaged in a wide variety of subsistence activities, such as small-scale agriculture, berry picking, making clothes, and baking bread, tasks which were generally divided along gender lines. They also relied on

³³Sean Cadigan, "The Merging of Farm, Fishery and Wage Labour."

³⁴It is beyond the scope of the present discussion to explore the relationship between merchant credit and the family fishery. Sean Cadigan's *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay* covers this topic well. See also essays in Rosemary Ommer ed., *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective*.

³⁵For a critical assessment of the merchant credit system, see, James Hiller, "The Newfoundland Credit System: An Interpretation," in Rosemary Ommer ed., *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies*, 86-102.

occupational pluralism, engaging in activities such as logging, sealing, the Labrador fishery, and temporary out-migration, usually after the fishing season was over.

Merchants, in turn, indirectly supported this system. The credit they supplied to fishers fuelled the informal economy, ensuring their own firm's survival in periods of decline in the fishery and when the costs of provisions increased.

Historian Rosemary Ommer has argued that the relationship between merchant capital and household production was a relationship of unequal symbiosis. In the absence of state welfare during the early 20th century, these economic systems (merchant credit and the informal economy) "operated as an essential safety net for people living in marginal economies."³⁶ Though Ommer's work was primarily an economic history, and she did not consider gender as an analytical category, her recognition of the importance of these two overlapping and mutually dependent economies has laid the groundwork for future studies of women's role and status in the Newfoundland economy during this period.

The merchant credit system prevailed into the 1940s and 1950s, even though it had come under considerable scrutiny by advocates for fishery reform, such as the Fishermen's

³⁶Rosemary Ommer, "Merchant Credit and the Informal Economy: Newfoundland, 1919-1929," *Historical Papers*, 1989 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1990)167; and Patricia Thornton, "Dynamic Equilibrium: Settlement, Population and Ecology in the Strait of Belle Isle, Newfoundland, 1840-1940," PhD thesis (University of Aberdeen, 1979). For a case study on the lasting significance of unpaid work in the peripheral region of the Northern Peninsulas, see Lawrence Felt and Peter Sinclair's "'Everyone Does it': Unpaid Work in a Rural Peripheral Region," *Work, Employment and Society*, 6,1 (1992).

Protective Union, the Commission of Government, and subsequent policy makers.³⁷

During the 1920s, and increasingly in the 1930s, when the crisis in the fishery reached epic proportions, both merchants and fishing families struggled, as merchants increasingly restricted credit to debt-ridden fishers, and larger numbers of families became reliant on the public relief system. The Commission of Government accepted its responsibility for the burden of social security reluctantly and preferred the informal economy as a solution to the ills of impoverished fishing families, at least in the short-term.³⁸ Those living in resource-dependent company towns, such as Grand Falls, were largely left on their own throughout this period, because it was believed the companies would take care of social welfare matters within their communities.

It was within this context of uneven development that young women left their homes to find work in urban centres or in smaller fishing households other than their parents.' Even though the system of household production persisted throughout the early 20th century, it is becoming increasingly clear that there was much variety in patterns of

³⁷On the FPU, see Ian McDonald, "*To Each His Own: William Coaker and the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics, 1908-1925*," James Hiller ed. (St. John's: ISER, 1987). For a discussion of government criticism of the merchant credit system in the Newfoundland cod fishery after World War II, see Miriam Wright, "Newfoundland and Canada," particularly Chapter 2, "World War Two and the Beginning of the Industrial Vision for the Newfoundland Fishery."

³⁸For a case study of conflicts of credit restrictions between fishing families, merchants, and the state, see Sean Cadigan, "Battle Harbour in Transition: Merchants, Fishermen and the State in the Struggle for Relief in a Labrador Community during the 1930s," *Labour: Le Travail*, 26 (Fall 1990).

women's work in Newfoundland, especially when factors such as region, economic change, and class are taken into account. Until the early 20th century, for instance, many young women worked in the Labrador schooner fishery, performing domestic tasks such as washing, cooking, and cleaning for half the pay of the male fishing servants. Many also worked as servants for the Labrador stationers who set up their fishing operations on shore and used these as the base for their fishery.³⁹ State response to the perceived "immorality" of young women working on these schooners at the turn of the century failed to put an end to the employment of single women domestics working on the schooners. But economic decline in the Labrador schooner fishery eventually meant that performing domestic tasks on the schooners no longer represented a common work experience for women in the interwar years. Other young women left the island to work in households in places like Boston, New York, Montreal, and Halifax. Few alternatives to domestic labour existed for young women from coastal communities in Newfoundland's precarious economy, which by the interwar years was based primarily on the exploitation of three resources: fish, minerals, and forest products.

³⁹Linda Cullum and Maeve Baird, "Women and the Law in Newfoundland from Early Settlement to the Twentieth Century," in Linda Kealey ed., *Pursuing Equality*, 115. Gail Hogan, "Female Labour in the Labrador Floater Fishery," unpublished paper (Maritime History Archive, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1983). A reminiscence of working in the Labrador stationer fishery is published in Greta Hussey, *Our Life on Lear's Room, Labrador* (St. John's: Robinson Blackmore Printing and Publishing, 1981); and in Kate Knox, "Kate Knox, St. Brendan's Island," *Decks Awash*, 4,5 (October 1975) 35.

1.4 Historiography

Women's Work in Newfoundland

The historical literature on women's work in Newfoundland produced thus far has concentrated primarily on women's role in household production and on their fishery-related work. Most of the literature has been produced by sociologists and anthropologists. Folklorist Hilda Chaulk Murray's study of women's lives in Elliston, Trinity Bay represented one of the first extensive case studies of the variety of social and economic activities in which women engaged in the early 20th century through oral history. Murray's work was inspired by the folklore tradition of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Her objective was to capture women's "traditional roles," as they varied seasonally and also according to the stages in their life cycle.⁴⁰ Slightly later works by Ellen Antler, Marilyn Porter and Dona Lee Davis confronted the androcentric nature of the existing literature of the fisheries, which either ignored women or viewed them as simply subordinate, dependent, and effectively passive.⁴¹ These sociologists and anthropologists drew on feminist concepts from a broader and then-emerging literature to examine more critically the sexual division of labour in Newfoundland's inshore cod

⁴⁰Hilda Chaulk Murray, *More Than Fifty Percent*.

⁴¹Jane Nadel Klein and Dona Lee Davis eds., *To Work and To Weep: Women in Fishing Economies* (St. John's: ISER, 1983), particularly Chapter 2 for a comparative review of the early social scientific literature on women's roles in fishing economies.

fishery, though their approaches and conclusions differed.⁴² Ellen Antler provided an economic value for the unpaid labour of women in saltfish production. Using a long-term perspective on women's roles in the fishery and a marxist framework of analysis, Antler also argued controversially that they lost status and power within the context of fishery restructuring, which reduced women to wage earners in fish plants and housewives.⁴³ Marilyn Porter argued that the gender division of labour in the inshore cod fishery, which relegated women to processing work on the shore, did not necessarily imply their subordination.⁴⁴ By adopting a separate spheres framework of analysis, Porter challenged previous assumptions by asserting that, until the 1940s, women wielded a considerable amount of power as "skippers of the shore crew," through the relationships they engendered with one another on the shore.⁴⁵ Subsequent research challenged Porter's

⁴²Ellen Antler, "Women's Work in Newfoundland Fishing Families," *Atlantis*, 2,2 (1977), and Ellen Antler, "Fisherman, Fisherwoman, Rural Proletariat,"; Dona Lee Davis, *Blood and Nerves: An Ethnographic Focus Menopause* (St. John's: ISER, 1983) and Dona Lee Davis, "The Family and Social Change in the Newfoundland Outport," *Culture III*, 1 (1983); and Marilyn Porter, "She was Skipper of the Shore-Crew: Notes on the Sexual Division of Labour in Newfoundland," *Labour/Le Travail* 15 (1985).

⁴³Dona Lee Davis argued that Antler idealized the past and condemned the present in her account of the effects of economic restructuring on rural women's lives in "The Family and Social Change in the Newfoundland Outport." Davis preferred a more subtle approach, which accounts for continuity and change in women's lives in one small community.

⁴⁴Marilyn Porter, "Women and Old Boats: The Sexual Division of Labour in a Newfoundland Outpost," in E. Garnikow ed., *Public and Private: Gender and Society* (London: Heinemann, 1983).

⁴⁵Marilyn Porter, "She was Skipper."

hypothesis on the basis that it rested on a sample of the wives and daughters of boat owners, overemphasized the role that women played in salting and curing fish, and unnecessarily eschewed the concept of patriarchy in limiting women's access to control of fishing resources.⁴⁶ At issue here too is Porter's periodization, which implied women's shore work lasted until 1949. While subsequent research has begun to add richness and diversity to the general framework sketched out by Porter in her pioneering work, major gaps remain in the literature.

More attention is now being paid to factors such as social differentiation between women, regional variation in their paid and unpaid work, seasonal fluctuations, and gender relations. For example, sociologist Barbara Neis revisited the issues of women's status in fishing economies by focussing on poorer women.⁴⁷ In so doing, she documented those ideologies and practices of past and present that limited poorer women's control of and access to the fishing resources.⁴⁸ Familial patriarchy shaped poorer women's lives in the past, when factors such as male preference in their ownership of fishing gear, property,

⁴⁶Barbara Neis, "From 'Shipped Girls'." For another criticism of Porter, see Peter Sinclair, "Introduction," in Peter Sinclair ed., *A Question of Survival: The Fisheries and Newfoundland Society* (St. John's: ISER, 1988) 11.

⁴⁷Barbara Neis, "From 'Shipped Girls.'"

⁴⁸Neis relies on Jane Ursel for her concept of social patriarchy. Jane Ursel, *Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992). For another study of how gender ideology and state policy intersect in the Newfoundland context, see Miriam Wright, "Women, Men and the Modern Fishery: Images of Gender in Government Plans for the Canadian Atlantic Fishery," in C. McGrath et al., *Their Lives and Times*.

and traditional skills and knowledge, and male inheritance practices pushed many women out of fishing households, forcing them to find work elsewhere. The uneven and gradual shift to social patriarchy, which has been guided by state policies that have increasingly restricted women's lives, has meant their retreat to the household or a reliance on gender-insensitive income-support programs over the last few decades.

Few scholars have explored women's non-fishery-related work.⁴⁹ Nancy Forestell's MA thesis and her related published work on wage earning women in St. John's in the interwar years, represents a notable and important exception. Forestell's study was one of the first sustained attempts at documenting women's wage earning experiences in St. John's. By relying on a sample of the 1921 and 1935 nominal census for St. John's, she found that class, marital status, and age determined the type of paid work women did. Forestell determined that most of the female surplus labour from outports worked as domestics in St. John's middle-class households. In looking at women's wage earning experiences in manufacturing, retail and other sectors, Forestell highlighted their contribution to the vibrant St. John's labour movement, particularly in the years between 1918 to 1932.⁵⁰ The fact that women's work has been dealt with either

⁴⁹An exception is Linda Parsons, "Passing the Time: The Lives of Women in a Northern Industrial Town," unpublished MA thesis (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1986); and her recently published, "Labrador City by Design: Corporate Visions of Women," in C. McGrath et al. eds., *Their Lives and Times*, which focuses on the 1950s. See also Cecilia Benoit, "Urbanizing Women Military Fashion: The Case of Stephenville Women" in McGrath et al. eds., *Their Lives and Times*.

⁵⁰Nancy Forestell, "Women's Paid Labour in Newfoundland," 153-77.

within the context of the fishery or within that of their factory, retail, and office-related work has meant that we know little about those women who moved between these two social and economic contexts.

In short, the literature on women's work in Newfoundland has made clear that historians should no longer overlook the household and women's changing status within it, as the basis for any study of social and economic change in Newfoundland – a fact which has not always been obvious to historians and sociologists.⁵¹ For that reason and others, the concept of the family economy is a central concept in the organization of the present study. More specifically, the analysis of domestics' work and migration experiences draws on the approaches of women's historians such as Bettina Bradbury and Marjorie Cohen, who were among the first scholars in North America to challenge interpretations of the family and households, which stressed the complementarity of family members' work roles within the household economy.⁵² They demonstrate that families are

⁵¹For example, Peter Sinclair and Barbara Neis criticized the studies of Patricia Thornton and Raoul Andersen on the grounds that neither of them explored or incorporated wives and daughters unpaid work in household production into their analyses. See Peter Sinclair, "Commentary" and Barbara Neis, "Discussion," in *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies*, 184-87.

⁵²Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993); and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988). The pathbreaking work in the U.S. was Tamara Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship between the Family and Work in a New England Shoe Industry, 1780-1910* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

complex and differentiated institutions, and households have often been locations of conflict and tension, where power and control over resources and labour were distributed unequally along the lines of gender and age.³³ Their studies have also added much to our understanding of economic development, and the impact of industrialization on men, women, and children, by considering women's paid and unpaid labour in the household.

In Newfoundland, women's decisions to earn wages, leave home, migrate, and marry took place within the household, though these decisions were shaped by the broader context of economic development and restructuring, which affected the organization of domestic work as well as other forms of labour. In their rural communities of origin their decisions were also made within the patriarchal productive relations of the household, defined as "the organization of labour in which males, as husbands, fathers and even sons and brothers, have power over the productive activities of their children, wives, and sometimes their sisters and mothers."³⁴ This is not to say that women did not effectively

³³Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families*, 16 and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development*. Joan Scott and Louise Tilly pioneered the family economy approach to the history of women's work in industrialization in their comparative study of Britain and France, see *Women, Work and Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978); For a case study of gender divisions within the household of one small Nova Scotia community see, Stephen Maynard, "Between Farm and Factory: The Productive Household and the Capitalist Transformation of the Maritime Countryside, Hopewell, Nova Scotia, 1869-1890," in Daniel Samson ed., *Contested Countryside*.

³⁴Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development*, 43. Cohen explains that these productive relations have been historically prevalent in both waged labour and in the family economy. Sean Cadigan uses this type of analysis in his assessment of women's roles in household production in the 19th century. See *Hope and*

challenge authority and power during this period.⁵⁵ The household also presents an important unit of analysis for understanding gender and class relations within the company town, because husbands and wives who employed domestics decided to hire household help within the household, and households were also the workplaces of domestics.

Domestic Service and Household Labour

Until relatively recently few historians of women's work focussed their research on domestic service.⁵⁶ Socialist and marxist feminists viewed unpaid domestic labour in the home as a key aspect of women's oppression in their scholarly writings in the 1960s and 1970s, and they debated the relationship between housework and value in a capitalist economy. Despite this focus on housework, the lives and experiences of those who did

Deception in Conception Bay, especially Chapter 4.

⁵⁵Nancy Forestell and Jessie Chisholm, "Working-Class Women as Wage Earners in St. John's, Newfoundland, 1890-1921," in Peta Tancred-Sheriff ed., *Feminist Research: Prospect and Retrospect* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988). The essays in Linda Kealey ed., *Pursuing Equality: Historical Perspectives on Women in Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's: ISER, 1993) also contribute to our understanding of women's political culture in Newfoundland.

⁵⁶Early attempts to understand domestic service in the United States were not informed by feminist perspectives. See for example, David Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Daniel Sutherland, *Americans and Their Servants: Domestic Service in the United States from 1800 to 1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). For a discussion of feminist reluctance to write about domestics, see Barbara Melosh, "Historians and the Servant Problem," *Reviews in American History*, 11,1 (1983) 55.

domestic work for pay remained under-represented in the historical literature of this period for a number of reasons.³⁷

First, over the past decade and a half feminist labour historians have produced fewer studies of women workers' experiences than they had during the 1970s and 80s, when the new social history combined with a second wave feminist commitment to understanding women as agents of change influenced their research agendas. Second, much of the recent scholarship on women in historical perspective, has taken a wider approach, focussing on the ways in which gender relations were influenced by and influenced social change in terms of factors such as shifting religious, political, and moral discourses at specific moments in time.³⁸ In Canada, as elsewhere, some feminist historians have been influenced by post structuralist approaches to understanding gender, which has raised the question of whether it is possible to understand women's experience

³⁷This is known as the domestic labour debate. Ellen Malos ed., *The Politics of Housework* (London: Allison and Busby, 1980). Meg Luxton's pioneering study of housework in Flin Flon Manitoba is an example of an empirical study based on marxist feminist principles. *More than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home* (Toronto: the Women's Press, 1980). Wenona Giles and Sedef Arat-Koç argue that it is now time to return to the issue of domestic labour that dominated discussion among marxist feminists in the 1960s and 70s with a renewed theoretical perspective, in their recent publication, *Maid in the Market: Women's Paid Domestic Labour* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1994) 4-5.

³⁸It is beyond the scope of the present discussion to examine this historiographical shift in great detail. For examples of recent approaches, see Cecilia Morgan, *Public Men and Virtuous Women: The Gendered Languages of Religion and Politics in Upper Canada, 1791-1850* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), and Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

“separate from the cultural discourses constructing the experience.”⁵⁹ This scepticism about more “traditional” feminist methodologies, and the debates around the issue of what constitutes gender has meant a movement away from specific groups of women workers. Third, and more specific to domestic service, the nature of the historical sources has shaped historians’ approaches to the topic. Domestic servants rarely unionized, their work was generally temporary, and it remained largely hidden in the household. Thus, North America historians have had to rely on records produced by employment agencies, immigration authorities, and court records to document the work patterns and struggles of domestic servants. Rarely have scholars had access to documentary sources that would enable them to develop a thorough profile of domestics and their employers to combine with oral accounts.

Some of the renewal of interest in domestic service has taken root among social scientists writing about paid domestic workers in the contemporary period. Underlying their current feminist interpretations is a concern with the fact that despite transformations in the labour market, changing gender ideologies, capitalist restructuring, and the women’s movement, domestic service has persisted into the present as women’s work and continues to encompass relationships of domination and subordination in many aspects of public

⁵⁹Joan Scott’s *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) has been central to debates about gender and experience in Canadian women’s history. See Joan Sangster, “Beyond Dichotomies: Re-Assessing Gender History and Women’s History in Canada,” *Left History*, 3,1 (Spring/Summer, 1995) for a lively discussion of the debate about the importance of post-structuralism in the Canadian historical literature on women.

policy, legislation, and in human relationships.⁶⁰ The merits of the social scientific literature for historians is that these scholars, some of whom have explored patterns of domestic service in an international context, have shown that it is no longer possible to assume a universal pattern for domestic service; it has followed and continues to follow, the flow of capital and labour in a global economy.⁶¹ These studies collectively demonstrate that domestic service needs to be viewed within the context of segmented labour markets and gender, class and ethnic relations at specific moments in time.

For instance, important contributions have been made by North American sociologists and historians who specialize in the study of domestic workers of one ethnic or racial group, drawing on the concepts of gender, class, and ethnicity/race. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Mary Romero, and Roger Sanjek and Shellee Colen, have explained how systems of oppression and inequalities in the labour market in colonial labour systems have

⁶⁰For a discussion of the renewed interest in domestic service among North American feminists, see Julia Wrigley, "Feminists and Domestic Workers," *Feminist Studies* 17,2 (1991). The essays in Wenona Giles and Sedef Arat-Koc, *Maid in the Market*; and those in Abigail B. Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis eds., *Not One in the Family: Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), and Agnes Calliste, "Canada's Immigration Policy and Domesticity from the Carribean: The Second Domestic Scheme," in Elizabeth Comack and Stephen Brickely eds., *The Social Basis of Law*, 2nd Ed. (Halifax: Garamond Press, 1991) focus on the persistence of domestic service into the present. For another statement on this issue see, Carole Turbin, "Domestic Service Revisited: Private Household Workers and Employers in a Shifting Economic Environment," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 47 (Spring 1995).

⁶¹Roger Sanjek and Shellee Colen eds., *At Work in Homes: Household Workers in World Perspective*, American Ethnological Society Monograph Series, No.3 (Washington, D.C.: the American Anthropological Association, 1990), 177.

relegated certain women to the occupation of domestic servant.⁶² This literature has also challenged analyses from the past, which were generally descriptive, used aggregate figures, and discussed domestic service in terms of its rise and decline.⁶³ These approaches which reject a linear model for understanding patterns in domestic service intersect with those used by scholars of female migration, who consider migration as a gender differentiated and historically specific process.⁶⁴ For example, a group of women's historians writing of women's transatlantic migration from Europe to work as domestics demonstrate that now migrations need to be viewed as complex processes, "in which labor and marriage markets, the division of labour and migration traditions, family networks, the family economy, prospects for family formation, and gender all interact."⁶⁵ In short, the

⁶²Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, Warbride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Roger Sanjek and Shellee Colen eds., *At Work in Homes*; and Mary Romero, *Maid in the U.S.A.* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁶³For studies based primarily on aggregate figures of women's employment see, Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1988) and Alice Kessler Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). The problems of using aggregate data for understanding women's work are highlighted well in Bridget Hill, "Women, Work and the Census: a Problem for Historians of Women," *History Workshop Journal* 35 (1993).

⁶⁴Robin Haines, Margarete Kleinig, Deborah Oxley and Eric Richards, "Migration and Opportunity: An Antipodean Perspective," *International Review of Social History* 43 (1998) 235, in particular, "A Great Many More Opportunities: Skill, Single Women and Emigration to South Australia in the Early Twentieth Century."

⁶⁵Christiane Harzig et al., *Peasant Maids - City Women: From the European Countryside to Urban America*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) 3.

rural-to-urban migration of young women needs to consider the traditions of migration within rural societies (the sending society) which were neither static nor traditional. This approach also enables us to consider factors other than young women's sense of adventure and choice to depart seemingly "stagnant" rural localities for the city.⁶⁶ As Carolyn Strange has highlighted for 19th century Toronto: "In Canada, like other industrializing nations, it was not 'redundancy' or debilitating boredom that drove the first generation of women to waged labour, but poverty."⁶⁷

Much of the most recent literature has fruitfully integrated women's perceptions of their experiences as paid domestic workers by weaving oral accounts into their analyses. They have demonstrated that by listening to the women who worked as domestics, we can gain an understanding of the particular sites of conflict within the household, and the complexity of the work experience, which varied along ethnic and cultural lines.⁶⁸ In

⁶⁶Historians who rely on oral history without integrating a gender and class analysis have sometimes come to this conclusion of women's rural to urban migration experiences. See for example, Alan A. Brookes and Catherine A. Wilson, "Working Away from the Farm: The Young Women of Huron North, 1910-30," *Ontario History*, 77,4 (December 1985).

⁶⁷Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem*, 8.

⁶⁸Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestic Workers in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); Bonnie Thornton Dill, *Across the Boundaries of Race and Class: An Exploration of Work and Family Among Black Female Domestic Servants* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1994); Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride*; Mary Romero, *Maid in the U.S.A.*; Varpu Lindström-Best, "I Won't Be A Slave!": Finish Domestic Workers in Canada, 1911-30," in Jean Burnet ed., *Looking Into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Toronto, 1986). See also,

accounting for the perspectives of domestics some of these studies have shown that within certain contexts (particularly in the United States) domestics' actions and protests within households changed the nature of the occupation from live-in to live-out arrangements.

In addition to encompassing an important work experience in many women's lives, domestic service also needs to be viewed as a social relationship between employer and employee that takes place primarily in the household between women. An understanding of the nature of these relationships can provide powerful insight into gender and class relations. Feminist historians and sociologists such as Judith Rollins, Phyllis Palmer, and Faye Dudden, have argued that we must always take into account the changing status of married women as housewives and as employers in understanding the social relationships of domination and subordination that took place between women in the household.⁶⁹

British historians of women's work have been particularly insightful on methodological questions revolving around the census as a source for understanding domestic service. The theoretical insight of scholars such as Bridget Hill on the gender bias of the census, and the diligent research methods of historians of domestic service such as Edward Higgs and, later, Di Cooper and Moira Donald, who have worked extensively

Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁶⁹Faye E. Dudden, *Serving Women: Household Service in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middletown Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983) and Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt: Housewives and Domestic Servants in the United States, 1920-1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); Judith Rollins, *Between Women: Domestics and their Employers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

with census material underline the ways in which the use of sources have often coloured our understanding of domestic service.⁷⁰ Bridget Hill, for instance, has argued that censuses were not enacted and carried out for the benefit of social historians and demographers and the implications of their methods of creation need to be understood, especially with regard to women's work.⁷¹ Edward Higgs' work on the Victorian occupational censuses of Britain, reveals that the undercounting of women's paid and unpaid work is endemic to the ideology of capitalism, which has informed statisticians' choices as to what to count as productive and what to leave out.⁷² The occupational censuses tend to measure work that is done for a wage and that produces economic value in the capitalist economy more than work associated with social reproduction or the family economy. In censuses, women tend to be defined as dependents and not in terms of the

⁷⁰Bridget Hill, "Women, Work and the Census: a Problem for Historians of Women," *History Workshop Journal* 35 (Spring 1993); Edward Higgs, "Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth-Century Censuses" *History Workshop Journal*, 23 (Spring, 1987); "Domestic Servants and households in Victorian England" *Social History*, 8,1 (May 1983); "The tabulation of occupations in the nineteenth-century census, with special reference to domestic servants," *Local Population Studies*, 28, (1982); "Domestic Service and Household Production." in Angela V. John ed., *Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England, 1800-1918* (London: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986); Di Cooper and Moira Donald, "Households and 'hidden' kin in early nineteenth-century England: four case studies in suburban Exeter, 1821-1861," *Continuity and Change* 10,2 (1995).

⁷¹Marilyn Waring's work *If Women Counted: A New Feminist Economic*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988) is also important conceptually.

⁷²Bridget Hill, "Women, Work and the Census;" Edward Higgs, "Women, Occupations and Work."

value of their labour. Despite these limitations, the adoption of a qualitative and gender-informed approach to understanding domestic service through the manuscript census can shed new light on the nature of the occupation.

1.5 Sources

The Nominal Census

The particularity of Newfoundland's constitutional history (from responsible government status to Commission of Government to province of Canada) has meant that census data, which has traditionally been available only in aggregated tabular form, is available in manuscript format for 1921, 1935, and 1945. The accessibility of these censuses has provided a rich source for gaining insight into domestics' working conditions within Grand Falls households.⁷³ This study would not have been possible without access to the schedules. In fact, they are the only mid-20th century manuscript census schedules that are publicly available in North America. In all other jurisdictions, such material is closed by statutory provisions. While national samples of the late 19th and early 20th century censuses in Canada and the United States are currently the focus of mega data-

⁷³The manuscript versions of the Newfoundland and Labrador census will be cited as *Census of Newfoundland (nominal)*, 1921, 1935, and 1945 respectively throughout the dissertation. The 1911 manuscript censuses are also available to researchers but only select communities have survived. These include, St. John's East, Bonavista Bay (various communities) and Port de Grave, and are available at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University, Coll-196, "Colonial Secretary's Office, *Census of Newfoundland*, 1911 and 1921," 2.03.001-3.02.001.

base projects, these projects have not involved the creation of complete intercensal data sets.⁷⁴

For a number of reasons it would have been impossible to rely solely on the aggregate tabulations for understanding the distribution of domestics in one small community. The 1911 and 1921 aggregate censuses did not include a calculation of domestics, even though that information was collected at the household level and is contained in the manuscript schedules.⁷⁵ The aggregate census schedules for 1935 and 1945 provide figures on the total numbers of domestic servants for Newfoundland and a district-by-district count, but they do not provide community-level breakdowns.⁷⁶

⁷⁴For a thorough discussion of the "Minnesota Historical Census Project" which is presently constructing a Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) for the United States for the years, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990, see the Special Issue, *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History: The Minnesota Historical Census Projects* 28,3 (1995). Significantly each of the U.S. samples is independent, so it is not possible to trace individuals from one census year to the next. The 1920 manuscript census was the latest census to be released in the United States in 1992 (after 72 years of confidentiality protection). In Canada, the University of Victoria-based Canadian Families Project (CFP) is presently constructing a data base which contains a national sample of the 1901 manuscript census. Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager's recent book, *Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) is based on that material.

⁷⁵Colonial Secretary's Office, *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1911* (St. John's: J.W. Withers, 1914), Colonial Secretary's Office, *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1921* (St. John's: The Office, 1924).

⁷⁶In the aggregate censuses for Newfoundland and Labrador a district is a broader category than a settlement. Thus, in the 1935 and 1945 aggregate tabulations figures on the entire district of Grand Falls are available but they are not broken down into individual communities. Department of Public Health and Welfare, *Tenth Census of Newfoundland*

Moreover, the only category of women's work included in the aggregate tables in 1911 and 1921 was the number of "Females engaged in Curing Fish." Aggregate tabulations also mask the social relationships that developed between family members living in households. These are revealed more clearly in the manuscripts.

The manuscript census offers several major advantages for the study of domestic service in Grand Falls. First, the relatively small population of Grand Falls has enabled me to avoid sampling. The methodology for this study relied partly on computer analysis of the manuscript censuses for Grand Falls for 1921, 1935, and 1945. This resulted in entering a total of 3450 individuals in 1921 (with 14 fields); 4168 in 1935 (with 24 fields); and 4514 in 1945 (with 34 fields) into machine-readable form.⁷⁷ The total number of census records for all census years includes 301,808 covering many aspects of the lives of 12,132 individuals. The manuscript censuses for select rural communities were also used in the research, particularly for Chapter Three. Second, the manuscript censuses portray families in residential units, providing information on kinship relationships, age, marital status, literacy, birthplace, religion, income, and type of housing. This type of data has been particularly useful in developing a collective profile of domestic servants and other community members. Because of the relatively stable nature of the core permanent

and Labrador, 1935; and Government of Newfoundland, *Eleventh Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1945*.

⁷⁷The number of individuals for Grand Falls for 1921 excludes those residing in Grand Falls Station. In 1935 and 1945 residents of Grand Falls Station (later known as Windsor) were enumerated as a settlement separate from Grand Falls.

workforce in Grand Falls, and because domestic servants worked in households, residential organization was key in providing insight into these social relationships. Insofar as the census masks the social and economic ties between households within the town and elsewhere, oral history and other documentary sources enabled me to begin to overcome that limitation.

I used the census material as a qualitative representation of social and economic change in Grand Falls, especially since there were inconsistencies in the nature of the data collected over the three census periods. For instance in 1911 and 1921 enumerators recorded birthplace information on a community-by-community basis because, then, the government took special care to develop an accurate system of counting a population. More specifically, educational and road grants were allocated to each section or settlement according to its population. By contrast, in 1935, residents were asked the country of their birth -- generally specifying Newfoundland or elsewhere. In 1935 in the midst of world wide Depression, the Commission of Government enacted the census hastily with a view to taking an inventory of employment and unemployment on the island and to document school attendance. The Commissioners were less interested in the details of the local situation in 1935 than the Newfoundland government had been when it took the census in 1921. In 1945, the Commission of Government reverted back to an emphasis on the specific whereabouts of the island's residents. Enumerators, therefore, asked residents of all communities where they were born, where they lived in the previous census year, and their occupation in the previous census year.

It is highly probable that most residents had a personal knowledge of the Grand Falls enumerator, and they may have shaped their responses to questions about income, employment and social relationships within the household accordingly. As Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager have reminded us, the workforce helped construct the census when they responded to the enumerator's questions about employment.⁷⁸ In 1935 a local newspaper published an article encouraging residents to cooperate with the enumerator, reporting that "many people regard him [the enumerator] as a preying busy-body -- they misconceive the purpose of a census and are unwilling to give the desired information."⁷⁹ This scepticism may have been due in part to the fact that during the 1930s, the state was becoming an increasingly larger presence in the lives of the population than ever before. During this period, the Commission of Government was concerned about and fixated on getting people off public relief, and it appointed magistrates and other inspectors to evaluate residents' eligibility for relief, which fishers often relied on over the winter months. Archival research in fact revealed that the enumerator for Grand Falls had written the Department of Public Health and Welfare with commentaries on living conditions in a nearby town, indicating that he had scrutinized households while taking the census.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager, *Unwilling Idlers*.

⁷⁹*Evening Telegram*, 8 July 1935.

⁸⁰"Correspondence from Census Enumerator, Windsor Vicinity to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 3 December 1945, GN38, S6-1-7, File 14, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL). The same enumerator compiled the 1935 census for the district of Grand Falls.

The interaction between the enumerator and the individual household member at the door would also have mediated the way that women's domestic labour was enumerated in the census. As a researcher it is impossible to know who answered the enumerator's questions, but it was possible to imagine how that relationship played itself out through a close look at different household circumstances as they were conveyed in the census schedules. If a male head of household was responding for all household members and was asked, for example, the identity or relationship of the young single woman living in the household to himself, he may have chosen domestic servant as the simplest explanation to define a much more complex relationship. As mentioned above, Grand Falls was a closed town and the company strictly regulated who could live there.

The category domestic servant, which was sometimes inscribed in the schedules as domestic, maid, or the more active designation of "in service" (usually appearing beside the names of fishers' daughters who were working in Grand Falls or in other urban centres) encompassed a much broader range of experience than the manuscript census could reveal. The approach to the census taken here was thus a qualitative one.

Oral History

This dissertation relies on oral history to gain insight into these women's perceptions of their work and migration experiences. Due to financial and time constraints, I confined my research to interviewing those women who had stayed in Grand Falls, or remained connected to that community. After my preliminary research trip to

Grand Falls, I decided a snowball sample would be the best approach, both ethically and practically -- it would be less of an intrusion if I contacted women through word of mouth rather than identifying them through the census. In any case, women enumerated as domestic servants in the census would have been virtually untraceable because most of them married and changed their names. This approach made a considerable impact on my research because the sample population was contained geographically and historically by its continuous relationship to the town.¹¹

I conducted fourteen interviews with former domestics and former employers of domestics.¹² When I approached people to discuss the subject at hand, I was generally referred to the more elite members of the community -- those who were more vocal and willing to talk about the past. Most of these individuals stood on the employer side of the equation. There was a considerable reluctance on the part of some women to discuss their domestic work experiences, since they did not think their experiences significant. I

¹¹For example, women who left the town after marriage may have been more apt to discuss in detail their employment in Grand Falls.

¹²I also transcribed and drew on 16 interviews conducted by the Grand Falls Heritage Society. I also have drawn on 30 interview transcripts of former domestics who grew up on the Avalon Peninsula during the interwar years. These interviews were conducted through a project coordinated by Dr. Bernard O'Dwyer of the English Department of Memorial University. Dr. O'Dwyer has graciously allowed me to read the transcripts and refer to them in the present study when relevant. Since it is a work in progress, I was unable to quote directly from the transcripts. To facilitate citation of that material, I have numbered the transcripts based on the order of birth of the informants. Thus, the oldest informant (born in 1900) is number 1 and the youngest (born in 1935) is number 30. Hereafter those interviews are cited as O'Dwyer interviews, 1,2,3,4... etc. The bulk of the women interviewed were born during the World War I period.

respected their reluctance and shaped the study accordingly. In short, more emphasis has been placed on employers of domestics than I had initially intended.

Even though the population has quadrupled and the geographical boundaries of the town have expanded since the onset of World War II, many of the former mill workers from the period under study still live in the company houses which they have owned for decades. These pioneering residents generally have a strong sense of the past, recorded in scrap books and other mementos from the days when they lived in an AND Company-dominated, company-run town. Those residents who stayed in Grand Falls for their entire lives were relatively small in number and they generally recall the circumstances of the migration of other individuals and families to Grand Falls, and their employment. Women who worked briefly as domestic servants in Grand Falls and who later married mill workers, are still identified as former domestics by certain Grand Falls community members.

The development of oral history methodology for the dissertation was informed by the writings of feminist historians and social scientists who have reflected extensively on research relationships, their limitations, and the effects of those relationships on scholarship.⁴³ These scholars generally agree, "that a [feminist] research relationship is a

⁴³See Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," *Women's History Review*, 3,1 (1994).

particular kind of association, at least with respect to the work being done in its context”⁴⁴

We should devise reflexive methods of data collection and interpretation, not necessarily to overcome the barriers between ourselves and our subjects, but to approach our research honestly, while recognizing the inequalities that may exist between ourselves and the women whose voices we want to hear.⁴⁵ I attempted to adopt an interactive approach, so that women would be the subjects and not the objects of my research. I ambitiously thought the interview process would serve as a vehicle for these women to value the paid and unpaid work they did, and to draw those accomplishments to the attention of their families, by providing copies of the tapes to them. In the present study oral evidence is used as a reflection of former domestics’ perceptions of their work and migration experiences, of employers’ perceptions of hiring domestics, and of aspects of the work process that are unrecorded in documentary evidence.

I have used pseudonyms to protect the privacy of individuals. In order to maintain consistency, and in keeping with the ethical guidelines, I have also used pseudonyms when referring to families in the nominal census and the transcripts of the Grand Falls Heritage Society. When referring to the leadership of the mill town, I have used real names.

⁴⁴Susan Geiger, “What’s so Feminist About Women’s Oral History?” *Journal of Women’s History*, 2,1, 1990, 175.

⁴⁵The essays in Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai eds., *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991) offer detailed reflections on the ethical issues of doing oral history. See in particular the essay by Daphne Patai, “U.S. Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible?”

1.6 Organization of thesis

Although a great deal of terrain is covered here, it is not intended as an exhaustive study of all aspects of workplace and home in Grand Falls. Since AND Company records are not available for public scrutiny, company history and policy had to be gleaned from promotional literature interviews, the census, and government records. The study does not explore in any detail the exploitation, oppression and abuse of domestics at work in Grand Falls. The unavailability of court records for Grand Falls, and the potential unease of informants on issues of abuse and exploitation informed my decision to take a different tack.

In this study domestic servants are defined as persons (whether kin or not) who were recruited from outside the employing household to perform some portion of its domestic labour, and who were paid by wage or in kind for their labour. Female domestic servants in hotels and boarding houses are also considered for reasons that will become clear in the chapters that follow. Excluded from the study are daughters of mill workers who lived with their parents and did housework in the home for no pay, and the domestic labour of wives and widows who were housekeepers in their own homes. When appropriate, the analysis recognizes the ways in which the line between paid and unpaid domestic work was blurred in women's lives.

It has been necessary to organize the following study thematically rather than chronologically. Though within each chapter due attention is given to change over time, there is considerable overlap of historical periods, because it attempts to follow the lives

and experiences of domestic servants from their households of origin, into the household and community, and into their married lives.

Chapter Two establishes the social and economic framework for Grand Falls as a case study by exploring the development of the mill site within the political and economic climate of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It also examines the company's early labour recruitment policies and the impact which workers and their families had upon the community from 1905 until the immediate post World War I period of recession and inflation. It shows how the particular mix of the first migrants (from Newfoundland and from outside), and the organizations they established during this period laid the community's social foundation for subsequent decades. Chapter Three surveys gender and class divisions within Grand Falls during the 1920s and 1930s. It outlines the ways in which community life was defined by the company's second wave of labour recruitment for its secondary labour force, the increasing role of the local elite in the town's social welfare matters, and the relative prosperity of Grand Falls in relation to the outlying districts. These factors arguably sharpened social divisions within the community and engendered the development of a sense of localism. Chapter Four explores the migration of domestics to Grand Falls during the interwar years within the context of the migration patterns of the core permanent workforce. In understanding migration as a complex and gendered process, the communities and households of origin of domestics are identified here. The analysis draws on oral history and manuscript census data to shed light on daughters' departure from home as an aspect of occupational pluralism. How were

decisions to leave home worked out between family members in these women's households and communities or origin? Chapter Five considers the demand for domestics in Grand Falls. It explores the divergence in recruitment practices between elite wives and those of mill workers. In addition it explores the various ways in which employer demand was shaped by their particular household circumstances, which influenced the wages they paid and their relationships to the young women they hired. Chapter Six is primarily concerned with understanding the domestics' perceptions of their work experience and their status in the wider community by focussing on relationships between employer and employee within the household. In so doing the argument is made that throughout the interwar years migration status became a site of social differentiation between women. Chapter Seven is concerned with the lives and experiences of Grand Falls domestics after they left their situations to marry. Some of these women stayed in Grand Falls and married mill workers, and others left. Both patterns of experience are considered to show how housework had become an integral aspect of these women's lives within and outside of marriage. Through a case-study approach of domestics in Grand Falls this study attempts to make inroads into understanding a potentially significant gendered aspect of social differentiation in Newfoundland -- an area of study which requires much more research.

Chapter Two

“A Garden City”: The AND Company and Grand Falls, 1905 to 1921

To understand and appreciate the details of community life and work experience in Grand Falls, described in subsequent chapters, it is important to have a grasp of the general economic and political climate in which the AND Company established its Grand Falls site, its early labour recruitment policies, and the impact which workers and their families had upon the community in its formative phase. While the Grand Falls mill was certainly one of the largest and the most economically successful forestry-related operations in the history of Newfoundland, it was not the first. From the beginning of European exploitation of the fishery and of early settlement, the forests of Newfoundland were considered an open access resource, and they were used by fishers and others for firewood, building materials and other subsistence needs. Apart from shipbuilding, which was an important industry during the first half of the 19th century, there was little commercial use of the forests until the 19th century, when small-scale sawmilling operations emerged in densely populated regions of the island such as the Avalon peninsula and Trinity Bay.¹ Outport merchants and St. John's merchants generally owned these family-based enterprises, which were distributed all over the island, but concentrated

¹The emergence of the sawmilling industry in Newfoundland has been well documented elsewhere. See for example, James Hiller, “The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland.”

primarily in Trinity Bay and Bonavista Bay, and later in Twillingate, St. Barbe, and St. George's on the west coast.² The Gander Bay mills and those at Gambo, Glenwood, Norris Arm, Botwood, and Campbellton together employed around 3,000 men at around the turn of the 20th century, providing work in the winter months to those who relied on the fishery from spring to fall.³ Some of these operations harvested increasingly smaller trees as resources dwindled, and by the turn of the century, the island's meagre exports of lumber had substantially declined.⁴

Despite this downturn during the late 19th century, the number of sawmills actually increased during the early 20th century, from 350 in 1911 to 690 in 1921.⁵ An increasing number of mills did not, however, indicate increased production. In 1901, for example, 195 mills produced 43.6 million board feet of lumber, but that fell to below 30 million board feet by 1921, when there were substantially more mills on the island.⁶ The numbers employed in sawmills also did not parallel the number of mills. Between 1901 and 1921

²Colonial Secretary's Office, "Recapitulation -- Mines, Factories & etc." *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1901*, Vol. II, Table III (St. John's: J.W. Withers, 1903); Colonial Secretary's Office, "T.-Saw Mills," *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1921*, Table XXIII.

³Roland Goodyear, "Lewis Miller and Harry J. Crowe: The industry they founded and the events and happening which led up to the development of the newsprint industry in Newfoundland," unpublished manuscript, 1966, personal names files, *Roland Goodyear*, Newfoundland Historical Society, 2-3.

⁴Roland Goodyear, "Lewis Miller and Harry J. Crowe," 4-11.

⁵Colonial Secretary's Office, "T.-Saw Mills."

⁶J.A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland," 150.

the number employed in sawmills only increased from 2,408 to 2,953,⁷ and total lumber exports declined from a peak of 65,820 board feet in 1901/05 to 5,871 in 1921/25.⁸ By the interwar years, most of these sawmills produced only for the local market, and some had been established merely so that the owners of land tracts could satisfy the “manufacturing condition,” which required them to erect a sawmill or some other processing plants.⁹ Forester John A. Munro has also suggested that in the interwar period, much of the new sawmilling was confined to non-licensed Crown Lands around the coast. This “three-mile limit,” which amounted to a band of common property forest around the coast of the island, traditionally protected fishers’ rights to a portion of the resource. Between 1901 and 1920 no licenses were issued on the three mile limit. The Saw Mill Act of the post-World War I period, however, allowed small commercial sawmill operators who were not located in densely populated regions to cut on unalienated Crown Lands.¹⁰ Significantly, these operations came into direct competition with fishers who had a traditional and continual need for the forest resource.

The Grand Falls mill, however, was a completely different undertaking, and on a completely different scale from these smaller operations. The mill was established as a

⁷Colonial Secretary’s Office, “T.-Saw Mills.”

⁸J.A. Munro, “Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland,” 153. Munro calculated these figures from the Newfoundland *Customs Returns*.

⁹J.A. Munro, “Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland,” 56.

¹⁰J.A. Munro, “Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland,” 150.

major industrial operation, based on modern production techniques and labour recruitment strategies. It was also part of a general thrust toward economic diversification through landward development that had become the hallmark of government policy over the late 19th century. The policies of successive Newfoundland governments were centred on diversifying the island's economy, providing employment for the island's growing population, and breaking the perceived over-dependence on the fisheries. While enterprises such as sealing¹¹ and, beginning in the mid-19th century, mining absorbed some of the increasing surplus labour, it became apparent to some that more concerted and systematic efforts would have to be made. According to David Alexander, early efforts in this direction centred on import substitution and agricultural development, which met with very limited success.¹² Economic diversification efforts took on an increased urgency over the latter half of the 19th century, especially in light of Newfoundland's deteriorating position within the international saltfish trade.¹³ While the fishery, which depended largely on merchant capital and household production, remained the mainstay of the island's economy throughout this period, by the late 19th century the industry had declined

¹¹For a discussion of the sealing industry's economic importance during this period, see Shannon Ryan, *The Ice Hunters*.

¹²David Alexander, "Newfoundland's Traditional Economy and Development to 1934;" and David Alexander, "Development and Dependence in Newfoundland."

¹³For a detailed history of this decline, see, See Shannon Ryan, *Fish out of Water*. For an examination of some of the long-term consequences, see David Alexander, "The Collapse of the Saltfish Trade and Newfoundland's Integration into the North American Economy." *Canadian Historical Association Papers* (Ottawa, 1976) 229-48.

dramatically. By the late 1880s and into the 1890s, economic diversification policies had come to be heavily influenced by such initiatives as the Geological Survey which was begun in 1864, and which stimulated interest in the possibility of land-based industrial development. Survey director Alexander Murray echoed the beliefs of many when he predicted that a forest industry and other interior developments would also stimulate permanent agricultural settlement in the island's interior.¹⁴

Another cornerstone of the attempt to diversify and stimulate the economy through landward development was construction of the trans-island railway. Construction of a railway line from St. John's to Hall's Bay (on the northeast coast and close to the mines of Notre Dame Bay) was begun in 1881 by Blackman's Newfoundland Railway Company. The initial construction phase was beset by several problems, and construction had stalled by 1890, when the newly elected government of William Whiteway paid Canadian railway contractor Robert G. Reid for continuing the construction of the railways, and granted him vast tracts of land in exchange for operating the railway. By this time, government

¹⁴James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland," 43-45, examines the influence of Murray's survey on government policy. John A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland," 43, also outlines the connection between forest development and agriculture. See Sean Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay*, for an examination of the connections between political reform and agricultural development in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

attention had shifted almost completely away from reform of more traditional sectors such as the fishery, and toward promoting export-led growth in minerals and pulp and paper.¹⁵

Given the prevailing economic and political context, the Newfoundland legislature's passage of *An Act to Encourage the Manufacture of Pulp and Paper in this Colony* on 13 June 1905 can be viewed as another in a series of attempts to modernize the Newfoundland economy through landward industrial development. The 1905 legislation was also characteristic of the beginnings of a shift in the Atlantic region of British North America towards state promotion of forestry development by large foreign capitalist concerns, which depended on wage labour.¹⁶ The 1905 Act in effect ratified an agreement with the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company (AND Company) to build a pulp and paper mill at Grand Falls.¹⁷ The Act granted enormous concessions to the AND Company's London-based owners, the Harmsworth brothers, amounting to a

¹⁵Alexander argues that this strategy characterized Newfoundland's economic policy until 1934 when the island lost responsible government status. David Alexander, "Newfoundland's Traditional Economy and Development to 1934." Historians are now beginning to question Alexander's assumption of government's total neglect of the fishery. For two recent examples, see Robert Hong, "'An Agency for the Common Weal; and Fred Winsor, "The Newfoundland Bank Fishery: Government Policies and the Struggle to Improve Bank Fishing Crews' Working, Health and Safety Conditions, 1876-1920," unpublished PhD dissertation (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1997).

¹⁶See L. Anders Sandberg ed., *Trouble in the Woods* for a discussion of shifts in state policy toward favouring pulp and paper development in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially Anders Sandberg, "Forest Policy in Nova Scotia: The Big Lease, Cape Breton Island, 1899-1960," 1-22.

¹⁷*Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland*, Schedule to 5 Ed. VII c.10, 1905, (St. John's: J.W. Withers, 1905).

perpetual lease of 2,300 square miles of timber lands, a good source of water for hydro-electric power, and no stumpage on pulpwood.

2.1 The Harmsworths and the rise of the pulp and paper industry in Newfoundland

Later known respectively as Lord Northcliffe and Lord Rothermere, Alfred and Harold Harmsworth had established themselves as pre-eminent newspaper men during the Boer War, when the circulation of their *Daily Mail* skyrocketed, surpassing one million. The Harmsworths also owned the London *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, and later, the Amalgamated Press and Associated Newspapers Ltd. The Harmsworths were riding a wave of success when they came to Newfoundland in 1902, seeking a steady supply of newsprint for their London-based enterprises. Newsprint prices from traditional British markets such as the Baltic countries were rising at the turn of the century in response to an increase in demand on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁸ The Harmsworths also anticipated a shortage in supply and looked to the British colonies for an exploitable and abundant resource. In this period of increasing literacy, consumerism, and innovations in transportation and communications, mass-market publishers everywhere were eager to secure large, reliable supplies of paper.¹⁹ Newfoundland, in short, represented to interests

¹⁸See James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland," 51, fn 34, where he attributes the rise in prices of newsprint to the Spanish American and Boer Wars of the turn of the century.

¹⁹W.J. Reader, *Bowater: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 10.

such as the Harmsworths an untapped resource for an industry that was becoming increasingly competitive on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Harmsworths' willingness to invest in the Grand Falls project was increased by certain conditions in the colony at that time, particularly the completion of a railway line through the Exploits River region in 1894, and to Port aux Basques on the island's southwest coast in 1898, (see Figure 2):

The Newfoundland government had rendered our coming possible by engaging the late Sir Robert Reid and his sons to build the railway across the island, without which the vast amount of British capital which I represent, would never have come here.²⁰

Timber tract owners and land speculators, representing a combination of foreign entrepreneurs and merchant firms, also proved willing to promote a newsprint industry on the island, which also helped lay the groundwork for the Harmsworth proposal.²¹ In fact, historians have generally credited late 19th and early 20th century lumber companies with

²⁰Excerpts from Northcliffe's speech were reproduced in, Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 2.

²¹Other jurisdictions, such as New Brunswick, which had a relatively strong tradition of trade and export of sawn lumber, were slower in making the transition to pulp and paper before World War I in part because of opposition from lumbermen, who were part of the province's "patrician elite," and who represented an increasingly powerful force in the province's foreign-controlled lumbering industry. Bill Parenteau, "The Woods Transformed: The Emergence of the Pulp and Paper Industry in New Brunswick, 1918-1931," *Acadiensis* 22, 1 (Autumn, 1992) 8-9. See also L. Anders Sandberg ed., *Trouble in the Woods*, 4-5.

setting the stage for the development of the Grand Falls project.²² In 1897, for example, the first pulpwood was manufactured in Black River, Placentia Bay. This mill, which was owned by Harvey and Company of St. John's, produced twenty tons a day at its peak but it ultimately failed and closed down in 1903 because of inadequate water resources, mechanical failure, and lack of capital.²³ Harvey and Company later became key supporters of the Grand Falls project. Other influential interests were from elsewhere. In 1899, R.G. Reid encouraged Lewis Miller (who came from a Scottish town close to Reid's home) to transfer his Swedish-based sawmilling operation to Newfoundland. During 1900-1902, Miller established state-of-the-art lumbering operations on Red Indian Lake and on the Gander River. The logging communities Miller created included Millertown, which consisted of 80 cottages, 20 larger homes, a church, and a school house; Glenwood, previously the site of a sawmill; and Lewisporte, formerly Burnt Bay.²⁴ Lewisporte and Millertown were linked to the main railway by branch lines financed by

²²Historians writing on the origins of the pulp and paper industry disagree over which individual was responsible for alerting Harmsworths to Newfoundland's potential. Countering James Hiller who credits Miller with enticing Harmsworths, W.G. Reeves highlights Whitney's involvement, while the earliest account by Munro claims it was Harry Crowe. James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland," 51; and John A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland"; W.G. Reeves, "'Our Yankee Cousins'," 408-09.

²³James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland," 49; and J.A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland," 82-83.

²⁴Miller operated the largest lumberyard and shipping pier in Newfoundland, at Burnt Bay with a capacity of 40 million board feet.

Miller. Though Miller's operation was short-lived -- the white pine he intended to produce was over- mature and his plan to import and accommodate Swedish loggers proved costly -- it was significant insofar as the AND Company drew on the Millertown workforce in its early recruitment of labour for the construction phase of the Grand Falls mill.

According to their biographer, the Harmsworths embodied the spirit of guilt-free, imperialist Britain.²⁵ This claim is certainly supported by the Harmsworths instructions to Mayson Beeton, an ex-reporter and part of their inner circle, in 1902, to "go to Newfoundland, get timber concessions and build mills."²⁶ Beeton was no stranger to colonial development, and the Harmsworths liked the fact that he had "already shown a firm grasp of economic geography in articles which he had written for the *Daily Mail* after investigation of the West Indies sugar industry."²⁷ Beeton also came from the right social milieu. Beeton's father was a distinguished editor and publisher, and his mother, Isabella Beeton, had written *Beeton's Book of Household Management*, an advice manual and

²⁵Paul Ferris, *The House of Northcliffe: A Biography of an Empire* (New York: World Publishing, 1971).

²⁶Reginald Pound and Geoffrey Harmsworth, *Northcliffe*, (London: Cassel, 1959) 276.

²⁷Pound and Harmsworth, *Northcliffe*, 176-77.

recipe book read widely by England's middle and upper classes throughout the late 19th century and long after.²⁸

Newfoundland was not the first North American location Beeton scrutinized for possible establishment of a pulp and paper industry. He also visited Maine and New Brunswick in 1902, but little is known about the details of those trips. He most likely settled on Newfoundland because of his awareness of the Harmsworths' preference for development under British jurisdiction. One newspaper report stated that the Harmsworths believed a Newfoundland-based enterprise would "safeguard this company against renewed attempts to 'squeeze up' the price of paper -- efforts which might be engineered in the future by American trusts as they have in the past."²⁹ In keeping with this anti-American viewpoint, Alfred Harmsworth (then Lord Northcliffe) once remarked

²⁸The relationship between Mayson Beeton and Isabelle Beeton was described in a manuscript on the early history of Grand Falls. The unidentified author of the manuscript claimed that his work was based in part on interviews and letters belonging to Mayson Beeton. "Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd" (n.p., 1955) Chapter 1, 5, Coll 188, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Hereafter cited as "Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd." There are several editions of Isabella Beeton's book. See *Mrs. Beeton's Cookery and Household Management* (London: Ward, Lock and Co. Ltd, 1965) for one example. Michael Mason's "A Little Pickle for the Husband," *London Review of Books*, 1 April 1999, discusses the mystique surrounding the publication of the book and Isabella Beeton's life.

²⁹*Evening Times*, 5 January 1906, as referenced in W.G. Reeves, "Our Yankee Cousins'," 406. Pound and Harmsworth state that Northcliffe responded to a question about why he was interested in Newfoundland by stating he had to consider the situation of his newspapers in light of the possible activities of a paper-making trust, which might "squeeze the life out of English papers." Pound and Harmsworth, *Northcliffe*, 365.

while travelling in the United States that, "every one of the new factory chimneys here is a gun pointed at England."³⁰

The Harmsworths may have also viewed a Newfoundland operation as a check on a rapidly expanding American pulp and paper industry, and the accompanying depletion of timber reserves. The American market for newsprint expanded dramatically between 1900 and 1940, and the pulp and paper industry spread from the industrial heartland of the northeast and the Great Lakes regions to the South and Pacific regions of the United States. Depletion of timber stands in the north, technological innovation,³¹ transportation development, and lower cost of production in the less industrialized regions of the South and the Pacific were catalysts for relocation.³² During this period, American mills also became increasingly dependent on imports of pulp from Canada and Scandinavia.³³ The removal of the American tariff on imported raw materials in 1913 stimulated the Canadian newsprint industry, which was then largely based in Northern Ontario and Quebec. Canadian production of newsprint more than doubled between 1913 and 1919, while

³⁰Pound and Harmsworth, *Northcliffe*, 367.

³¹Robert Zieger, *Rebuilding the Pulp and Paper Workers' Union, 1933-1941* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 20.

³²Nancy Kane Ohanian, *The American Pulp and Paper Industry, 1900-1940: Mill Survival, Firm Structure, and Industry Relocation* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993) 27.

³³Ian Radforth, *Bush Workers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987)17.

American production remained constant.³⁴ Viewed in this light, historian William Reeves' argument that "as the American pulpmaking frontier spread outward, the Harmsworths viewed the Newfoundland forests as a defensive line" appears to be a convincing one.³⁵

Beeton had initially intended to build the mill at Grand Lake on the island's west coast, an area which the Reid family (owners of the Reid Newfoundland Company, which possessed large tracts of freehold Crown Land on the island's east and west coasts) had already scrutinized for its development potential.³⁶ The Reids were adverse to negotiating with Beeton about Grand Lake because they resented the favour the government was beginning to show the Harmsworth proposal. Beeton thus decided to build the mill in the Exploits watershed, which in his view was ideal for pulp and paper manufacture: the river would provide an unlimited source of hydro electric power, and the area was surrounded by forests containing balsam, fir, and spruce trees. Beeton's criteria were standard ones for the establishment of pulp and paper mills in this period. Site selection for mill towns elsewhere tended to be based on these same basic criteria, and during this period mill towns tended to be rural in character, often with less than 10,000 people.³⁷

³⁴Kenneth Norrie and Douglas Owsam, *A History of the Canadian Economy* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1991) 449-51.

³⁵W.G. Reeves, "Our Yankee Cousins," 407.

³⁶For a thorough discussion of Reids' failed Grand Lake development see James Hiller, "The Origins of Pulp and Paper in Newfoundland," 54-56.

³⁷See Nancy Kane Ohanian, *The American Pulp and Paper Industry*, 101; and Robert H. Zieger, *Rebuilding the Pulp and Paper Workers' Union*, 22.

Grand Falls was also ideally situated to attract a willing workforce from surrounding regions. Northwest of Grand Falls lay Notre Dame Bay, site of the island's first major mining industry, and of a vast number of fishing and logging communities.³⁸ The large fishing communities of Twillingate and Fogo were located northeast of Grand Falls, and to the southeast lay the fishing/farming/sawmilling regions of Bonavista Bay and Trinity Bay. While some men and women in these areas had previously been exposed to land-based industries, such as mining and sawmilling, the unprecedented scale of the Grand Falls operation and the powerful position of the AND Company in labour market development was to transform their lives in deep and far-reaching ways. As one resident of the northeast coast town of Lewisporte put it very simply in 1933, "When the railway came through the country it opened new development, and the AND Company started a mill at Grand Falls which took our people away from the fishery."³⁹

Incentives such as the completion of the railway line through the Exploits Valley and to Port-aux-Basques, as well as other favourable conditions, were not enough to convince the Harmsworths to commence the project without seeking further concessions.

³⁸Wendy Martin, *Once Upon a Mine: the Story of Pre-Confederation Mines on the Island of Newfoundland* (Montreal, the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, 1983)5-31.

³⁹"Evidence of Mr. Manuel, Lewisporte," Vol.17, Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission, *Charles A. McGrath Papers*, MG 30 E82, PANL. Subsequent references to testimonies to the Newfoundland Royal Commission's island-wide tour in 1933 are cited as "Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission," as they are all contained in Volume 17 of the *McGrath Papers*.

In 1902, Beeton entered into negotiations with the government, stressing that his proposed massive development would not take place unless the existing Crown Lands legislation was relaxed.⁴⁰ In 1903, and prompted in part by considerable pressure to wrest some control over the island's resources from the Reids, whose company now controlled about 10 per cent of the island's land in freehold, in addition to the Cabot Strait ferry, St. John's Light and Power, the street railway, the coastal steamship and the island's only dry dock and machine shops, the Bond Liberals conceded to Beeton's demand.⁴¹

The government by-passed existing Crown Lands legislation to provide the Harmsworths with a 99-year renewable lease on 2,010,000 acres of land, with rights to all timber and trees, mineral and water resources; freedom from taxation; and a waiver of import duties on all machinery and construction materials.⁴² Pulpwood would be cut free of stumpage. Tourists would be allowed to enter the preserve only if accompanied by a ranger appointed by the Harmsworths and paid at their rates. In return, the company would pay fifty cents per 1,000 feet of timber, and if they should develop the mineral potential, a 5 per cent royalty on net profits. The Company planned to spend \$250,000

⁴⁰For a detailed historical assessment of Newfoundland's Crown Lands policy see J.A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland."

⁴¹James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland," 52. For a thorough discussion of the local political situation, see James Hiller, "The Political Career of Robert Bond," in James Hiller and Peter Neary eds. *Twentieth-Century Newfoundland: Explorations* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1994) 24-31.

⁴²*An Act to Encourage the Manufacture of Pulp and Paper in this Colony*, 1905.

within four years of the deal being struck, and \$750,000 within sixteen years. They also promised to hire Newfoundland labour. The deal was slightly amended in 1905; under the revised terms residents could enter the area to fish and hunt, and the company was obligated to supply free land for churches and schools within the community.⁴³ While previous governments had granted Reids large tracts of Crown Land in freehold, and had issued timber leases to a number of other concerns, such as Crowe and Miller, the 1905 legislation differed. It was designed specifically to facilitate the establishment of a pulp and paper complex which would rely on wage labour.

The Grand Falls deal did not go unopposed. Most public opposition arose in political circles, and among the St. John's business elite. The most vocal opponents, who organized as the Citizen's Protective Association, contended that the Harmsworths had a "reputation as high or as low as the reputation of Rockefeller in the U.S."⁴⁴ They also argued that the price Newfoundlanders were paying for development of the forest, mineral and other resources was too high. According to Alfred Morine, a backer of the Reids and a Tory representative, the Newfoundland lumbermen, miners, hunters, fishermen and settlers of "this and succeeding generations... are robbed to all eternity of that which should have been and remain their inalienable heritage."⁴⁵ While these men voiced their

⁴³James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland," 59.

⁴⁴*The Free Press*, 2 May 1905.

⁴⁵*The Free Press*, 2 May 1905.

opposition in nationalistic terms, they were actually vying for position in a tumultuous political time, when collusion between business interests and government, and shifting alliances within the elite over development initiatives, were commonplace. The Liberals, led by Bond, were reluctant at this point to side with the Reids over anything. Bond also argued that the Grand Falls development would diversify the economy, create employment for “800 to 900 operatives in addition to loggers”, and stimulate agricultural development in the interior.⁴⁶

The Grand Falls deal was also negotiated during a tumultuous and competitive time within the industry itself. During this period, companies such as Newfoundland Timber Estates, led by Harry Crowe and Henry Melville Whitney⁴⁷, as well as the Reid Company, were involved in several attempts to set up pulp and paper industries themselves, or in acquiring timber rights and selling them to larger concerns for quick profit. Crowe, an aggressive business promoter from Nova Scotia who was influential in the Harmsworth deal, had taken control of many ailing sawmilling operations, including those at Botwood, Norris Arm, and Millertown (Lewis Miller’s largest operation), and by

⁴⁶*The Free Press*, 2 May 1905. The agricultural argument was not a new one. See Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay*, for the 19th century; and James Hiller, “The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry,” for the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

⁴⁷Don Macgillivray, “Henry Melville Whitney Comes to Cape Breton,” *Acadiensis* 9, 1 (Autumn, 1979).

1903 he had built a new mill at Point Leamington.⁴⁸ Timber Estates led the island in lumbering activity by 1903, and Crowe employed around 1,500 men, whom he paid by promissory notes which were to be redeemed at one of his own stores.⁴⁹ This company also maintained 23 miles of railway line and extensive shipping facilities at Lewisporte, which it later sold to the AND Company.⁵⁰ The transition to pulp and paper production, however, required large outlays of capital, tracts of land, technological innovation, and perhaps most importantly, government support. Lacking the right combination of these advantages, and unable to attract the same level of government support, Reid and Crowe did not succeed in making the transition by the time of Beeton's arrival.⁵¹

Favourable local conditions, along with government support, were not the only incentives attracting the Harmsworths to Newfoundland. There was also the comparatively low cost of labour. All these factors combined meant that the AND Company expected to deliver Newfoundland paper to London \$5 to \$10 per ton cheaper

⁴⁸The demise of Miller's enterprise is detailed in James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland." Crowe purchased Miller's as part of the consolidation of his east coast lumber operations, which was backed by the Reids. One of the holding companies, Timber Estates, received \$400,000 as part of the Harmsworth deal for its freehold land at Millertown and Lewisporte, the Millertown railway, and approximately 803 square miles of timber rights.

⁴⁹Roland Goodyear, "Lewis Miller and Harry J. Crowe," 38.

⁵⁰W.G. Reeves, "'Our Yankee Cousins'," 411.

⁵¹According to Hiller, the Reids did not come forward with a proposal of their own until 1915. James Hiller, "The Politics of Newsprint," 4.

than paper from any other North American location.⁵² While few figures exist to verify this estimate, Bond had kept a chart in his files which indicated that materials and labour cost considerably less in Newfoundland than in Canada and the United States in 1912. According to Bond's figures, in 1912 the cost of labour in Newfoundland was \$2.94 per ton of newsprint, compared to \$3.19 in Canada, and \$5.27 in the United States. In addition, materials in Newfoundland cost \$14.34 per ton of newsprint, compared to \$18.11 in Canada, and \$23.51 in the United States.⁵³

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that the Grand Falls development helped secure the Harmsworth's place as a leader in British publishing. In integrating the papermaking, printing, and publishing sectors, the Harmsworths were following the lead of Edward Lloyd, publisher of *Lloyd's Weekly News* and the *Daily Chronicle*. In the early 1860s Lloyd had established a paper making mill at Sittingbourne in Kent, at which point his enterprise became the first of its kind in Britain to have a stake in every stage of the enterprise, from making wood pulp to selling the finished newspaper.⁵⁴ The direct

⁵²James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland," 57.

⁵³*Robert Bond Papers*, 4.03.005, Coll -237, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

⁵⁴W.J. Reader, *Bowater: A History*, 1-17. In the 1940s Edward Lloyd Limited was involved in the export of groundwood from Newfoundland. See F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress at Grand Falls: the Impact of Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company Ltd. On the Economy of Newfoundland* (Canada: Pulp and Paper Magazine of Canada, October 1959), 43. For more on vertical integration, which was a characteristic of the pulp and paper industry as it developed in the 20th century, see, Nancy Kane Ohanian, *The American Pulp and Paper Industry*, Ch.5.

relationship the Harmsworths established between production of the product and its market would prove beneficial to the Company's sustainability in the ensuing years. In 1910 when the Harmsworths purchased the Imperial Paper Mills at Gravesend, England, they became the third largest paper manufacturing concern in the United Kingdom.⁵⁵ That same year a cartoon with the caption "The New Robinson Crusoe and his New Found Land of Paper" appeared, depicting Northcliffe clad in fur, holding a rifle, and standing on the Grand Falls mill superimposed on a map of Newfoundland. An accompanying verse underlined the interconnectedness of the manufactured Newfoundland product and the publishing empire:

I am Monarch of all I survey!
My right there is none to dispute.
'Mail' paper I make every day,
And the 'News' and the 'Mirror' to boot.⁵⁶

The caption also foreshadowed the future dominance of pulp and paper in the colony, as Newfoundland entered a second and much more complex phase of negotiations with foreign companies.

The Harmsworth deal triggered a speculative land boom in Newfoundland. Now, old-line St. John's merchant firms, doctors, clergy, and persons specifically interested in

⁵⁵James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry," 64-65. According to Hiller the Harmsworths also owned timber lands in Nova Scotia and Vancouver Island, and the Laurentide Paper Company of Grand Mere, Quebec.

⁵⁶F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 22. The source for the cartoon is unknown, although F.A. Price cites the source as *The Stationer*, which does not appear to be a Newfoundland publication.

forest development and in obtaining Crown Lands rushed to acquire rights to the rest of the island, and to Labrador.⁵⁷ According to J.A. Munro, government had relaxed its conditions on timber licenses between 1899 and 1911.⁵⁸ This allowed large fishing firms such as Jobs to acquire large tracts of land in the Deer Lake region, and enormous tracts in Labrador. Bowrings, another St. John's company, joined with British interests, such as A.E. Reed, to establish a second major development on the Exploits.⁵⁹ In 1907, during this period of optimism, the A.E. Reed Company, which owned eight paper mills in Great Britain, entered into an agreement with the Bond government to establish a pulp mill at Bishop's Falls, which opened in 1912. The Reed Company secured control of cutting rights in the Exploits Valley between Red Indian Lake and the Grand Falls mill, while the AND Company's limits were located 50 miles away from the site. The AND Company worked closely with the Reed concern, acquiring some of its timber limits in 1919, and eventually absorbing the entire operation into its holdings by 1929.⁶⁰

The period from the outbreak of World War I to the early 1920s was marked by a rapid expansion of the pulp and paper industry in the Atlantic region, as well as a second

⁵⁷For a detailed discussion of the allocation of timber licenses in Labrador, see J.A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland," especially Chapter VI, "Developments in Labrador."

⁵⁸J.A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland," 54.

⁵⁹W.G. Reeves, "'Our Yankee Cousins,'" 424.

⁶⁰See John A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy," 85-86; and James Hillier, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland," 63, for a discussion of the Bishop's Falls agreement.

phase of pulp and paper development in Newfoundland. The second phase occurred in an atmosphere of pessimism and desperation on the island, brought on by deteriorating economic conditions in the fisheries, increasing public relief rolls, and social unrest. Within that atmosphere, the Squires government entered into an agreement with British armaments manufacturer Sir Armstrong Whitworth and Company Ltd. (which was also involved with the Reid family) to build a mill on the Humber River on the island's west coast. Squires's 1923 election campaign slogan, promising to put "the Hum on the Humber," proved successful, and the government advanced generous concessions to these industrialists, who also had backing from the British government.⁶¹ Squires and others hoped the complex would absorb some of the surplus labour displaced from the flagging fishery. In 1928 the mill, which had been built by the Newfoundland Power and Paper Company, was taken over by the International Power and Paper Company (IPPCO) of New York. In 1938 it was taken over by Bowaters of England. Despite these and other efforts to develop pulp and newsprint mills on the island during the interwar years, Bowaters and the AND Company were the only major operations still in existence at the outbreak of World War II.⁶²

⁶¹According to James Hiller, the British government gave the proposal a joint guarantee which was made possible by the 1921 Trade Facilities Act, which "authorized the Treasury to guarantee loans within the British Empire whose proceeds were to be spent on British industrial products. James Hiller, "The Politics of Newsprint," 14.

⁶²J.A.Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland," 82-90.

By the onset of World War II, Bowaters and the AND Company owned around 80 per cent of the island's timber tracts (see Figure 3). The AND Company not only survived the interwar years – its land holdings increased steadily, from 2,327 square miles of timber land in 1909, to 6,327 in 1929, to 7,479 in 1933.⁶³ When Bowaters took over the IPPCO mill in 1938, it held nearly 8,000 square miles, up from around 2,600 in 1926. By 1939, that had increased to over 11,000.⁶⁴

One of the effects of the increasingly close ties between foreign-based newsprint companies and the colonial government was underdevelopment of other sectors of the forest industry. While Newfoundland had not possessed the kind of forest resources which would have allowed it to develop a lumbering industry early in its history, its lack of endowment was exacerbated by the dominance and influence of the major pulp and paper companies such as the AND Company and Bowaters. This is evident, for example, in the fact that throughout the interwar years, as these large foreign corporations increased their dominance over the island's forest resources, sawmilling -- which had long been a necessary adjunct to the fishery and an important element in the seasonal economy -- became an increasingly marginal sector of the island's forest industry. Historians have rightly argued that export figures showing the dominance of forestry in the island's

⁶³J.A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland," 96.

⁶⁴J.A. Munro, "Public Timber Allocation Policy in Newfoundland," 96.

economy did not tell the whole story.⁶⁵ In the long-term, the dominance of the forest industry by foreign ownership meant that newsprint profits were invested elsewhere, Crown lands were consolidated, the companies became incredibly powerful in the island's affairs, and the government lost control of the forest resources and its subsequent ability to manage them.⁶⁶ In the short-term, however, pulp and paper complexes like Grand Falls created a lot of waged work and absorbed a significant amount of surplus labour from the fishery.

The AND Company's established hegemony over the central and eastern portions of the island by the 1930s allowed its publicists to describe the region as a "country within a country," where "virgin land has been transformed into hives of industrial activity."⁶⁷

⁶⁵The value of forest products as a percentage of Newfoundland exports between 1901 and 1905 was 2.13 per cent, compared with the fishery, which accounted for 83.73 per cent, and minerals for 13 percent. By 1911-15 the impact of the Grand Falls development had increased the value of forest products as a percentage of exports to 14.61. Between 1926 and 1930, forest products came close to rivalling fish, when forest products accounted for 41.09 per cent, and fish, 46.33 per cent and minerals were 10.87 per cent. Between 1931 and 1935, with two mills producing 250,000 tons of newsprint a year, the percentage of forest products rose again to 53.2 percent, while the fishery dropped to 29.9 percent and minerals increased to 15.38 per cent. These figures are from James Hiller, "The Origins of the Pulp and Paper Industry in Newfoundland," 67.

⁶⁶John Omohundro, *Rough Food: The Seasons of Subsistence in Northern Newfoundland* (St. John's: ISER, 1994) 35; and James Hiller, "The Politics of Newsprint," 38.

⁶⁷W. A. Lawrence, *Business Drama Unfolded the Story of the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company Limited: A Story of Progress Benefiting Newfoundland and Its People Shown in Company's History* (Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company, Limited, 1935) 15.

Until the beginning of the 19th century the Exploits River system was inhabited mainly by the Beothuk, who had moved inland to avoid confrontation with settlers along the island's northeast coast.⁶⁸ Later, the area attracted sportsmen who fished for salmon and hunted caribou. Local fishers and loggers also used the region to hunt game and fish, and to cut timber for their own use. They also cut timber in Grand Falls area to supply sawmills at Gander Bay, Norris Arm, Botwood, Spaniard's Bay, Gambo, Glenwood, and Northern Arm.⁶⁹

Within this interior region, several communities emerged or were transformed as a consequence of the development of the Grand Falls operation.⁷⁰ In addition to the Bishop's Falls pulp mill, the nearby sawmilling community of Botwood soon flourished as a shipping port for the AND Company's newsprint. Lying at the mouth of the Bay of Exploits, Botwood was connected by an AND Company railway branch line to Grand Falls. The logging centres of Badger, located west of Grand Falls on the Exploits River, and Millertown, grew in conjunction with increases in newsprint production. The logging centre of Terra Nova on the east coast came to rely heavily on the Grand Falls operation

⁶⁸Ralph Pastore, *Shawnadithit's People* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1992).

⁶⁹Roland Goodyear, "Lewis Miller and Harry J. Crowe," 3.

⁷⁰For more on the communities of the Exploits River Drainage Basin, see Exploits Valley Tourism Association, "History of Communities Along the Exploits Water System," unpublished manuscript (Project Group, 1990). Several smaller company towns emerged with the construction of the mill at Corner Brook. These communities were situated primarily on the Northern Peninsula and on the western regions of the island. See, John Omohundro, *Rough Food*, 52-76.

by the 1920s. North of the railway tracks at Grand Falls, the tiny settlement of Grand Falls Station emerged, growing into an incorporated community by the late 1930s. To the southwest, a major deposit of lead, zinc and copper ore which had been discovered within the AND Company land allotment gave rise to a major mining operation and construction of the town of Buchans, a company owned and controlled community. The Buchans mine operated on a joint agreement between the AND Company and the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO), and grew into a major interior industrial site.⁷¹

2.2 Grand Falls and the company town

The infrastructure of the community of Grand Falls, which was imposed from above, was instrumental in shaping and reshaping the town, and the residents' perceptions of themselves as citizens. Instead of simply setting up a community infrastructure designed for practical and utilitarian purposes, which other companies in North America tended to do, the AND Company sought something more permanent and monumental in the plan for Grand Falls, and to accomplish this they drew on the Garden City concept.⁷² In the same year Mayson Beeton arrived in Newfoundland (1902), the future Lord

⁷¹Red Indian Lake Development Association, *Khaki Dodgers: The History of Mining and the People of the Buchans Area* (Grand Falls-Windsor: Robinson Blackmore Printing and Publishing, 1993); Derek Yetman, *Riches of the Earth: the Story of Buchans* (St. John's: Tenax, 1986).

⁷²The garden city town planning concept included features such as open spaces within the community, a green belt surrounding it, individual neighbourhood design, and curvilinear roads.

Northcliffe, along with George Cadbury and other notable British industrialists, was listed as a key shareholder in the Garden City Pioneer Company of Great Britain.⁷³ The London *Daily Mail*, with a lower middle-class readership, gave wholehearted support to the Garden City movement.⁷⁴ In fact, historians of the movement have emphasized that “Alfred Harmsworth was crucially important in the establishment of a bridgehead of middle-class tolerance and sympathy for the Garden City.”⁷⁵ Notably, the movement to which Harmsworth and other industrialists were allied stressed the planning aspects of the Garden City, rather than the cooperative and communal ideals associated with it. Northcliffe underscored the trans-Atlantic connection between British developments and his company’s intentions for Newfoundland at the opening ceremonies of the Grand Falls mill:

We have, I am proud to say, industrial settlements and model garden cities in England... settlements, in the establishment of which the owners have spent more money on the homes, gardens, and amusements of their people than they have on their plants. We hope to make Grand Falls a Garden City.⁷⁶

⁷³Stephen Ward, “The Garden City Introduced,” in Stephen Ward ed., *The Garden City: Past, Present and Future* (London, 1992) 2-12.

⁷⁴Robert Beevers, *The Garden City Utopia: A Critical Biography of Ebenezer Howard* (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1988)79 and 111.

⁷⁵Stephen Ward, “The Garden City Introduced,” 5. For the wider context, see Anthony Sutcliffe, “From town-country to town planning: changing priorities in the British garden city movement, 1899-1914,” *Planning Perspectives*, 5 (1990) 257-269.

⁷⁶“Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd.,” Chapter 5, 18.

Northcliffe's comments reveal that the type of industrial community he wanted to create was based more on visions of a model environment, such as that which existed at Letchworth in England, than of a community based on the concept of an ideal society.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the notion of town planning for single-industry communities was relatively new in North America at that time, placing Harmsworths at the forefront of progressive town planning. More specifically, the closed-town concept was unprecedented in Newfoundland in the early 20th century.⁷⁸

Resource-based communities first emerged in Newfoundland in conjunction with the mining industry, which originated in the 1860s and 1870s with the development of a copper mining industry in Notre Dame Bay (at such places as Tilt Cove, Betts Cove, and Little Bay).⁷⁹ One factor that set Grand Falls apart from these early mining towns was the fact that, unlike pulp and paper, minerals are a non-renewable resource, so mining companies tended to house workers in more temporary living arrangements. The iron ore

⁷⁷Steven Ward ed., *The Garden City*, 4.

⁷⁸Grand Falls fits Rex Lucas's definition of the "old fashioned company town," which he reserved for closed communities that were owned and administered by the industrial employer. See *Minetown, Milltown, Railtown: Life in Canadian Communities of Single Industry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) 104. Lucas's definition has been widened to include towns in which the company was not necessarily involved in running the town itself. Rolph Knight, *Work Camps and Company Towns in Canada and the U.S.: An Annotated Bibliography* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1975) 7-10.

⁷⁹No studies have explored the social history of the Notre Dame Bay mining communities. For a brief discussion of living conditions in Tilt Cove, see Tom Philbrook, *Fisherman, Logger, Merchant, Miner*, 82. See also Wendy Martin, *Once Upon a Mine*, 5-31.

mining town of Bell Island in Conception Bay, for example, emerged as a mixture of company town and established traditional community after the first mines were opened in 1895. Though it went on to become one of the largest and longest operating mining centres in North America, and though the company built some housing for the workforce and their families, many simply never accepted it as a permanent residence. Some persisted in commuting to and from Bell Island from surrounding communities, on a seasonal, weekly, or daily basis. Others stayed in bunkhouses during the work week, returning home on their days off.⁸⁰ A determining factor in the difference between Bell Island and Grand Falls may have been that the ownership of the Bell Island mines changed hands many times during the first few decades of the industry's existence, and this may have resulted in little attention to community development. Like Bell Island, the copper mining community of Tilt Cove in Notre Dame Bay, which operated somewhat sporadically from the 1860s until 1918 (and again from 1957 to 1967), attracted commuters and single men from the surrounding communities, many of whom lived with relatives.⁸¹ According to Robson, these early mining towns would have been unexceptional in this regard, since resource town planning in that period was "mostly a

⁸⁰Wendy Martin, *Once Upon a Mine*, 52-65; Gail Weir, *The Miners of Wabana: The Story of the Iron Ore Miners of Bell Island* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1989) 18; and Peter Neary, "'Traditional' and 'Modern' Elements, 112-117.

⁸¹Tom Philbrook, *Fisherman, Logger, Merchant, Miner*, 82-83; Wendy Martin, *Once Upon a Mine*, 16-31.

pragmatic response to community needs as created by industrial necessity.”⁸² Resource communities had thus traditionally emerged in an *ad hoc* way, in close proximity to the mill or mine, with little attention paid to environmental and other concerns. It was not until the influence of the social reform movements of the early 20th century that governments began to play a regulatory role in health and welfare matters in such communities,⁸³ and even then ultimate control over the community remained in the hands of the company.⁸⁴ Based on Robson’s view, Grand Falls would have been among the first North American pulp and paper mill towns to be based on the garden city ideal.⁸⁵

⁸²Robert Robson, *Forest Dependent Communities in Canada: An Interpretive Overview and Annotated Bibliography* (The Rural Development Institute: Brandon University, 1995) 19.

⁸³Robson, *Forest Dependent Communities in Canada*, 17-33. Robson documents the evolution of town planning in select forestry-dependent communities (mainly in Ontario) and argues that the establishment of the Commission of Conservation (1909) in Canada and the appointment of Thomas Adams in 1914 brought to Canada a direct link with the Garden City movement. Robson does not discuss Newfoundland or Atlantic Canada. According to Overton’s research on social policy in Newfoundland in the 1920s, there was little attention to community development in St. John’s until the 1920s. See James Overton, “Self-Help, Charity and Individual Responsibility: The Political Economy of Social Policy in Newfoundland in the 1920s,” in James Hiller and Peter Neary eds. *Twentieth Century Newfoundland: Explorations*.

⁸⁴O.W. Saarinen, “The Influence of Thomas Adams and the British New Towns Movement in the Planning of Canadian Resource Communities,” in A.F.J. Artibise and G.A. Stelter eds., *The Usable Urban Past* (Ottawa: Macmillan, 1975).

⁸⁵Early examples of planned forestry based communities in Canada include, the lumbering centre of Keewatin, Ontario (1880s); the pulp and paper town of Espanola, Ontario (1903) and the pulp and paper town of Iroquois Falls (1915-19). Robert Robson, *Forest Dependent Communities in Canada*, 20- 21; and E. Golz, “Espanola: The History of a Pulp and Paper Town,” *Laurentian University Review*, 6, 3 (June 1974).

Companies began adopting town planning concepts around World War I as a way of attracting a permanent workforce and because it was believed that a “well-planned community could be used as a show piece of company benevolence.”⁸⁶ Most historical assessments of the AND Company’s role in Newfoundland generally, and Grand Falls more specifically, provide unqualified support and praise for the material benefits that Newfoundland gained by the company’s presence.⁸⁷ Reflecting on the role of the company in community life, second and third generation Grand Falls residents who moved into wage earning positions in the 1920s stressed the relationship between material benefits and company control. “The mill owned the town and in a sense they owned everybody in the town,” recalled a retired mill employee.⁸⁸ “You got your house painted every three years. You were caretakers for the company. Probably no different from other company towns. The company controlled who lived here because they owned the houses.”⁸⁹ Another remarked that “nobody resented the fact that the company controlled everything because the town was looked after. We got electricity and the water made people glad.”⁹⁰ IPPCO’s town of Corner Brook never encompassed all mill workers. Corner Brook’s

⁸⁶Robert Robson, *Forest Dependent Communities in Canada*, 20.

⁸⁷F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*; Exploits Valley Senior Citizen’s Club, *The Forest Beckoned*; W.A. Lawrence, *Business Drama Unfolded*.

⁸⁸Interview with Raymond S., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1994.

⁸⁹Interview with Raymond S.

⁹⁰Interview with Geraldine B , Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls. 1995.

well-serviced "Townsite" only housed management, elite workers, local entrepreneurs, and professionals, because the IPPCO regarded other mill workers as "transients."⁹¹ Thus, Corner Brook mill workers never felt they owed their homes and welfare to the company as did their counterparts in Grand Falls.⁹² Buchans was also a town rigidly divided along class lines, where management lived uptown and the miners lived downtown in substandard houses and bunkhouses. There was much animosity between the two groups in Buchans, where workers viewed their rigid separation from the town's elite as an intentional company tactic.⁹³

Writing of company paternalism, historian Joan Sangster has argued that dominant companies do more than create consent by extending material benefits to their employees and to the wider community. According to Sangster, paternalistic companies also attempt to create "a broader cultural and intellectual hegemony, in which ideology works to create meanings of class and gender, legitimizing, rationalizing, or naturalizing the existing design of material and social organization, the status quo of both economic and gender power."⁹⁴ The AND Company's challenge was to maintain a core stable workforce within a

⁹¹Harold Horwood, *Corner Brook: A Social History of a Paper Town* (St. John's; Breakwater, 1986) 38.

⁹²Dufferin Sutherland, "'We are Only Loggers'," 97.

⁹³Red Indian Lake Development Association, *Khaki Dodgers*, 106; Yetman, *Riches of the Earth*.

⁹⁴Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) 163.

community that was built from the ground up, and inhabited by workers, families, and managers from diverse socio-economic and religious backgrounds. It did so through its paternalism, and more specifically by accommodating families from the outset, restricting access to company housing to permanent, married mill workers, regulating subsistence production, building and sponsoring a community infrastructure, and supporting the leadership of a local elite in the community's affairs. Temporary mill employees were forced to the outskirts of the company town, where they set up houses on the other side of the railway tracks at Grand Falls Station.⁹⁵

2.3 Opening up a closed town: labour recruitment, 1905 to 1921

In 1909 the AND Company hosted a gala dinner for its shareholders, top management, and government officials to celebrate the completion of the mill, which was renowned for being "of advanced design and efficient in conception."⁹⁶ It included a dam built across the river at the top of the falls, with a power house and grinder room at the bottom, a sulphite pulp mill (with digesters), three paper machines, a steam plant, a large foundry, a machine shop, and an electrical shop.⁹⁷ In 1909 the mill's annual capacity was

⁹⁵Bill Gillespie, *A Class Act*, 33-37. Meg Luxton discusses the two-tiered labour force employed in the mining/smelting town of Flin Flon, Manitoba in the late 1920s. Flin Flon maintained a core stable work force composed of families and a temporary labour force of mainly single men. Meg Luxton, *More than a Labour of Love*, 27.

⁹⁶F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 12.

⁹⁷W.A. Lawrence, *Business Drama Unfolded*.

30,000 tons, with a surplus groundwood capacity of 10,000 tons. Technological change and further capitalization increased its output to 100,000 tons a year by 1925.⁹⁸

At the inaugural dinner, Northcliffe stood to address the crowd, remarking on the importance of the coming together of British capital and Newfoundland labour. He continued in a laudatory fashion, predicting that, “this new development might prove to be the pointing of the way from old time conditions to more modern ways and Newfoundland.... [may] become the most successful and prosperous possession in the British Empire.”⁹⁹

While he did not state so explicitly in his speech, the “more modern ways” involved transforming local migrants into an obedient workforce based on the rhythms of industrial life, a male breadwinner wage, and a separation of spheres for men and women. Northcliffe also wanted his speech to reassure shareholders. Some company officials and shareholders, who had capitalized the company to the tune of \$5,000,000 (based on 1 million shares of 5 dollars each), were wary of hiring Newfoundland workers. During the negotiations, he recounted, “financial writers had warned investors against the project, some calling it ‘a wild cat proposition’... labour authorities had predicted that the

⁹⁸In 1912 two new paper machines were added, increasing annual production to 60,000 tons and in 1925 the AND Company installed a fifth machine, increasing its production to 100,000 tons a year. See Appendix E for changes in production levels over time.

⁹⁹“Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd.” Chapter 4,7.

Newfoundlanders would never submit to industrial conditions."¹⁰⁰ In fact, Northcliffe believed that because "Newfoundlanders were all mostly of English and Irish extraction" that it was unnecessary to import Swedish and Norwegian workers for the Grand Falls operation; and he stated "I imagine these people of British stock can do equally well.... I will guarantee to bet the Newfoundlanders against any axemen in the world....they have no fear of a new job or a new tool."¹⁰¹ Newfoundland men were inherently adaptable, according to the Company's view; they were also expected to be "loyal, independent, and able to withstand severe hardship without complaint."¹⁰² The AND Company believed the success of its mill depended on the eradication of the pre-existing labour traditions of its new permanent local workforce, and on a sexual division of labour that would relegate women to the role of keepers of the home, inhabiting the private sphere of the household - now a unit of consumption.

The early recruitment of labour was dominated by the Company, but connections between some of the first migrants and their family members contributed to the establishment of a core group of workers and their families. To a certain extent, the particular mix of the first migrants laid the community's social foundation for the ensuing

¹⁰⁰Pound and Harmsworth, *Northcliffe*, 384-85.

¹⁰¹F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 16.

¹⁰²Dufferin Sutherland explains how this view, espoused by the AND Company and the Commission of Government throughout the 1930s, contributed to the relatively poor treatment of Newfoundland loggers. See, Dufferin Sutherland, "We Are only Loggers," 180-181.

decades. Three main types of migrants were attracted to Grand Falls during the construction phase, beginning in 1905.¹⁰³ The first group was generally from outside Newfoundland and were recruited by Company representatives to assume managerial positions in the mill. Some of these men arrived from Britain and Scotland specifically to work at Grand Falls, while others were absorbed into the company's management structure from their previous involvement working in the large-scale sawmilling enterprises, such as the one at Millertown.¹⁰⁴ William Scott, a civil engineer who had been employed by the Reid railroad, was appointed for his skills and experience of "the trials and difficulties of construction in the interior."¹⁰⁵ The American and British workers who came to Grand Falls early on were primarily temporary, skilled workers hired as engineers and paper makers. William Brain was recruited from Lloyd's mill in Sittingbourne, England, to train the Grand Falls workers, establishing a direct link between workers in Britain and Grand Falls.¹⁰⁶ The AND Company hired George Hardy, a New York City consulting engineer, to design the mill and dam site. Few of these men brought their wives and children, and most of them left once full-scale production began.¹⁰⁷ The Americans were remembered as "experts in the building of dams...[and] specialists in

¹⁰³For a more detailed discussion of migration, see Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁴"Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd." Chapter 3, 1.

¹⁰⁵F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 9.

¹⁰⁶"Anglo Newfoundland Development Company Ltd., Chapter 7, 25.

¹⁰⁷F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 9.

engineering and electricity."¹⁰⁸ Roland Goodyear, from Ladle Cove on the island's northeast coast, secured temporary work at the Millertown enterprises in the late 19th century through his uncle's connections to Morine and the Tory party.¹⁰⁹ He too was eventually recruited to work with the AND Company at Grand Falls and set up one of the few independent businesses in the town. Hagbert Hanson of Sweden, who had also worked at Millertown, became office manager at Grand Falls in its early years. Eventually, he secured an upper management position.¹¹⁰ Until the 1940s, town and mill managers were almost exclusively from outside Newfoundland.¹¹¹

The second group of workers was recruited by the AND Company's representatives on the island. These men were local carpenters and tradesmen who were recruited to build the town's infrastructure, beginning a process of chain migration. While little documentation on the early workforce exists, a cross-referencing of names of pioneering residents from local history, and the 1921 manuscript census for Grand Falls, reveals that these men came from a wide range of communities -- St. John's, Elliston, Trinity Bay, Exploits, Harbour Grace, Carbonear and Fogo -- and were employed in a variety of skilled and semi-skilled positions in the mill. They were store-keepers, water-

¹⁰⁸"Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd." Chapter 3, 5.

¹⁰⁹Roland Goodyear, "Lewis Miller and Harry J. Crowe," 15.

¹¹⁰Roland Goodyear, "Lewis Miller and Harry J. Crowe," 19.

¹¹¹F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 32.

tenders, carpenters, millwrights, finishers, and timekeepers.¹¹² A few of them were salesmen and accountants. The AND Company also recruited former employees of the Reid Newfoundland Railway.¹¹³

One pioneering resident remembered his father had been called from New Harbour, Trinity Bay, by Mayson Beeton to build a large log house complete with dining room, drawing room, and den for Lord Northcliffe. Once the job was finished, Brown returned to his Trinity Bay home, collected his wife and children and moved back to Grand Falls permanently, travelling by horse and carriage to Whitbourne and then by train to Grand Falls Station.¹¹⁴ The Company had requested that Brown return to Grand Falls to build the palatial Grand Falls House in time for the mill opening in 1909. Brown agreed and hired between 200 and 300 men, most likely acquaintances or relatives from his community of origin, to work on the project. Some of these men would have stayed on as wage earners at the mill and others would have returned to the fishery. In many ways Tom Brown's story reveals much about the various levels of paternalistic practices which accounted for the distribution of jobs at the mill.

¹¹²These occupations and places of birth were found by cross-referencing the list of pioneering residents contained in "Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd.," Chapter 3, 2, with the 1921 manuscript census for Grand Falls. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921*.

¹¹³Roland Goodyear, "Lewis Miller and Harry J. Crowe," 7-9.

¹¹⁴Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 4.

The third group of early migrants consisted of over 1,000 men who had worked as labourers on the construction site and a further 800 men who were employed as loggers on a part-time basis.¹¹⁵ In 1906, the basic rate of pay for construction workers at Grand Falls was 13.5 cents an hour, or \$1.35 for a ten hour day.¹¹⁶ This increased slightly to \$1.40 per day in 1908.¹¹⁷ Newspapers reported that some men earned quick cash in construction and returned to the fishery before the job was completed, presenting management with a problem.¹¹⁸ This behaviour is one example of how the early labour force combined the cash wages on the Grand Falls construction project with their pre-existing fishery work to help sustain their households. Cape Breton industrialists drew upon this tradition, and recruited Newfoundlanders to take unskilled, low paid, temporary positions in the demanding and dangerous Sydney steel and coal industries because of their willingness to return home in periods of unemployment.¹¹⁹ The co-existence of two economies proved beneficial to large companies who depended on temporary workers in addition to a core group. Generally, those who had little fishery-related experience, and

¹¹⁵F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 21.

¹¹⁶Exploits' Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 20.

¹¹⁷"Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd.," Chapter 4, 15.

¹¹⁸*Evening Herald*, 18 May 1907.

¹¹⁹Ron Crawley, "Off to Sydney: Newfoundlanders Emigrate to Industrial Cape Breton, 1890-1914," *Acadiensis* 17,2 (1988).

who were primarily tradesmen had worked on the railway and had some mining experience, stayed in Grand Falls. They eventually made up the core group of workers.

In 1910 Northcliffe hand-picked Vincent Jones as mill manager because “[Jones is] the most likely Englishman I have ever seen for sending to the Colonies, I much prefer an Englishman to any other nationality.”¹²⁰ Years later Jones remembered the task of recruiting local workers as “almost a nightmare,” and complained that none of the potential workers “were acquainted with the rudiments of factory discipline, had never heard a mill whistle, punched a card or received a pay envelope.”¹²¹ Jones also complained that “they were mostly fishermen from the outports born and bred, who went to work when they liked and left off at their own will.”¹²² Jones’ concerns represented an ongoing theme in the history of social relations and industrial development in Newfoundland, but what industrialists perceived as resistance to modernization was in fact a more complex social hybrid where traditions overlapped.¹²³ One former mill worker recalled that “Manager Mr. Jones would shake hands with every man in the mill, ”

¹²⁰Pound and Harmsworth, *Northcliffe*, 385.

¹²¹“Anglo Newfoundland Development Company Ltd.,” Chapter 7, 23.

¹²²“Anglo Newfoundland Development Company, Ltd.,” Chapter 7, 23.

¹²³Peter Neary, “‘Traditional’ and ‘Modern’ Elements.” More recent approaches to understanding the ways in which local tradition and industrial development intermeshed in the Third World economies focus on how the populations viewed development, providing important insight into the complexities of these relationships. See for example, Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995).

underlining his paternalistic management style.¹²⁴ Jones' remark to the 1933 Royal Commission is indicative of his view of how the new hierarchies of labour were difficult to enforce: "The Newfoundlander is very frightened of being a foreman. It is very difficult to make a foreman out of him, in the mill or anywhere discipline has to be applied. They don't like to crack a whip over their brothers."¹²⁵

As was also the case with other single-industry towns in their formative phase, Grand Falls experienced substantial population growth in the first few decades. The first available figures indicate that in 1911 there were 1,643 people there (See Appendix A). As opposed to other communities of single industry, and reflecting the company's efforts to accommodate families, Grand Falls had a relatively balanced gender ratio early on. There were 307 married men and 299 married women in 1911, suggesting that few married men worked in Grand Falls unaccompanied by their wives. In terms of ethnicity, the 1911 population was overwhelmingly of Newfoundland origin.¹²⁶ According to aggregate census figures, 1,412 were born in Newfoundland, 92 in England, 19 in Scotland, 33 in the British colonies, and 84 elsewhere.¹²⁷

¹²⁴Interview with Brian S., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1995.

¹²⁵"Evidence of Mr. Vincent Jones, Mr. Keddie, and Mr. Crowe," Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

¹²⁶Colonial Secretary's Office, "Table I, Section A," *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1911*, Vol.1, 200.

¹²⁷Colonial Secretary's Office, "Table 1, Section A," *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1911*, 202. In the absence of a manuscript census for Grand Falls for 1911 an analysis of ethnicity and occupation is impossible to conduct.

Labour relations within the town were initially influenced by the presence of workers who had come from outside Newfoundland. According to labour historian Bill Gillespie, Canadian and American paper makers brought their unions with them to Grand Falls almost immediately after production began.¹²⁸ The International Brotherhood of Paper Makers (IBPM), Local 88, was established there in 1910; the International Brotherhood of Sulphite Workers (IBSW), Local 63, in 1913;¹²⁹ and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), in 1920.¹³⁰ Alphonsus Duggan, for instance, who became the first president of IBSW Local 63, was born in Holyrood, Conception Bay in 1884. At the age of 15 Duggan went to work in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, where he joined Glace Bay Lodge 684 of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen before moving to Grand Falls to work as an electrician. In his memoirs he attributes his previous trade

¹²⁸Bill Gillespie, *A Class Act*, 38.

¹²⁹The International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers was established in Burlington, Vermont in 1906. The membership of the union grew from around 4,000 in 1906 to over 145,000 in the 1930s. The Grand Falls Local 63 was chartered 20 May 1913, and it operated without a written agreement with the AND Company for a number of years. Excerpts from John P. Burke, *A Short History of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers*, n.p., in *Papers of William Gillespie*, Coll-097, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

¹³⁰"Trade Union Register," collected by T.K. Liddell Royal Commission, 1938 in *Rolph Hattenhauer Labour Collection*, Coll-079 Series 1, 1.3, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

union experience and his Roman Catholicism as influences on his trade union work with the paper workers.¹³¹

In 1905, Newfoundland's first non-denominational amalgamated school opened in Grand Falls, with 15 students. Workers on the company payroll were expected to pay a portion of their wages for the operation of this school. Five years later the Roman Catholic population of 428 canvassed local residents to petition the company for permission and assistance in building their own school and church.¹³² Their efforts proved successful and a Roman Catholic school opened in 1912. The combined Protestant denominations outnumbered the Roman Catholics in 1911, with approximately 490 Church of England, 471 Methodists, 101 Salvation Army, and 118 Presbyterians.¹³³ By the 1920s all denominations had built their own churches with the aid of company land grants (five acres each) and money, at which point they ceased using the Town Hall for conducting religious services.¹³⁴ Arguably the AND Company's support of a heterogenous religious population encompassed another facet of their effort to maintain

¹³¹Alphonsus Gregory Duggan, "Sixty Years of Social Life: My Memoirs," 23 February 1967. MF-326, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Duggan became the first president of the Newfoundland Trades and Labour Council.

¹³²Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 54.

¹³³Colonial Secretary's Office, "Table I, Section B," *Census of Newfoundland, 1911*.

¹³⁴"Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd.," Chapter 7, 1. Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 16-19.

consent in the community. Besides schools and churches, the company also owned and operated a hospital, whose doctors and nurses were considered company employees.¹³⁵ Named after its primary donor, Lady Northcliffe, the hospital originally contained nine beds and residents were required to pay \$2.00 each time to use its services.¹³⁶

The AND Company's paternalism extended into the realm of production and consumption, where the two spheres were inextricably linked and deeply gendered. In the first decade of the mill's operation, for instance, patterns of consumption were shaped by a combination of company regulation and a resident tradition of household production within which men and women had distinct roles. From the community's inception, household production of foodstuffs was highly regulated by the AND Company, which provided subsidized dairy products to all residents, who also had to purchase all goods at the company store. The company store had a monopoly on consumer goods until 1912 when the St. John's Royal Stores opened a branch in Grand Falls. However, mill workers did not confine their patterns of consumption to store-bought goods, and regularly ate local game, including moose, caribou and rabbits, and trout or salmon.¹³⁷ But over time company policies made it increasingly difficult for residents to supplement their diet with

¹³⁵According to Valerie Marsh, the first hospital was merely a camp situated on High Street. Valerie Marsh, "Grand Falls," unpublished paper, (Maritime History Group: Memorial University, 197-) 10.

¹³⁶Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 18.

¹³⁷Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 6 and 14.

local resources. A few pioneer residents, for instance, fondly recalled the days when they played near the ponds and in the woods during the summer and after school, and how their fathers cut firewood on the outskirts of town.¹³⁸ Shortly after the mill opened the AND Company covered up at least one pond to build a ball park, and enforced fire warden patrols in the surrounding countryside, cutting off access to these resources. As one local official described the situation: "At Grand Falls everything in the way of food and clothing has to be bought as all the land is owned by the Company and there is only a small parcel of land surrounding each house -- really only a yard."¹³⁹ By the end of World War I, "You couldn't go out the road through the forest. We used to go there and set muskrat and weasel traps in the snow, but then it got cleared and everything got built up and people got work."¹⁴⁰ The expansion of the town meant that the informal economy, on which families from coastal communities had relied to sustain themselves over the winter months (and to which many of the town's local residents were accustomed) and household production, was gradually undercut, but not completely eradicated by the culture of

¹³⁸Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 6 and 12.

¹³⁹"Reporting Magistrate A.J. Walsh to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 29 February 1936, Department of Natural Resources, GN38, S4-3-3, File 1, PANL.

¹⁴⁰Interview Patricia O., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1994.

consumerism in Grand Falls.¹⁴¹ These regulatory measures also reshaped women's roles, making them into consumers, while reducing men's sphere to that of wage-earner.

When it was convenient to do so, such as during World War I, the AND Company supported women's role as producers. Over 600 men from Grand Falls, and the surrounding communities of Botwood, Bishop's Falls, and Millertown, joined the army or navy during World War I. Fifty-five men from Grand Falls died.¹⁴² At the beginning of the war, the AND Company treated those men who enlisted with generosity and support, promising to supplement their wages while they fought. They also promised them their jobs back upon return. In an effort to accommodate families, the Company embarked on a massive project to build over 200 houses, and they encouraged women to keep flower and vegetable gardens by lending them tools and providing them with seeds.¹⁴³ It also hired a horticultural expert to teach women how to can vegetables and root crops, representing an ongoing priority of the company: to provide instruction and education for its citizens. The first exhibition of the Grand Falls horticultural society took place in 1916, in the middle of the war. That the company's encouragement of household production was necessary for

¹⁴¹Rosemary Ommer, "Merchant Credit and the Informal Economy," 167-89. Census data for Grand Falls Station reveals that residents in that community kept more livestock and engaged in small-scale agriculture to a larger extent than those in the neighbouring community of Grand Falls. See next Chapter.

¹⁴²For a gripping account of the effects of World War I on one family in Grand Falls see, David Macfarlane, *The Danger Tree: Memory, War and the Search for a Family's Past* (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter, and Ross, 1991).

¹⁴³F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 25.

the survival of those women and children whose husbands and sons had enlisted is perhaps indicated by the dramatic decline of newsprint production levels from 60,000 tons in 1912 to 32,000 over the course of the war, combined with the rising cost of living and the introduction of a reduction in hours to eight per day.¹⁴⁴ (See Appendix E for more details on production figures.)

In the post-World War I period, a select group of mill workers established a branch of the Newfoundland Industrial Workers Association (NIWA) to address the issue of high prices for foodstuffs and other products in Grand Falls.¹⁴⁵ The NIWA had been established in 1917 as a St. John's-based labour organization which sought to organize all workers and to act as a national labour federation. The NIWA lobbied government to establish a labour department to deal with labour standards issues and child welfare. It was also particularly concerned with wartime inflation and merchant profiteering. The Grand Falls branch, comprised entirely of men, argued that the AND Company should open up competition in trade, and expressed particular concern over the price of fish and meat.¹⁴⁶ In 1919 the Grand Falls NIWA members abandoned the NIWA route, however,

¹⁴⁴F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 25.

¹⁴⁵"Minutes of NIWA Grand Falls Branch," February, 1918 to April 1919, Series 7, 7.11, *Rolph Hattenhauer Labour Collection*; Peter S. McInnis, "Newfoundland Labour and World War I: the emergence of the Newfoundland Industrial Workers' Association," unpublished MA thesis (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1987); James Overton, "Self-Help, Charity, and Individual Responsibility, 80-81.

¹⁴⁶"Minutes of NIWA Grand Falls Branch," 6 March 1918.

and contacted the Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd. in England for advice on methods of financing and guidelines for the establishment of a consumer cooperative society in Grand Falls.¹⁴⁷

In November 1920 the Grand Falls Cooperative Society opened as an alternative to the company store. Pioneering residents explained it was the first of its kind in Newfoundland because a “large number of mill employees had come from England and Scotland and had been members of co-operatives in ‘the old country’.”¹⁴⁸ In keeping with the British connection, the first co-op manager, World War I veteran Harry Fletcher, was recruited from England. As historian Dana Frank has stated with respect to the “cooperative movement” that took hold in industrial centres around the United States in the post-war period, “men were numerically dominant in the movement, despite consumer cooperation’s theoretically “female” place in the sphere of consumption.”¹⁴⁹ Though, as elsewhere, the Grand Falls cooperative was linked tightly with the town’s trade unions, it

¹⁴⁷Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 52. Also “Minutes of the NIWA Grand Falls Branch”; and “Minutes of the Grand Falls Co-operative Society Minutes (1919-22), Series 7, 7.11, *Rolph Hattenhauer Labour Collection*.

¹⁴⁸Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 52. Alphonsus Duggan also assisted in establishing the Grand Falls Branch of the Co-operative Society. Alphonsus Duggan, “Sixty Years of Social Life,” np.

¹⁴⁹Dana Frank, “Gender, Consumer Organizing, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-1929,” in Ava Baron ed. *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) 279.

is likely that women did have a role to play in advocating for lower priced goods; they were the ones who generally spent their husband's checks.

In 1921, in the climate of post-war recession, high inflation, and labour unrest in North America, Grand Falls paper workers went on strike because cut backs and high prices for consumer goods threatened to further gouge their earnings. In March of that year the Company had reduced the work week to 5 days, laid off 250 workers, ceased all construction work, and asked staff and mill employees to accept a cut in pay ranging from 20 to 33.3 per cent.¹⁵⁰ It would have been almost impossible to survive in Grand Falls under those conditions, especially considering the increased cost of living and the company's decision to cease providing coal free of charge to residents.¹⁵¹ While little data exists on the cost of living in Grand Falls in the post-World War I period, it has been noted that earnings were cut by about one sixth, and that rent for accommodation was on average \$9.00 a month, and the Company provided coal and milk to employees on a sporadic basis. A "regular worker," after rent and the purchase of half a ton of coal, would have 24 cents per head per day to feed and clothe his family. At this rate, based on a household of six members, semi skilled and unskilled workers would have netted around

¹⁵⁰F.A.Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 27.

¹⁵¹"Anglo Newfoundland Development Co., Ltd.," Chapter 8, 21.

\$525 per year.¹⁵² A labourer's salary was reduced to around \$54 per month (\$648 per year) during the post-war period of recession.

The Company's justification for the reduction in hours and wages was twofold. First, it had an excess inventory of wood, coal and supplies that had built up during the post-war newsprint boom of 1919 and early 1920, while the price of newsprint had plummeted from \$130 per ton to \$85 per ton in 1921 alone. Second, it used its benevolent policies of the previous years of advancing milk, coal and other staples to employees at below-cost prices to justify the wage cut.¹⁵³ In short, they asked the mill workers to pay them back for their generosity during war time. In response, Grand Falls workers went on strike from May until August 1921.

Official company histories suggest that during the dispute "little animosity [was] expressed or shown and the representatives and management continued to explore every means of arriving at an equitable settlement."¹⁵⁴ Overwhelming community support for the strike, however, suggests a more widespread militancy. While little was reported on women's involvement in the strike action, they undoubtedly worked hard to stretch the family budget throughout the period of work stoppage, and depended heavily on the consumer co-operative that had been established the previous year. One worker recalled:

¹⁵²"Anglo Newfoundland Development Company Ltd.," Chapter 8, 21.

¹⁵³F.A.Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 27.

¹⁵⁴F.A.Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 27.

"You were never hungry. But we ate molasses and oat meal because you couldn't get any sugar."¹⁵⁵ The Grand Falls Co-operative Society extended credit to members and non-members during the strike and, as a result, did not regain a sound financial footing until 1923. Nonetheless, the Society gained a lot of support during the strike, which continued afterwards and eventually led to increased return on investment and a major increase in sales.¹⁵⁶ Local historians have remarked that the unions involved, however, suffered financially from the after-effects of the 1921 strike for a number of years.¹⁵⁷

The strike ended when the company restored production to previous levels and reinstated a full work week at the end of August 1921. Writing of Northcliffe's handling of the Grand Falls strike, Ferris made special note of his paternalism: "Northcliffe liked to pretend he wasn't one of 'the bosses': they were someone else."¹⁵⁸ According to Ferris, Northcliffe complained bitterly of labour unrest in four different locations of his world-wide operation during 1921. He responded to the situation by ceasing publication of

¹⁵⁵Interview with Harold S., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1994.

¹⁵⁶In 1937 the Society sent a delegate to the first annual convention of the Newfoundland Trades and Labour Council. Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 53 and 122.

¹⁵⁷In 1925, Joseph Smallwood led an attempt to establish a Newfoundland Federation of Labour at Grand Falls and the three unions involved in the 1921 strike participated. The Newfoundland Trades and Labour Council was successfully formed in 1937. Bill Gillespie, *A Class Act*. A cross referencing of the list of Grand Falls mill workers who attended the 1925 convention and the nominal census indicates that all of these men were Newfoundland-born and held skilled or semi-skilled positions in the mill. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1921.

¹⁵⁸Paul Ferris, *The House of Northcliffe*, 236.

newspapers for three days “in order to give the workmen a little liberty -- we say; really to teach them a lesson.”¹⁵⁹ Northcliffe died in 1922 and when his will was read Grand Falls workers learned that permanent mill workers had been bequeathed the equivalent of three months pay. In collective memory this gesture was interpreted as Northcliffe’s repayment for wages lost during the strike.¹⁶⁰ One newspaper reported that when Northcliffe died, “Grand Falls lost a friend and a father.”¹⁶¹

After the 1921 strike Grand Falls mill workers engaged in almost no collective action for many years. Most labour unrest stemmed from the AND Company loggers who were represented by the Newfoundland Lumbermen’s Association (NLA) after the early 1930s.¹⁶² Pulp and paper workers at both Grand Falls and Corner Brook remained organized throughout the 1930s, when other unions were losing their membership, but did not display much militancy until the early 1970s.¹⁶³ Throughout the 1930s the AND Company publicist communicated the company’s support for the unions through the local press: “our intention was to indicate clearly that the Management was in favour of dealing

¹⁵⁹Paul Ferris, *The House of Northcliffe*, 236.

¹⁶⁰Personal correspondence, former mill worker, Grand Falls, 1998. This view was also reflected in “Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd.,” Chapter 9, 12.

¹⁶¹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 8 October 1938.

¹⁶²For a detailed study on the NLA see, Dufferin Sutherland, “‘We are Only Loggers’.”

¹⁶³Grand Falls unions became much more militant in the 1970s. See Exploits Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 125.

with labour in the Mill through the two Union Committees.”¹⁶⁴ The company believed workplace relations would continue to be harmonious if “100% of the permanent and regular seasonal employees become members of their local unions.”¹⁶⁵ Mill workers rarely supported the loggers in their ongoing struggles to improve working conditions and wages throughout this period.¹⁶⁶ Historically, Grand Falls has been considered a socially homogenous place, where a host of well- paid mill workers and their families reaped the benefits of the AND Company’s benevolent management practices. In fact, for generations, a good job in Newfoundland was known as “A Grand Falls Job.”¹⁶⁷ Indeed, however, from the time the town was established, it was a complex, dynamic, and socially differentiated community.

In the pre-World War I period, and in the immediate post-World War I climate of inflation and recession, the efforts of the workforce and their families to better their lives by drawing on the institutions and organizations of a broader reform movement demonstrated the ways in which production, consumption, workplace and community intermeshed in the community’s formative years. The influences of the Company’s early

¹⁶⁴*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 20 November 1937.

¹⁶⁵*Grand Falls Advertiser* 20 November 1937.

¹⁶⁶In “We are only Loggers,” 187-89, Sutherland states that these divisions between workers within the forestry sector were more or less typical during this period.

¹⁶⁷David Alexander, “Economic Growth in the Atlantic Region,” Eric W. Sager, Lewis R. Fischer and Stuart O. Pierson compilers, *Atlantic Canada and Confederation: Essays in Canadian Political Economy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) 64.

labour recruitment strategy of combining a local core permanent workforce with skilled workers and managers from Canada, England, Scotland, and the United States were key factors in shaping gender and class relations within Grand Falls in the interwar years.

Chapter Three

Social Change in Grand Falls, 1921 to 1939

The interwar years were a time of extensive change on several fronts within the community of Grand Falls. A second generation of mill workers began to occupy the town's homes, and gender and class distinctions among mill workers and their families sharpened. Community life was also influenced by external social and economic factors, particularly during the 1930s. This chapter discusses the details of these social and economic transformations and their impact on community development between 1921 and the outbreak of World War II. It begins by describing gender and class distinctions among members of the community, through an examination of disparities in living conditions, hierarchies of employment in the mill, and patterns of consumption and leisure. The second section focuses on the 1930s, and explores the town's relative prosperity compared with other regions of the island, the interaction between company control and resident influence over the primary and secondary labour markets, and the role played by local elite in the town's social welfare matters. While these factors contributed to the development of a strong sense of localism in Grand Falls, this localism existed alongside gender and class divisions.

3.1 The social context: divisions at work and in the community

Between 1911 and 1921 the population of Grand Falls increased from 1,643 to 3,768, a growth rate of 8.7 per cent.¹ While some of the expansion was due to the in-migration of core permanent workers, a great deal of it was due to the growth of families within the community. Between 1911 and 1921, for example, the net percentage gain in the 0-9 age cohort for boys was 359.1; for girls it was 445.1. In the 10-19 year cohort, the percentage gain was 127.2 for young men and 118.1 for young women (See Appendix B). The percentage gain for age cohorts between 20 and 50 years was around 100 for both genders in all instances between 1911 and 1921, indicating that much of the population in this period was very young.

By the 1930s, a core permanent workforce had been established, and Grand Falls had the appearance of a relatively permanent mill town, with many young families, and a relatively even gender balance. That the population had stabilized by the mid 1930s is demonstrated by its slower growth rate -- 0.83 per cent between 1921 and 1935, and 0.7 per cent between 1935 and 1945. Most of the town's population in 1935 had lived in Grand Falls since 1921; these core residents also appeared in the 1945 manuscript census schedules.² This stabilization indicates that the labour market for permanent work had

¹See Population Pyramids and Growth Rates in Appendix A.

²Of a total population of 3,473 over the age of ten in 1945, for example, only 372 (or ten percent of the population over 10 years) had not been living in Grand Falls in 1935, indicating a small number of in-migrants in a decade. These calculations are based on the manuscript census for 1945. Children under the age of 10 were eliminated from the total

narrowed.

Within that framework of demographic change, Grand Falls had developed into a fairly hierarchical town. Class distinctions were mapped onto the townsite. The mill, located in the centre, physically divided the streets on which the mill workers lived and the streets inhabited by the elite, which generally occupied company houses located to the east of the mill, on streets such as Hill Road, Church Road, Riverview, and Carmelite Road.³ To the west of the mill lay the older Circular Road area, one of the first to house mill workers on a permanent basis. This neighbourhood expanded after World War I, when streets named after battles fought by the Newfoundland Regiment, such as Beaumont Avenue, Monchy Rd, Suvla, and Peronne were added to the town site.⁴ House construction did not stop there. In 1931 the company commissioned six additional large houses on Hill Road for members of the elite. In keeping with their promise of a garden city, the company renovated some of the town's older homes, paved its main streets, and landscaped areas around the mill and public buildings in the late 1930s.⁵

In this period between 25 to 50 per cent of houses in Grand Falls were serviced by water and sewer systems. Water tanks with lions' heads as spouts were located on street

population count because they would not have been included in the 1935 census tabulations. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1945.

³The 1921 census enumerators did not record street number and street address of Grand Falls residents, but the 1935 and 1945 censuses contained such information.

⁴Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 14.

⁵F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 42.

corners for those residents without running water.⁶ The water supply came from the Exploits River and was filtered through the mill. The company paid the contracting firm of Messrs J. Goodyear and Sons to remove sewage and garbage from all houses, signifying one aspect of a progressive public health system. As one local historian claimed: "Grand Falls was admittedly the healthiest town in the island thanks to Mr. Beeton's earnest interest in sanitation and the financial help [he gave] to the Anti-Tuberculosis Association."⁷ Services such as water and sewage, however, were available primarily to those residing on the more affluent streets. One resident recalled that "In the downtown some of the places had outhouses and they had to get their water."⁸ Women living in such neighbourhoods would have been more likely to carry water as a large part of their daily household duties than those in more affluent neighbourhoods.

Company policy exacerbated the inequalities in living conditions between neighbourhoods. In 1936, when the local magistrate surveyed public health matters,⁹ he noted that sewage, water from washing, refuse, and "other forms of obnoxious material,"

⁶"Magistrate Walsh Report to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 9 April 1936, Department of Natural Resources, GN38, S4-3-3, File 1, PANL.

⁷"Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd.," Chapter 5, 11.

⁸Interview Donald G., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1995.

⁹There was no government-appointed medical officer in Grand Falls in the 1930s. The magistrate took on those duties.

were not being disposed of properly in the town's poorer neighbourhoods.¹⁰ He found conditions so bad that he planned to invoke sections of the *Health and Public Welfare Act*,¹¹ and recommended that "a sanitary inspector be appointed with instructions to clean up the situation by court proceedings or otherwise."¹² The town manager, L.R. Cooper, responded by stating that the company proposed "installing water and sewerage into over sixty houses in this section at an estimated cost of over \$52,000."¹³ Moreover, Cooper argued that the company was providing these services to their employees at no cost, and suggested that the doors to the night boxes had been broken by "children and tenants of the houses" and "the Company could not undertake to keep them constantly repaired."¹⁴ The company shifted much of the responsibility for public sanitation onto individuals, especially women, whose primary task was care of the home and children. One of the

¹⁰"Magistrate Walsh Report to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 9 April 1936.

¹¹Health and Public Welfare Act, General Assembly of Newfoundland, *Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Twenty-Second Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George V* (St. John's: King's Printer, 1931) 69-397. For an historical assessment of the Act, see Theresa Bishop, "Public Health and Welfare in Newfoundland," unpublished MA thesis (Queen's University, 1984).

¹²"Magistrate Walsh Report to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 9 April 1936.

¹³"Magistrate Walsh Report to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 9 April 1936.

¹⁴"Magistrate Walsh Report to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 9 April 1936.

ways the company accomplished this was by encouraging citizens to participate in voluntary activities such as an annual clean-up week:

A clean, tidy town with well cared-for yards and gardens bespeaks good, thrifty citizens who possess pardonable pride in their own possessions and a regard for their town. Untidy, not overly clean premises are signs of carelessness laziness and a lack of proper pride in their owners.¹⁵

The company's unequal attention to living conditions contradicted its promotional literature, which depicted a common standard of living for all residents. In 1920, the company distributed a publication, *The Mystery of the Daily Mail*, to all householders, reminding them of their good fortune in living in the conditions allegedly enjoyed by all residents:

Although they live in this remote spot...[a]ll the houses are of wood, and are models of comfort and convenience...[a]ll are furnished with electric light, and electricity is used for cooking and heating. In place of the shops...large stores of the Canadian type serve to provide the people with all that they require for their daily needs.¹⁶

This characterization of the company town differed from the reality of the situation. Living conditions depended to a large extent on where you lived.

While class distinctions were certainly evident in the community's spatial organization, there were also hierarchies of employment status among male mill workers.

¹⁵*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 1 May 1937.

¹⁶Walter Blackmore, *Me and Mike and the Bold Adventure: Some Boyhood Dreams Realized* (Grand Falls: the Blackmore Heritage Press, 1995) 8. Blackmore is quoting from his copy of *The Mystery of the Daily Mail*. This description of Grand Falls was written by one of Harmsworths' team of British consultants who visited Grand Falls during World War I.

The mill operated on a similar basis to those elsewhere; workers were sharply differentiated according to skill.¹⁷ In general, skilled labour accounted for about 20 per cent of employees, and semi-skilled labour for about 33 per cent, with the remainder classed as unskilled. Those in skilled jobs, such as beater room workers, boss machine tenders, and paper makers, were members of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers (IBPM). Tradesmen often joined craft-based unions, and semi-skilled workers such as digester loaders, acid handlers, oilers, cleaners, cutters and trimmers were members of the Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers Union (IBSPMWU). In 1938, the IBPM had a membership of 125. Around 95 per cent of these skilled workers were born in Newfoundland, compared with 86 per cent in 1921.¹⁸ The IBSPMWU's 876 members represented the bulk of mill workers, who were also primarily Newfoundland-born by the interwar years.¹⁹

The breakdown of the total earnings by household head shows more clearly the economic disparity that existed between Grand Falls families, who all depended primarily

¹⁷Robert H. Zieger, *Rebuilding the Pulp and Paper Workers' Union*, 24.

¹⁸1921 census data indicates that of a total of 77 paper makers, one was born in the United States, nine in England, and none in Canada, and the rest were born in Newfoundland. In 1935 there were 111 paper makers in Grand Falls, two of American origin and three born in England, demonstrating the vast majority of paper makers were from Newfoundland as early as 1921 and that the pattern continued throughout the 1930s. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921 and 1935*.

¹⁹T.K. Liddell, "Trade Union Register," 1938.

on the wages earned by male heads of households.²⁰ While the 1921 census did not provide data on wages, the 1935 census asked residents to state their total yearly earnings. In 1934, 86 per cent of household heads earned between \$600 and \$1,500 per year, five per cent reported total earnings of \$2,500 and \$3,000 per year, two per cent between \$3,001 and \$4,001, and three per cent between \$4,001 and \$5,000 (See Appendix D). Of the top five per cent of income earners in Grand Falls (those earning between \$3,001 and \$5,000 a year), around half were managers, superintendents, and professionals; the other half consisted of boss machine tenders and paper makers.²¹ The breakdown of total earnings of household heads shows that a relatively large gap existed between the bulk of mill workers and the elite.

These hierarchies of employment in the mill also shaped class relations in other aspects of community life. One Grand Falls resident stated that, "There were two or three classes of people in the town. The upper middle class, they played golf and curled and

²⁰In the absence of the AND Company employment records, the nominal census combined with other documentary sources and oral history provide one of the few windows into the class structure of the town (See Appendix D for breakdown of income of heads of households in Grand Falls in 1935). It is easier to determine the social status of heads of households than for their wives, children, and the more transient and temporary members of the household such as domestics and boarders in the nominal census. As feminist historians have cautioned, reliance on the census alone limits our understanding to the paid formal labour of family members that was reported in the census. Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families*, 16.

²¹These percentages are based on a total of 464 household heads, which were those who reported annual earnings in the 1935 manuscript census. Census enumerators did not include data on monthly and hourly wages in the 1935 census.

went to social functions... other people didn't do those things."²² In general, management, the local shop owners, middle managers, and some of those mill workers who had been recruited by the company in the pre-World War I period, comprised the town's elite.²³ Migration status was a factor in gaining access to the activities of the elite. For example, one paper maker who emigrated to Grand Falls in 1911 when "paper making had fallen on hard times in England,"²⁴ became an elite member of the town. By 1921 his sons, who were employed as paper makers before landing some of the most senior positions as mill workers, and their wives, who were both Newfoundland-born, associated with the elite. In 1935, one of the sons earned \$4,071 a year as a paper maker, advancing to boss machine tender at an annual salary of \$5,100 in 1945. The second son lived with his wife and three children at a relatively prestigious Hill Road address in 1935, earning \$3,000 as a paper maker.²⁵ While they undoubtedly shared common interests with their fellow skilled workers through membership in the paper makers' union, they took advantage of their father's associations, and defined themselves as members of the town's "upper middle class," at least according to oral testimony.²⁶

²²Interview with Raymond S.

²³*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921, 1935, 1945.*

²⁴Interview with Raymond S.

²⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

²⁶Interview with Raymond S.

A paper maker who began work in the interwar years may have had more in common with a semi-skilled or unskilled worker than a much better-paid paper maker recruited from England, Canada, or the United States in the early stages of production. Connections to family members with good jobs in the mill, skill, and training were indeed factors in the type of work that a new recruit was likely to get in the interwar years. For example, Fred K, a logger who came to Grand Falls on the train searching for more secure work, described his situation as compared to that of others:

Well I come in here and there were fellows down there working belong to down home, so we go off here in Grand Falls and left the lumber woods and got on down there and did a little work. That's how. I did labour work. I was no paper maker or nothing... no electrician because we never learned that.²⁷

This man eventually secured a position as a labourer in the AND Company's dairy on the outskirts of town. Throughout the interwar years, as more Newfoundland-born workers filled permanent mill jobs, migration status increasingly blurred hierarchies of labour in the mill.

Social and leisure activities were strictly divided along class and gender lines in the interwar years. For the majority of mill workers, social life centred on their connections to other workers who had migrated from the same regions of the island. Social life for men also revolved around membership in fraternal organizations, such as the Lions' Club, the Elks' Club, the Knights of Columbus, the Masons, or the Odd Fellows. The company also

²⁷Interview with Fred K., Grand Falls Heritage Society, February, 1995.

established a Town Club, known also as the “House of Sports”, or the “Home Away from Home”, where many men went to play cards and billiards. Men also read in the town’s library.²⁸ Women entered the Town Club only to bowl. Though the Grand Falls Athletic Association was funded by the AND Company and run by the town’s leadership, many workers actually participated in team sports, such as hockey, football, and cricket, competing with teams from Corner Brook, St. John’s, and Buchans. Open-air boxing was also popular.²⁹

Husbands and wives of the “higher ups” in the mill played cricket, and frequently attended social functions such as the Paper Makers’ Ball, the Masquerade Ball, and the Firemen’s Ball, which are described as black tie affairs. These men and women also participated extensively in local arts activities, playing musical instruments, painting, and acting in theatrical productions, sometimes touring the island.³⁰ The social life of upper-class women revolved around social teas, bridge parties, and volunteer work for various community and church groups.³¹ Nearly everyone in the community -- men, women, and

²⁸Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 75.

²⁹Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 75-76.

³⁰For example, A.E. Harris, one of the AND Company managers in the 1920s, became a distinguished visual artist, as did Gwendolyn Cooper, the wife of AND Company town manager, L.R. Cooper. Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 31-42.

³¹The social lives of mill workers’ wives are dealt with in Chapters 5 and 6.

children -- participated in Labour Day parades, inter-denominational picnics held at Log Cabin field, and other church-related activities.

Consumption patterns emerged as another marker of social status in the town during the interwar years. The worker-run Co-operative Society and the Royal Stores, established during the community's formative years, continued to sell food and other household necessities.³² Other downtown stores included the Woods Candy Store, the Grand Falls Drug Store, and Chancey.³³ The rapid expansion of the retail sector, however, provided women more choice than they had in previous years, and where they shopped became a marker of social status. One mill worker's wife implied that where one shopped was closely tied to social standing: "We did our business down on the main drag [in Grand Falls], not in Windsor [Grand Falls Station]."³⁴ The establishment of retail outlets such as Cohen's and Dubeau's in Grand Falls Station expanded the choices women had. Less affluent mill workers' wives would have been more likely to shop in Grand Falls Station. Loggers and others who were passing through Grand Falls Station on the train generally stopped to pick up supplies at these outlets.³⁵ These stores were described by Grand Falls residents as stocking "the cheapest kind you could get."³⁶

³²Interview with Joan P., Grand Falls Heritage Society, 1994.

³³Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 14.

³⁴Interview with Iris B, Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1994

³⁵Interview with Brian S.

³⁶Interview with Iris B.

Women married to senior mill workers also used their connections to the AND Company to purchase British products that were unavailable in Grand Falls stores. From April to December each year, two steamships owned by the Anglo Newfoundland Steamship Company, carried paper to London and Manchester, and brought back cargoes of mill supplies and consumer goods. One woman, born in Harbour Grace and married to a skilled mill worker said, "If you wanted anything from England you could put it on the company boat."³⁷ While not all residents would have been able to afford these goods, this woman remembered sending away to England for a fireplace. It arrived in twenty oak crates, transported in a company vessel as ballast. She also ordered plants for her flower garden direct from England, indicating that her family did not use its small household plot to cultivate vegetables as supplementary food.

In the interwar years, the hierarchy of occupation, migration status, and wages by which workers were divided in the workplace was also evident in the community. There, neighbourhood design, social and leisure activities, and patterns of consumption distinguished one group from another. Social relations within the town were also, however, shaped by external factors such as the increasing presence of temporary workers in the vicinity, and the fear of unemployment for the next generation. The way in which the local elite and the company responded to these crises also shaped class relations in the town during the Depression.

³⁷Interview with Gloria B., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1995. This woman came to Grand Falls from St. John's as a teacher in the mid 1930s.

3.2 “An oasis in a desert of tribulation”: Grand Falls in the 1930s

The 1933 report of the Royal Commission appointed by the British government to investigate Newfoundland's social, economic, and political situation, described Grand Falls as an “oasis in a desert of tribulation,” a town in which the people were “largely self contained.”³⁸ Compared with other towns and regions on the island, Grand Falls fared relatively well during the Depression. In fact, throughout the 1930s, residents were repeatedly reminded that “Grand Falls cannot complain. In the midst of a countrywide poverty and unemployment we enjoy the blessings of a prosperous and busy community.”³⁹

The 1930s was a period of high unemployment and extreme poverty in Newfoundland. While most sectors of the economy suffered setbacks during this period,⁴⁰ the fishery was the hardest hit, as the export value per quintal of dry cod fish fell from over \$9.00 in 1929 to \$4.53 in 1932, and \$4.00 in 1936.⁴¹ The winters of 1931, 1932, and 1933 were ones of unprecedented hardship for many Newfoundlanders; over one third of the population was receiving some form of public relief, and merchants, who had

³⁸*Amulree Report*, 142-43.

³⁹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 17 April 1937.

⁴⁰During the 1930s, the workforce at the Bell Island mines was reduced from 2,200 to 1,100, and the railway closed down several branch lines, cutting staff from 2,400 to 1,800, and reducing wages between 10 and 25 per cent. Bill Gillespie, *A Class Act*, 56.

⁴¹James Overton, “Riots, Raids and Relief, Police, Prisons and Parsimony: The Political Economy of Public Order in Newfoundland in the 1930s,” Elliot Leyton et al eds., *Violence and Public Anxiety: A Canadian Case*, (St. John's: ISER, 1992) 210.

traditionally provided a safety net for fishing families through the credit system, began restricting credit in an effort to keep their own operations afloat. The distribution of relief and the terms upon which it would be allocated defined the social policy concerns of the Squires and Alderdice governments, and after 1934, the Commission of Government.

The relief system in Newfoundland up to this point was administered by the central government, on a mostly *ad hoc* basis, and was intended primarily to meet the needs of the infirm, the aged, widows, and others who could clearly not look after themselves and had no family or other resources to turn to.⁴² Along with widespread unemployment and little in the way of local infrastructure to help deal with the problem, the Commission of Government also faced continuous pressure from the Dominions Office in Great Britain to rationalize the relief system and to reduce expenditures.⁴³ The government undertook various measures to meet these demands and to reduce expenditure, by enforced labour in cutting pit props, and the adoption of very strict guidelines for who would receive public relief, and the type and amounts received. Officials overseeing public relief were ordered to investigate every claim, to issue relief only when and to whom it was absolutely

⁴²For an account of the evolution of public relief in Newfoundland during the 1920s, see James Overton, "Self-Help, Charity, and Individual Responsibility," 79-122.

⁴³Commissioner for Public Utilities to P.A. Clutterbuck," 19 October 1934, Records of the Dominions Office (DO) 35/499/N1028/4, Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

necessary, and to distribute the absolute minimum.⁴⁴ In some cases, these measures led to social unrest and public protest.⁴⁵ Faced with this extremely difficult situation, the government distributed as little relief as was necessary to maintain the population and to quell unrest.⁴⁶ Commission of Government policy was also shaped by a belief that the island had a surplus population, and that the unemployed and impoverished could not be absorbed by the fishery as it was then structured, or by other industries such as pulp and paper and mining. On the proactive side, therefore, the government implemented measures such as land settlement schemes to encourage “agricultural colonization.” This involved the creation of eight settlements designed to “put the surplus population on the land.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴“Memorandum regarding the supply of clothing relief to the outports during the coming winter,” 30 October 1935, Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-1-1, File 2, PANL.

⁴⁵James Overton, “Public Relief and Social Unrest in Newfoundland in the 1930’s: An Evaluation of the Ideas of Piven and Cloward,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 13, 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1998)143-69; James Overton, “Riots, Raids, Relief,”; and Sean Cadigan, “Battle Harbour in Transition.”

⁴⁶In “Mining, Labour and Public Relief in St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, during the Depression: A Case Study of the Impact of Commission of Government Policy,” an unpublished paper presented at the Canadian Historical Association Conference, Sherbrooke, 1999, Rick Rennie described how public relief policy in Newfoundland during the Depression, like that in Canada and Great Britain, gradually came to be defined by the “principle of less eligibility”. Essentially, this meant that public relief was made so unattractive and difficult to obtain that people would be willing to accept almost any kind of paying work.

⁴⁷Gordon Handcock, “The Commission of Government’s Land Settlement Scheme in Newfoundland,” in James Hiller and Peter Neary eds. *Twentieth-Century Newfoundland: Explorations*, 123; Peter Neary, *Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World*; and James Overton, “Moral Education of the Poor: Adult Education and Land Settlement Schemes in Newfoundland in the 1930’s,” *Newfoundland Studies* 11, 2 (Fall

It is not surprising, given the general economic environment in Newfoundland, that Grand Falls was viewed as an unusual bright spot in this otherwise dark economic climate, or that it attracted job-seekers from many parts of the island. Much of Grand Falls' relative economic prosperity, resulted from an earlier deal between the AND Company and the Associated Newspapers Limited of Britain, under which Associated Newspapers agreed to "take all the requirements of newsprint for their newspapers from the company in Newfoundland."⁴⁸ As mill management told the 1933 Royal Commission, "They made a sort of bargain with us that if we could meet the market price in London, they would keep our order book full."⁴⁹ As a result, the AND Company was able to operate the mill at close to full capacity from 1932 to 1938, a period of extreme depression in much of the newsprint industry world wide.⁵⁰ Its direct relationship to the market for its products thus safeguarded the Grand Falls mill, while others across North America experienced severe difficulties staying afloat.

In the winter of 1936, in the district of Grand Falls -- from Buchans to Botwood - - there were 59 families on relief; 31 of these families lived in Grand Falls and Grand Falls

1995) 25-82.

⁴⁸F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 32.

⁴⁹"Evidence of Mr. Vincent Jones, Mr. Keddie, and Mr. Crowe," Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

⁵⁰F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 32, Robert Zeiger, *Rebuilding the Pulp and Paper Workers' Union*.

Station, with the majority in the Station settlement.⁵¹ These figures were relatively low compared to other communities on the northeast coast, where able-bodied relief varied drastically according to seasonal fluctuations in the economy. For example, in January 1935, the percentage of the population receiving able-bodied relief in the Grand Falls district was 10.7, compared with 35.6 per cent in Trinity South, 31.08 in Fogo, 31.8 in Twillingate, and 43 per cent in Placentia-St.Mary's.⁵² These percentages decreased in July 1935, when 16.5 per cent of the population of Trinity South was receiving able-bodied relief, 6.2 per cent in Fogo, 2.2 per cent in Twillingate, 22.7 per cent in Placentia -- St.Mary's, and 2.7 per cent in the district of Grand Falls.⁵³ Nevertheless, most workers and their families faced some cutbacks during this decade, when intermittent wage reductions and reductions in hours were common.⁵⁴ Unlike the more militant workers at the IPPCO's plant in Corner Brook, who threatened to strike over a 30 per cent cut in pay and a reduction of the work week to four days in 1933, the Grand Falls workers and their families did not resist the pay cuts by means of strike action. *The Amulree Report*

⁵¹"Magistrate Walsh reporting to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 29 February 1936.

⁵²"Comparative Statistics, Able Bodied Relief, January 1933 and 1934," Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-6-1, File 1, PANL.

⁵³"Comparative Statistics, Able Bodied Relief, 1934 and 1935," Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-6-1, File 2, PANL.

⁵⁴In 1932 the company reduced wages by eight percent. F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 37. Also "Evidence of Grand Falls," Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission. 22 April 1933, 2.

suggested that “the record of the company in promoting the welfare of its employees... is such that recent reductions in wages, though severe have been accepted with good grace.”⁵⁵

The AND Company’s provision of benefits such as group insurance for mill employees in the late 1920s, and other social security measures for full time workers, made it exceptional within the pulp and paper industry as a whole, where few employers provided the “emoluments” of welfare capitalism, such as pensions, sick pay, insurance and other benefits.⁵⁶ The inadequacy of the pension scheme, however, came to the fore in the 1933 Royal Commission’s interviews with union representatives in Grand Falls. According to the IBPM’s representative, the pension scheme amounted to around 25 or 30 dollars a month and ran for a period of two or three years when a worker reached 60 years of age. He also stated that, “When their pensions run out they are absolutely helpless... there is no possibility for employment... one or two might get a job in the store.”⁵⁷ Another mill worker noted the scheme was more like “superannuation” for men employed in the mill for at least 17 years than a pension scheme. Workers feared that an

⁵⁵*Amulree Report*, 142, and 150. There has been little research done on the Corner Brook resistance beyond what was mentioned in the report. According to Amulree’s survey, in Corner Brook wages were reduced more drastically than in Grand Falls and the workers nearly shut down the mill in response.

⁵⁶Robert Zieger, *Rebuilding the Pulp and Paper Workers’ Union*, 39.

⁵⁷“Evidence of Mr. B. Scott, International Brotherhood of Paper Makers, Grand Falls,” Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

aging population of mill workers in Grand Falls would suffer under the system then in place.

Few options existed for company employees to supplement their incomes in a town where families depended on the male breadwinner to provide necessities through their earnings. One former mill worker described the way the company distributed meat to mill workers:

Years ago we used to buy meats from the company farm. You would go in the evening say after work and we would go to the barn.... We would go in and get a book of coupons and that would come off your card. The most I was eating was stew meat and they would deduct it off your card. ⁵⁸

Some residents, however, purchased game from outside the town's boundaries, indicating that despite the Company's best efforts to confine consumption to store-bought goods, people continued to rely on an informal economy based on the exchange of goods and services with others inside and outside the town. With help from the Department of Natural Resources, the company tried to curtail the development of informal market activity in the town. The magistrate and the game warden seemed particularly concerned about the quantity of rabbits and moose mill workers were obtaining from residents of the surrounding coastal regions and from places like Badger. The magistrate was ruthless in dealing with this perceived problem:

... moose meat has been finding its way into Grand Falls every winter and that it has been coming in here for some weeks this winter I therefore felt that it would not be wise to have this meat around here even amongst the

⁵⁸Interview with Brian S.

dole recipients, in case some meat should find its way here and the police would find it difficult to work on the matter.⁵⁹

The government and the company tended to express their concerns in terms of the environmental impacts of the unregulated hunting and selling of game. Those men who were punished for doing so often explained their actions on the grounds that their families were hungry and they “did not consider they had done anything to be ashamed of as their families were in need.”⁶⁰ While we know little of the particular circumstances of the lives of these men’s families, it is possible that they may have been trying to avoid the stigma of collecting relief, or that public relief was insufficient to make ends meet in a town like Grand Falls. In a correspondence with the Department of Public Health and Welfare the magistrate noted that many Grand Falls residents “cannot get or will not apply for Government relief,” and that the local elite had established their own committee to assist those cases.⁶¹ Some of this trapping may also have been resistance to Company control over the resources of the land. For example, in an interview, one woman noted that she used to be up at 2 or 3 o’clock in the morning cleaning rabbits “on the sly,” and then “you could go in the woods and nobody would be watching you.”⁶²

⁵⁹“Magistrate Walsh reporting to The Department of Natural Resources,” 29 February 1936.

⁶⁰“Magistrate Walsh reporting to the Department of Natural Resources,” 29 February 1936.

⁶¹“Magistrate Walsh reporting to the Department of Natural Resources,” 29 February 1936.

⁶²Interview with Hattie K., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1995.

Throughout this period, the AND Company continued to restrict access to company housing and to monitor closely the activities of those who lived there. The conflict between one mill worker, who operated a radio broadcasting unit from his home, and the AND Company demonstrates the extent of the company's intervention. This worker's daughter explained that her father gave up broadcasting in the mid 1930s because "pressure was put on him by the company that his job depended on whether he continued to operate this station or not as he was living in a company house."⁶³ In the mid to late 1930s the company began selling some of its houses for the nominal fee of \$200 to ensure the permanence of its established workforce. During this period, men and women of a younger generation who had connections to mill jobs through family members awaited housing. One woman's description of how she and her husband were allocated a house illuminates the ways in which Company paternalism operated:

When I got married first I lived with my husband's mother... it was a job to get a house and we lived with someone else in an apartment.... The boss of the mill came and knocked on the door and he said 'Mrs. L. we got two houses and you can pick the one you like to have. It was on Monchy Road.'⁶⁴

The personal touch of the mill's management won these women's favour. Such situations also suggest that it was easier to secure employment in the company town if you had relatives living there. Other ways in which residents worked around the company's tight

⁶³Interview with Joan P.

⁶⁴Interview with Daphne L., Grand Falls, 1998.

restrictions on who gained access to the town included taking in boarders and housing relatives.⁶⁵

Although Grand Falls was generally better off than other districts of the island throughout the 1930s, many mill workers and their families would have had great difficulty making ends meet. Company policy aimed to maintain the core group of workers by controlling access to housing and controlling supplementary market activity. Throughout the 1930s the company also used its second wave of labour recruitment, which centred on temporary employment on construction projects, to ameliorate the living conditions of residents who already lived in the vicinity, even though many others moved to the area in hopes of getting temporary employment. The presence of these workers arguably reshaped social relations, contributing to the development of a sense of localism in Grand Falls.

Historian Greg Patmore has described localism as “an identity associated with a particular geographic ‘space’ which provides employment and social interaction for particular individuals.”⁶⁶ According to Patmore, in cases where there is a narrow

⁶⁵Taking in boarders is dealt with more extensively in Chapter 5.

⁶⁶Greg Patmore, “Localism, Capital and Labour: Lithgow 1869-1932,” Raymond Harbridge et al eds., *Current Research in Industrial Relations: Proceedings of the 12th AIRAANZ Conference*, (Association of Industrial Relations Academics of Australia and New Zealand, 1998) 505. Patmore derived his definition of localism, which has a broader relevance, from his study of social relations in the industrial town of Lithgow, New South Wales. Patmore found that in Lithgow the local elite tended to support workers in their campaigns for better working conditions. Furthermore, in the Lithgow case localism fragmented industrial and political labour organization and hampered the Lithgow

economic base or a single employer localism can override class divisions: “Localism also influences the local labour market by fostering local preference in employment practices and denying jobs to ‘outsiders’ during periods of unemployment.” According to Patmore, localism also inhibits broader working-class alliances.⁶⁷ To understand the development of localism in Grand Falls it is necessary to examine more closely the interaction between company control and resident influence over the primary and secondary labour markets, and the role played by local elite in the town’s social welfare matters.

3.3 The Second wave of labour recruitment and localism in the 1930s

The AND Company’s labour force requirements changed on a seasonal and yearly basis. It required a consistent supply of labour for its mills, which comprised the core group of permanent workers, and it hired, directly and indirectly, a number of loggers on a seasonal basis to supply the mill with pulpwood. Loggers worked on a seasonal basis under extremely difficult working and living conditions, for less than subsistence wages. The AND Company’s increasing power on the island throughout this period meant it controlled working conditions and wages for loggers, as government buckled repeatedly under company pressure to relax regulations.⁶⁸ The AND Company was particularly

workers’ association with the broader labour movement.

⁶⁷Greg Patmore, “Localism, Capital and Labour,” 505.

⁶⁸For example, with government support, the AND Company recruited men from Avalon Peninsula and the South Coast to work as loggers in their camps in 1929. These

opposed to the idea of a minimum wage for loggers, and demanded that the government repeal sections of the Logging Act at times when it wanted to increase its volume of pulp wood.⁶⁹ While the situation of loggers who worked for the company is well documented elsewhere, less is known about a third group of company workers -- those who made up the temporary workforce in the secondary labour market during the 1930s. These were workers who did not have access to company houses, or many of the benefits which accrued to the core group of workers.

In 1929, the directors of the AND Company decided to embark on a complete modernization and financial restructuring of the Grand Falls mill, involving the installation of a hydro electric unit and a sulphite machine, a reconditioning of four paper machines, and the relocation of the head office from St. John's to Grand Falls. Lasting until 1934,

men were largely inexperienced, and many of them could not afford their passage to the interior and returned to their communities. Dufferin Sutherland, "We Are Only Loggers," 122. In response to a number of complaints about the working conditions of loggers throughout the early 1930s, the Commission of Government appointed Gordon Bradley to investigate the situation in the paper companies' wood camps. Bradley reported that the paper companies were grossly exploiting loggers and that working conditions, wages, food and accommodation were inhumane. In exchange for not making the report publicly available, the companies agreed to pay loggers a minimum wage of \$25 dollars per month, which was not always enforced. For evidence of that agreement, see "Memorandum Submitted by Commissioner for Natural Resources for Consideration of Commission of Government," 27 October 1934, Department of Natural Resources, GN38, (N.R.16F) S2-1-1, File 3, PANL. For a discussion of the Bradley Report, see Peter Neary, "The Bradley Report on Logging Operations in Newfoundland, 1934: A Suppressed Document," *Labour-Le Travail* 16 (1985) 193-232.

⁶⁹"Evidence of Mr. Vincent Jones, Mr. Keddie, and Mr. Crowe," Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1933, Dufferin Sutherland, "We Are Only Loggers," 151.

the reconstruction created a demand for temporary employment in the town.⁷⁰ In 1937 the company began two large construction projects, which also brought a number of temporary workers to Grand Falls.

Existing data on the AND Company shows the extent to which it recruited its secondary labour force, which included temporary workers and loggers, on a seasonal basis. In March 1937, the year the second phase of the mill reconstruction project began, the AND company employed 2,297. This increased to 3,765 by May of 1937, and reached 5,233 in August.⁷¹ While this data does not break down the figures in terms of occupation, gender, or wages, government statistics reveal that most of the seasonal and temporary labour force was male and relatively low paid. For instance, in January 1937, the Grand Falls and the Corner Brook companies employed a combined total of 4,511.⁷² Of those workers, 11 per cent were salaried and 89 per cent were wage earners. Fourteen per cent of salaried employees were women, and less than 1 per cent of all wages earners

⁷⁰Newspaper evidence indicates that the company recruited temporary workers earlier than 1934. For instance, in 1930 a local newspaper reported on the arrival of bricklayers from St. John's "to take up work in connection with the construction of the new boiler house and steam plant," *Western Star*, 1 October 1930.

⁷¹"Manufacturing Companies: Statement Re" Amount of Payroll and Number Employees, Companies Outside St. John's" Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-1-6, File 2, PANL.

⁷²"Paper Companies: Employees, Salaries, and Wages, January-March 1937-38," Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, Box S6-6-2, File 1, PANL.

were women.⁷³ Male wage earners earned around \$75 per month, and women \$27 per month. While the workforce of both paper companies increased from 4,511 in January 1937 to 8,282 in June 1937, the average salaries, wages, and gender breakdown did not change substantially.⁷⁴

Since the workers whom the company hired during the 1930s were largely temporary and did not secure company housing, it is impossible to determine where they had come from, how much they earned, and how long they stayed. Evidence from various government records and newspaper sources suggests that many of these workers migrated to Grand Falls in the late 1920s and early 1930s. While some of these men lived with relatives and friends in the town, the majority settled on the outskirts, in Grand Falls Station, and in settlements surrounding Botwood. One mill worker reported to the 1933 Royal Commission that, "Some are taking up residence at a settlement on the station eking out an existence as best they can."⁷⁵ The local newspaper reported that, "Overnight, shacks seem to have taken root and sprung up.... For some strange reason Grand Falls appears to be a 'Mecca' for the unemployed..."⁷⁶ The town of Grand Falls Station grew

⁷³There is no occupational breakdown of the difference between salaried and wage earner. The women included in the salaried positions, may have been nurses in company hospitals, or office staff. The one per cent women in wage earning occupations were more than likely cooks in the wood camps.

⁷⁴"Paper Companies: Employees, Salaries, and Wages, January-March 1937-38."

⁷⁵"Evidence of Mr. Cater, International Brotherhood of Paper Makers," Newfoundland Royal 1933 Commission.

⁷⁶*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 8 February 1939.

dramatically during this period. For example, in 1914, seven families lived in Grand Falls Station in households headed by mill workers, railway employees, loggers, and one shop keeper.⁷⁷ By 1927 the number of families had increased to 25.⁷⁸ From 1921 to 1935 the population of Grand Falls Station increased from 268 to 1427, and almost doubled to 2757 by 1945. Obviously, most of the settlement's population growth occurred during the 1930s.⁷⁹ Many of these people had been encouraged by friends and relatives living in Grand Falls, and a number of them had come in family groups. There was also substantial population growth in the district of Grand Falls as a whole between 1921 and 1945. It expanded from 9,227 in 1921 to 14,373 in 1935, a percentage increase of 55.8 per cent, and to 19,458 in 1945, a percentage increase of 35.4. In fact, the district of Grand Falls had the second highest percentage increase of all districts on the island, next to St. Georges-Port au Port on the island's west coast, where the population had increased by 35.6 percent from 1935 to 1945.⁸⁰

⁷⁷Roy Oldford and Edmund Power, "A History of Windsor: A Collaborative Essay," unpublished paper (Grand Falls Heritage Society, 1968) 4.

⁷⁸Roy Oldford and Edmund Power, "A History of Windsor," 6.

⁷⁹These figures are based on calculations from the manuscript census, *Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1921, 1935 and 1945, and they differ slightly from the aggregate census figures for 1935 and 1945. For example, the aggregate census does not include a total population for Windsor until 1935, when its population had reached 1,447, increasing to 2,772 in 1945. Government of Newfoundland, *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1945*, Volume I.

⁸⁰Table 2: Population by districts showing numerical and percentage increase by census periods, 1921-1945," Government of Newfoundland, *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1945*.

Despite AND Company protests, Grand Falls residents continued to encourage their friends and relatives to seek work in the vicinity. This became a popular topic in, among other places, local newspapers. One opinion piece, for example, expressed consternation at residents' actions in this regard: "It is hard to understand townspeople sending to their relatives and friends such encouraging news ie: labour conditions here in view of the repeated warnings issued by the company."⁶¹ That the company did not appreciate resident intervention in the recruitment of workers was evident in Vincent Jones' comments to the Royal Commission in 1933. In response to the Commissioners' question about where the workers came from, Jones replied that, "They all come from the outports; one brought another. We had several members on the staff here who are Newfoundlanders, and they naturally went to their homes and got them jobs. Now we have got more people than we want in this place."⁶² It appears that the company had decided that only workers already living in satellite communities around Grand Falls would be considered for the temporary jobs, as the local newspaper reported that, "The Company is definitely hiring only men residing at Botwood, Bishop's Falls or Grand Falls. Other men would be ill-advised to come here unless they have assurance of employment."⁶³ The AND Company also issued warnings to people in the press and

⁶¹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 21 May 1937.

⁶²"Evidence of Mr. Vincent Jones, Mr. Keddie, and Mr. Crowe," Newfoundland Royal 1933 Commission.

⁶³*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 24 April 1937.

elsewhere not to take chances on securing work in Grand Falls: "It is evident that all the work here this summer will be only sufficient to take care of local labour, if it even succeeds in doing that. Men from outside places who come here 'on their own' are simply wasting time."⁸⁴ In Buchans during the 1930s, ASARCO, with the support of the AND Company, attempted to control the movement of people by establishing a promissory note system, under which workers had to show a note to the Stationmaster at the Millertown Junction, stating that they had employment in Buchans, before they could board the train.⁸⁵ While access to Grand Falls was not that restricted, people were certainly discouraged from going there, and those who migrated there in the 1930s did not have the same opportunity to secure employment as those already resident in or close to the community.

During this period when so many Newfoundlanders were unemployed or relying upon public relief, the Company reinforced the view that its workers and their families should be especially grateful for wages received. The local newspaper noted that "residents of Bishops Falls, Grand Falls and Botwood were expected to thank the company for relieving them."⁸⁶ The AND Company also appropriated the language of

⁸⁴*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 21 May 1938.

⁸⁵Red Indian Lake Development Association, *Khaki Dodgers*, 34.

⁸⁶*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 24 April 1937.

merchant credit system, stating that its temporary workers were going to earn high enough wages to carry them through the winter months.

While most of the workers to receive employment [on the construction] will not be in the position of skilled artisans yet the rate of pay is such that at the end of the season they will have a generous surplus to tide them over the coming lean months of winter, with its forced inactivity and consequent lack of income.⁸⁷

The company may have used this benevolent language to win the Commission of Government's favour at a time when merchants were increasingly reluctant to extend credit during the winter. The magistrate's reports indicate that this temporary employment was in fact insufficient to carry people over the winter months, and that local businesses were unwilling to advance credit to these families because many of them were already in substantial debt.⁸⁸ Those who relied on jobs in the secondary labour market, as temporary employees, simply could not make a living wage, and were forced into staying in the settlements surrounding Botwood and Grand Falls Station. An editorial in the *Grand Falls Advertiser* in 1939 described the emergence of Grand Falls Station (now Windsor) as a result of these forces:

A man gets a job for a few months. He sends for his family, and probably his parents as well. When the job is over it costs money for them all to return to their former homes, so they stay on. Why they do is difficult to

⁸⁷*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 24 April 1937.

⁸⁸"Magistrate A.J. Walsh reporting from Grand Falls to the Department of Public Health and Welfare," 29 February 1936.

fathom for the shacks they have to put up with at Windsor are not to be compared to the good houses they have left in the outports.⁸⁹

By 1936, these people had become particularly dependent on temporary work for the AND Company. Rapidly declining conditions in these settlements exemplified the negative social consequences of the AND Company's presence in the central region of the island, as well as the increase in the population's dependence on such enterprises.

As with all settlements, both inland and on the coast, social and economic conditions in these outlying communities varied greatly. One striking feature of the Grand Falls case was the disparity in living conditions among those settlements that were all dependent, to a greater or lesser extent, on the AND Company. While Grand Falls residents recalled that, "there was no Depression in Grand Falls, everyone was employed,"⁹⁰ the lives of those living in Grand Falls Station and the settlements surrounding Botwood, which included Laurencetown, Burnt Arm, Northern Arm, North and South Peters Arm, and Dominion Point, were so precarious that access to the land for the cultivation of potatoes and other root crops meant the difference between dire poverty and getting by. As a result, some of these communities survived the period, while others simply collapsed and died. For example the magistrate noted that residents of Grand Falls Station, "have always depended on the work given by the Company to make a living, and

⁸⁹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 18 February 1939.

⁹⁰Interview with Michael P., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1995; interview with Molly M., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1997.

did not bother with cultivating the ground with the result that the land right by their houses has been taken by other people.”⁹¹ The magistrate may have misinterpreted the intention of those settlers: perhaps they had not planned on settling permanently in Grand Falls Station, but may have believed they could earn wages at temporary construction jobs and then return to their home communities when the fishery improved. Census data indicates that a sizeable portion of the produce grown at Grand Falls Station was consumed by the growers rather than traded. Only two per cent of the potatoes harvested were sold, and none of the turnips, cabbage or other vegetables that were produced were sold.⁹² By contrast, in Grand Falls, where such things as agriculture were regulated by the company, nearly all crops produced were sold.⁹³

Although Grand Falls residents often played a role in labour recruitment, the vast majority of those who came to the area likely came on their own, out of a sense of

⁹¹“Conditions at Botwood and Nearby Settlements,” March 1939, Department of Public Health and Welfare, S6-1-6, File 11, PANL.

⁹²These percentages are based on calculations from data contained in “Table 9 “Products of the Land, 1934.” Department of Public Health and Welfare, *Tenth Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1935*, Part I, Vol.2.

⁹³Census data indicates that in 1934 Grand Falls produced 7,071 bushels of potatoes, 216 barrels of turnips, raised 65,700 pounds of cabbage, and no other vegetables. It is difficult to determine how much of this was produced in households for private consumption or how much was produced on the company farm for sale in stores or for direct purchase by employees. Census data, however, does show that 20 per cent of the potatoes were sold, 71 per cent of turnips, and 51 per cent of the cabbage. “Table 9, “Products of the Land,” Department of Public Health and Welfare, *Tenth Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1935*.

desperation. The sense of localism that developed in Grand Falls was apparent in the late 1930s when the local leadership advised the community that this surplus population should have to leave the vicinity:

The Advertiser feels that many of the families at Windsor who have no means of livelihood and none to which to look forward, should make an effort to return to their homes in the outports... There they could possibly manage to develop some land, and thus add a little to their scanty store of staples.⁹⁴

In the late 1920s, government officials responded to increasing migration from rural areas to St. John's in a similar way. James Overton has pointed out that sending people back to outports was a common strategy in government circles because it would lighten the state's financial burden and ease the problem of unemployment and unrest in St. John's.⁹⁵

Ironically, evidence from relief inspectors who were responsible for the coastal communities of Notre Dame Bay revealed that they believed the impoverished and underemployed should be sent to places like Grand Falls to hone their qualities of self-help and independence. One inspector was of the opinion that, "If it were possible to move the people to some industrial centre under capable leaders, there may be some way of infusing a new spirit into the people, and get them to realize a sense of responsibility."⁹⁶

⁹⁴*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 18 February 1939.

⁹⁵James Overton, "Self-Help, Charity, and Individual Responsibility," 114.

⁹⁶"Magistrate B.J. Abbott, Twillingate District reporting to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 25 March 1936, Department of Natural Resources, GN38, S4-3-3, File 1, PANL.

The presence of recent migrants and the rapid growth of the town of Grand Falls Station seemed to reinforce Grand Falls residents' image of themselves as distinct from those who were less fortunate. In interviews, residents from pioneering families described the population growth of Grand Falls Station in a condescending way. One noted that it was "the same today in the States with the blacks,"⁹⁷ while others recalled that "it was the scroff of the whole country... it was like two separate places,"⁹⁸ and "the social fabric of Windsor was different from Grand Falls in all sorts of ways."⁹⁹

3.4 Gender, class, and citizenship in the 1930s

By the Depression years, Grand Falls had developed a contradictory identity. On one hand, the town's most loyal citizens and boosters, who were then occupied with setting up a horticultural society and promoting the development of a golf course, considered Grand Falls "Newfoundland's most progressive, most prosperous town."¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, social commentators feared the repercussions of the fact that the town's young male population lacked the employment opportunities that had been available to

⁹⁷Interview with Donald G.

⁹⁸Interview with Michael P. "Scroff" is a common Newfoundland term for wastage or of the worst quality.

⁹⁹Interview with Raymond S.

¹⁰⁰*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 3 April 1937.

their fathers.¹⁰¹ For instance, in a 1933 interview, the president of the International Brotherhood of Pulp and Sulphite Workers stated that, “there are men here enough to run two paper mills of this size.”¹⁰² Other union representatives expressed similar views: “You must have certain men to run the mills, and they will have families.... We have here to-day men working in the mill, with young men far better able to work [than] their fathers walking round the town... girls are the same....”¹⁰³ The lack of employment opportunities for the youth exemplified the early stage of the long-term effects of enclave industrialism. Once the company’s initial labour demands were met, it was no longer able to absorb the next generation into its workforce. Some mill workers had noted this problem and suggested making efforts at economic diversification within Grand Falls: “The only solution is some way to use up our by-products, and start some new scheme.... Countries seem to be taking up pulp-making production, but here it goes to waste.”¹⁰⁴

If employment figures from the census can be taken as an accurate representation of the labour market situation, this fear of unemployment for future generations must have arisen during the mid-1930s, since before then job opportunities for young men did not substantially decrease. The figures show that in 1921, 83 per cent of sons over the age of

¹⁰¹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 16 April 1938.

¹⁰²“Evidence of Mr. Bragg,” Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

¹⁰³“Evidence of Mr. Cater,” Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

¹⁰⁴“Evidence of Mr. Wall, Amalgamated Trade Unions,” and “Evidence of Mr. Bragg,” Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

15 who were not in school were employed. That had dropped slightly, to 81 per cent, by 1935.¹⁰⁵ This decrease may be partly explained by a tendency for young men to stay at school longer. Of all sons over 15, 8 per cent were in school in 1921, and 14 per cent in 1935. It also may be attributable to the outmigration of young men.¹⁰⁶ Atypically for a company town there were more young women than men in the 19 to 24 age group in Grand Falls, with a women to men ratio of 106:100 in 1935. (See Appendices B and C). Viewed in another way, there was a population loss of men in the 20-29 cohort of 24.7 per cent between 1921 and 1935 and there was a population gain of 12.5 per cent for women in the 20-29 cohort. Also, the percentage of daughters who were over the age of 15 and not in school was 48 in 1921, compared to 43 per cent in 1935. These gender imbalances suggest that it was more difficult for young men to stay in Grand Falls than it was for young women. Whatever the source of this shift, and whether the fears about unemployment were soundly based or not, it was certainly a pressing issue, as indicated by, for example, debate in the local newspaper:

Grand Falls has but one industry, and it cannot possibly absorb one quarter of the youth now growing up. Newfoundland in general is even worse off, industrially speaking, than Grand Falls, so there are few jobs to be found elsewhere in the country. Canada and the United States have unemployment problems of their own, so there is little hope from those

¹⁰⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921 and 1935.*

¹⁰⁶*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921 and 1935.* Of all sons, including students, 75 per cent were employed in 1921, decreasing to 69 per cent in 1935.

quarters. The future, as a result is one big blank for the youngsters of today.¹⁰⁷

Another feature which emerged during the Depression era was an increasing tendency for the local elite to play an active role in community affairs and public services. Like most Newfoundland communities in this period, Grand Falls did not have a municipal government, and the central government often, passively or otherwise, transferred the administration of many public services to private agencies such as churches, companies, or to its own public agents, such as magistrates, relief officers, and road boards.¹⁰⁸ The onset of the Depression and the dramatic increase in relief roles intensified the problem of how to administer public services given the limited system then in place, and at the same time limit the state's involvement and cut costs.¹⁰⁹ In Grand Falls, the AND Company and the local elite stepped in to gain effective control over public and social services in the town. Leading this effort was a tight-knit group of men and women who were regular participants in the town's community groups and organizations. In fact, the same names appear on the executive lists of a variety community organizations during this period, such as the Grand Falls Athletic Association, the Grand Falls Charitable Fund, the Boy Scouts Association, the Girl Guides, the Great War Veterans Association, and the Women's

¹⁰⁷*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 27 May 1939.

¹⁰⁸Ian McDonald, "To Each His Own," 18.

¹⁰⁹See James Overton, "Self-Help, Charity, and Individual Responsibility."

Patriotic Association.¹¹⁰ In addition, senior AND Company officials as well as members of the elite “actively identified themselves with the school boards” and played a powerful role in shaping how the town’s youth was educated and socialized.¹¹¹ While gender was indeed a factor in determining the kind of position one could hold on the executives of these various bodies, social status was the key determinant in gaining basic access.

Throughout the 1930s a great deal of attention and effort was focussed on “the problem of the youth.” That problem was seen as more than one of a simple lack of job opportunities; there was also much debate about the work habits and moral obligations of young citizens. A key concern in this regard was attitudes about the sanctity of private property, and initiatives such as playground construction were based partly on helping to mould the proper attitudes:

Such an oasis is of untold benefit to children, training them, as it does, to have respect for other people’s property, as well as inculcating in them a spirit of responsibility and civic pride.¹¹²

With the financial assistance of the AND Company, young people in Grand Falls were also taught to fulfill expected gender roles, which were broadly based on the gender ideology of industrial capitalist society -- the notion of a male breadwinner and female domesticity. In the 1930s, Notre Dame Academy, for instance, began holding domestic

¹¹⁰The first Boy Scouts brigade was established in Grand Falls in 1910 and the Girl Guides in 1923. Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 68.

¹¹¹Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 58.

¹¹²*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 19 June 1937.

science classes for female students, to teach them “how to cook nourishing, tasty and economical meals... how to set a table correctly and how to serve a meal properly.” This instruction was steeped in the idea that women were the “very essence of living and the back-bone of society” if they are “good and efficient housekeepers, cooks and homemakers.”¹¹³ Mothers and school teachers were encouraged to teach daughters how to be good consumers and unpaid providers.¹¹⁴ Men were also inculcated with notions of their proper gender roles and attitudes. They were encouraged to take industrial training classes, which were offered free of charge throughout the 1930s. Deemed as a “highly interesting course for boys,” these courses dealt with economic factors of mass production, the evolution of transport, and the theory and practical demonstration of the mechanism of the automobile. Residents were reminded, however, that, “The aim of the course is not to turn out mechanics, but rather to polish the windows through which to look out on the industrial world.”¹¹⁵ The industrial training courses were also based on the belief that “mental laziness and indifference are the beginning of final and complete deterioration.”¹¹⁶

¹¹³*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 1 May 1937.

¹¹⁴For further discussion on the role of domestic science in shaping gender roles, see Chapter 6.

¹¹⁵*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 20 May 1939.

¹¹⁶*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 20 May 1939.

Young people were not the only ones targeted to improve their moral outlook and sense of responsibility. The expanding co-operative movement, study clubs, and the establishment of a credit union in 1938 were all touted as significant achievements in making for a "better citizens and a better community."¹¹⁷ Many of these initiatives were island-wide efforts, but it appears that Grand Falls took the lead in listening to the advice of the Commission of Government, which promoted these initiatives as part of its effort to curtail relief and curb social unrest.

The local press also participated in a campaign to remind Grand Falls residents of their collective responsibility and their common heritage. It was apparently believed that since the population had come from many different communities around the island and elsewhere, they had to work at maintaining a collective consciousness with revolved around themes of independence and self-determination. Northcliffe's example was sometimes used in this regard:

The people of the town have almost all been transplanted. This condition is not conducive to any deep-rooted civic pride in the hearts of the growing generation. It could be found in the history of the birth of the town and in the history and example of the town's founder.¹¹⁸

Such efforts further demonstrate company's and, by extension, the community's ongoing commitment to achieving social harmony in this industrial enclave.

¹¹⁷*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 12 November 1938.

¹¹⁸*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 8 October 1938.

The local elite also played an increasing role in relief distribution throughout the 1930s. In 1933, government authorities looked on Grand Falls favourably, stating that it was “different from other sections.... there appears to be in this section a community idea that is being worked very well, and as a result the strain on this Department, in so far as it relates to this district, is somewhat eased.”¹¹⁹ Between 1931 and 1932, a Grand Falls poor relief committee, headed by the Roman Catholic bishop, assisted over 63 families in the region.¹²⁰ By 1935, however, the Grand Falls elite had undertaken to establish a different body for the administration of relief. In 1935, the Grand Falls Charitable Fund was established to provide relief to local residents. It raised funds by collecting one half of one per cent of three months’ earnings from AND Company employees. This amount was matched dollar-for-dollar by the Company. The Fund’s leadership represented a combination of religious leaders, local entrepreneurs and elite company representatives, and included Rev. Father Finn, Rev. S.J. Hillier, Magistrate A.J. Walsh, Alexander Ogilvie (manager of the Royal Stores), and Town Manager Lewis R. Cooper. The trustees distributed relief to those deemed needy and “deserving” by the Fund’s investigator, who worked in conjunction with the Government Relieving Officer to ensure there was no duplication in services. They advanced food, clothes, and fuel rather than cash, and one of

¹¹⁹“Memorandum prepared by Mr. Taylor and Mrs. Muir,” on able-bodied relief, Secretary of State’s Department, 1933, Vol. 12, *C.A. McGrath Papers*, MG 30 E82, PANL.

¹²⁰*Western Star*, 7 September 1932. The last meeting of the committee was held at the end of August or the beginning of September of 1932.

the key criteria for receiving relief was residency in Grand Falls for one year before the application was made.¹²¹ In its first year of operation, the Fund dealt with 90 separate cases.

The Charitable Fund also required relief recipients who were able to do so to cut a certain amount of wood in return for the donations. The Fund, in turn, sold the wood to raise money.¹²² Whenever possible the leadership gave recipients donations of seed potatoes, agricultural implements, and instructions for growing vegetables on their small plots.¹²³ They also organized a gardening exhibition to display publicly the practical skills the recipients had acquired. The rationale for so doing was telling -- by cutting wood, relief recipients would be left with a certain amount of independence, they would be helping the fund, and "it assures the people who have contributed to the fund that their money is being wisely spent." This reformist impulse among the local elite was not confined to Grand Falls. Writing of reformers in St. John's in the 1920s, James Overton found that charity organizers stood "for the 'natural community' against 'government' as

¹²¹"Report of the Trustees of Grand Falls Charitable Fund," *Grand Falls Advertiser*, 8 January 1938.

¹²²"Report of the Trustees."

¹²³"Magistrate Walsh Reporting to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 29 February 1936.

an 'artificial institution,' for 'individualism' against 'collectivism,' for 'charity' rather than 'right' to relief, and for 'volunteerism' against state provision of services."¹²⁴

The 1930s was clearly a time of extensive social and economic change within the community. It was during this period that many of the dynamics of community life that would shape people's experiences became entrenched. For example, hierarchies based upon social class and income levels began to define people's perceptions of themselves and their relationship to their fellow workers and citizens. On another level, Grand Falls' relative prosperity compared to other Newfoundland communities in the Depression era generated a sense of localism and in some cases superiority among town residents. This was especially true in the tendency to contrast Grand Falls to nearby communities which had become home to so many temporary workers and their families who came to the region to escape unemployment and poverty. The Depression also gave rise to an increased role for the local elite and the Company in overseeing and administering community services and social programs such as public relief. This was related to the Company's increasing attempts to control the movement of people in and around the community. Also in this period, a growing fear of future unemployment and of the

¹²⁴James Overton, "Self-Help, Charity, and Individual Responsibility," 97. The organizers of the COB in St. John's were responding to the crisis in the distribution of public relief which had been made public in the Hollis Walker enquiry. While the Grand Falls Charitable Fund was established in the next decade, the thinking of the leadership bore important similarities to the movement discussed by Overton.

perceived deterioration of morality among the youth prompted more formal efforts to inculcate them with the “proper” social values with respect to work, private property and gender roles.

Chapter Four

'Shipping Out' to the Mill Town: Female Migration and the Rural Household Economy

A hidden impact of Newfoundland's early 20th century pulp and paper development was that Grand Falls attracted a number of young single women to work as live-in domestics. Aggregate census figures show a direct correlation between pulp and paper development, its attendant urbanization and the proliferation of domestics. In 1935 in the electoral district of Grand Falls there were 415 domestic servants out of a total of 4,925 for the island, representing the highest number of domestic servants for any district outside the city of St. John's, which had 1,607.¹ After the mill at Corner Brook began production in the early 1920s, the Humber district, the highest growth area between 1921 and 1935, followed Grand Falls in total number of domestic servants, with 411 in 1935.² Thus, 48 per cent of all domestics on the island worked in one of these three urbanized regions in 1935. Even though it was quite common during this period for young women from fishing households to perform domestic and fishery-related tasks in households near

¹Department of Public Health and Welfare, *Tenth Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1935*. No comparable figures are available for 1921. Nancy Forestell, "Times Were Hard," 150.

²"Statistical Officer, W. Halfyard to Dr. H.M. Mosdell, Secretary for Public Health and Welfare re: Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1935 Interim Report," 19 May 1936, GN38, S6-1-5A, File 5, PANL. According to the Statistical Officer the district of Humber's population increased by 219.6 per cent between 1921 and 1935, and the district of Grand Falls by 55.8 per cent.

their parents, which in Newfoundland was known as “shipping out,” these figures suggest that the new industrial centres of Grand Falls, and later Corner Brook, provided many of them with an alternative to St. John’s to find work.³ In the period prior to the construction of Grand Falls, St. John’s was frequently, though not exclusively, the final destination of employment for many women whose options were limited to seeking work in households for pay before marriage.⁴ This transformation raises a number of questions about the gender dimension to migration patterns as well as the linkages that were made between households in coastal communities and the new industrial centres.

This chapter explores the migration of women to Grand Falls in the interwar years within the context of the migration patterns of the core workforce and their families. In considering migration as a complex and gendered process, the analysis moves from a general discussion of the processes that shaped migration patterns for all residents to a more specific assessment of the types of communities and households that sent young women to the town. The pre-migration conditions and experiences of women who

³Scholarly research on migration and patterns of women’s work shows that all cities experienced in-migration of young women, especially among the 10 to 14 and 20 to 24 age ranges. Patricia A. Thornton, “The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921: A New Look.” *Acadiensis*, 15,1 (1985), 24. See also, D.A. Muise, “The Industrial Context of Inequality.”

⁴Many women left Newfoundland to work as domestic servants in New York, Boston, Sydney, Nova Scotia, and Montreal. See, Shelley Smith, “A Better Chance in the Boston States.” Most of the 30 women interviewed for the “Girls in Service” oral history project moved to St. John’s to work as domestics after they had worked in communities near their parents’ households. See O’Dwyer interviews. See also Nancy Forestell, “Times Were Hard,” for a discussion of domestic service in St. John’s in the interwar years.

eventually moved to Grand Falls from surrounding coastal regions will then be examined in an attempt to link the social and economic reasons for daughters leaving home to larger questions about the nature of occupational pluralism and gender differentiation that shaped their decisions to migrate. How were they worked out between family members?

4.1 Inequality and women's paid work

In the interwar years the mill at Grand Falls offered few direct wage-earning opportunities for women. This was usual in the pulp and paper industry, which generally exhibited a large degree of sexual homogeneity in its labour force.⁵ According to Robert Zeiger, the converted paper manufacturing industry, which was "sharply competitive, locally centred, and oriented toward specialty markets" for boxes, novelties, and shipping materials, relied on female labour to fill low-skilled, low paying positions, while pulp and paper, which was integrated, consolidated and heavily capitalized relied almost solely on male labour.

Manuscript census data and oral history indicates that no married women worked for wages in Grand Falls in the interwar years.⁶ While the 1935 census consistently indicated a blank for the occupation of married women in the schedules, other sources not surprisingly revealed that elite and non-elite married women engaged in a wide range of

⁵Robert Zeiger, *Rebuilding the Pulp and Paper Workers' Union*, 15, 27-29.

⁶*Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1921, 1935. This issue is dealt with more fully and in relation to married women's status in the town in Chapter 6.

voluntary and philanthropic activities in the community. They also provided unpaid care for children, elderly relatives, husbands, and in some cases they cooked and cleaned for boarders, who were generally distant relatives. However, young single women made up a substantial proportion of the paid workforce in other sectors of the town's largely undiversified economy, and their participation increased over the first three decades of the 20th century. Single women represented 15 per cent of the entire wage earning population in 1921. The expansion of the retail sector in the early 1920s, the mill reconstruction projects of the early 1930s, and an increase in demand for domestics during the 1930s, meant that the percentage of women wage earners increased to 21 per cent in 1935, and to 23 per cent in 1945 (See Table 4.1).⁷ By far the greatest number of women wage earners performed paid domestic work in households or in the town's few hotels and boarding houses. In 1921, domestic servants represented 60 per cent of the total female workforce, dropping slightly to 57 per cent in 1935, and falling more substantially to 27 per cent in 1945.⁸ Since little research has been done on women's labour force participation rates in company towns, on and off the island, it is difficult to compare these

⁷In St. John's during the same period the participation rate of women in the paid workforce (including domestic service) was 21.4 percent in 1921, increasing to 26 percent in 1935. Nancy Forestell, "Times Were Hard: The Pattern of Women's Paid Labour in St. John's Between the Two World Wars," *Labour/Le Travail*, 24 (Fall, 1989) 149.

⁸In St. John's domestics represented about 40 per cent of the female workforce, which was higher than Canada during the same time period. See Nancy Forestell, "Times Were Hard," 149-150.

figures with other locales.⁹ The particular situation of surplus female labour on the island during this period also makes comparison difficult.

Table 4.1: Single Women's Employment, Grand Falls, 1921-1945 (N=785)

Sectors Employing Women	1921	1935	1945
office/clerical	25	33	81
retail	29	49	77
service	114	153	91
teachers/nurses	13	25	39
other	8	7	41
total number of women workers	189	267	329
total Grand Falls workforce	1246	1250	1444
percentage of women in workforce	15%	21%	23%
percentage of domestic servants in total female workforce	60%	57%	27%

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, Grand Falls, 1921, 1935, 1945*

Gender inequality characterized the labour market for unmarried men and women in Grand Falls. While sons of mill workers could generally get jobs in the mill and access to a company house, or they migrated out, their unmarried sisters found lower paying work in offices or retail outlets; a few secured teaching positions, and others earned wages as tailoresses or as post office clerks. These young women generally lived at home with

⁹Nancy Forestell's research on the mining town of Timmins, Ontario, which differed from Grand Falls in terms of the ethnic composition of the workforce and had a more diversified local economy, revealed that women made up 7.1 percent of the paid labour force in 1931, increasing slightly to 11.8 percent in 1941. Nancy Forestell, "All that Glitters is not Gold," 83.

their parents or, to a lesser extent, with their siblings or other relatives, for young single women would not have had access to company housing. In 1934 a sales clerk earned between \$200 and \$300 per year, and a stenographer was slightly better paid, earning on average \$550 a year.¹⁰ A domestic servant earned around \$100 annually (or \$10 per month), which included room and board.¹¹ By contrast unmarried sons working as labourers earned an average of around \$267 annually, those working as salesmen around \$320, and apprentices, \$520.¹² In retail, men earned 28 per cent more than women. Clearly, Grand Falls was a town where married men were paid a family wage. In the 1930s, company houses were reserved for married men. House rental rates averaged around \$11 or \$12 a month, but some of the more elite workers paid between \$17 and \$37, and lower waged workers paid between \$4.50 and \$8 per month in rent.¹³ In general, rental rates corresponded roughly with the income and job status of married men who had

¹⁰*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935*. Wages increased over the next decade. In 1944 a bookkeeper earned \$1,200 a year, an office clerk earned \$700 a year, and a sales clerk earned \$400 a year. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945*.

¹¹For a more detailed discussion of wages of domestics in Grand Falls see Chapter 5.

¹²*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935*. In 1944, wages for unmarried sons had increased, when labourers earned on average \$770 yearly, and a semi skilled worker, \$1,300 per annum. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945*.

¹³Rental rates varied substantially in Grand Falls in the 1930s, ranging from \$4.50 per month to \$62.50 for houses on the more elite streets. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935*.

full-time permanent positions and access to company housing. For the most part unmarried sons could not have lived independently in the town.

For a variety of reasons, class and migration status represented two other axes of inequality in the formal labour market for single women. The most evident division existed between mill workers' daughters, who generally had access to employment in the formal labour market, and female migrants from coastal communities, who were confined to paid work in the household. The relatively higher education levels of the former group combined with their families' relative prosperity meant that some of these "Grand Falls girls" were able to train for teaching or nursing positions in places like St. John's, others attended Mount Allison University in New Brunswick.¹⁴ Equally important, for the interwar years at least, no evidence exists to suggest that mill workers' daughters left their homes to work as domestics on or off the island.¹⁵ Oral evidence confirms that this division between women existed. Many residents recalled that there were two types of young women in Grand Falls: "Grand Falls girls" and "hired girls." In distinguishing Grand Falls, Corner Brook, and St. John's from coastal areas of the island, one former

¹⁴For data on relative education levels of domestics and mill workers' sons and daughters, see Chapter 7.

¹⁵This may have been unusual, though it is difficult to compare conditions in Newfoundland with those in other regions. In male-dominated heavy industry towns in Canada daughters generally migrated out to earn wages in domestic service or in other low-paid occupations. Rex Lucas also argues that outmigration of workers' daughters was a characteristic of single industry communities. See, *Minetown, Milltown, Railtown*, 95 and 110.

mill worker stated that people from the newsprint towns and St. John's "spoke differently from people from outside," and those from outside the mill towns "supplied servant girls and we hired them."¹⁶ One former domestic also made the distinction: "Domestic help usually came from outside because Grand Falls wasn't a place you'd go in and find working girls in there."¹⁷ Besides the implications of this woman's comment regarding the class and gender dimensions of her self-definition, it is significant insofar as former domestics differentiated themselves from mill workers' daughters on the basis of migration status, which is a theme that will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

In the absence of employment records for domestics, the precise number is impossible to obtain. Fortunately, however, the availability of the manuscript census provides us with a rare occasion to identify the characteristics of the hundreds of young single women who migrated to Grand Falls in the interwar years. Clearly the numbers listed below are an under-representation of the actual number of young women who worked as domestics in Grand Falls during this period, since these figures only capture the numbers for two census years over a fifteen year period.

¹⁶Interview with Richard S., Grand Falls, 1997. The local newspaper also made this distinction. For example in defending his remarks about a domestic servant, one reporter stated, "Outport girls, like the Grand Falls girls, receive 'cracks' only when they happen to deserve same by being in the spotlight." *Grand Falls Advertiser*, 11 March 1939.

¹⁷Interview with Martina L.

There were 114 domestic servants in Grand Falls in 1921, and 20 per cent of all household groups (580 in total) employed a domestic servant, indicating that the process of recruitment of domestics began within the first decade of the mill's operation.¹⁸ All of these women were single and the majority (78 per cent) were between the ages of 16 and 22.¹⁹ Interestingly, by 1935 there were 153 domestics enumerated in Grand Falls, representing an increase in the percentage of domestics to 24 per cent of households (628). The majority were also single, ranging in age between 17 and 25, as 79 per cent of the total domestics were in this age category.²⁰ By 1945 the total number of domestics in Grand Falls had fallen to 91; the majority of these women were between 16 and 34.

¹⁸These figures were calculated from the manuscript census. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1921, 1935, and 1945. It should also be noted that a small portion of these household groups employed more than one domestic (two in total) and most of the hotels and boarding houses employed more than one domestic. In the absence of the manuscript version of the Grand Falls census for 1911, it is impossible to determine the number of domestic servants for that year. In addition, the aggregate tabulations did not contain data on women's employment. Aggregate figures for 1911 do indicate that there were 202 women between 15 and 25 in Grand Falls compared with 204 men in the same age cohort, indicating an even gender balance. "Table 1, Section A," Colonial Secretary's Office, *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1911*.

¹⁹In 1921 the youngest domestic enumerated was 13 years. There was one who was 14, five who were 15, and two who were 16 in 1921. In 1935, there was one 13 year old, three were 14, two were 15, and two were 16. In 1945, one domestic was 15, and eight were 16. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1921, 1935, and 1945.

²⁰In St. John's working women were also generally under 25 in the interwar years, but in Canadian cities such as Halifax wage-earning women were generally older. Nancy Forestell, "Times Were Hard," fn12, 151.

In terms of patterns of female internal migration in Newfoundland, the scale of these women's presence (as young and single and from outside of Grand Falls) was, thus, most pronounced in the interwar years. By the time the 1945 census was taken domestic servants in Grand Falls were predominantly in-migrants, but it appears that daughters of some local mill workers had begun to find situations in Grand Falls households.²¹ Moreover, besides the decline in number of domestic servants between 1935 and 1945, their average age increased substantially between 1921 and 1945. For example, in 1921 the average age was 20.6, increasing slightly to 21.7 in 1935, and more sharply to 26.2 in 1945.²² The fact that the average age increased dramatically between 1935 and 1945 reflects the expansion of the labour market for women's work in World War II base construction, and in other sectors on the island.

While it is impossible to determine why exactly some men and women moved to Grand Falls and others did not, a general assessment of social and economic change in the districts from which they originated is necessary. The correlation between pulp and paper development, for example, and the high number of domestic servants could easily and

²¹Oral history suggests that no Grand Falls women worked as live-in domestics in the interwar years. However, this can only be checked against the 1921 census because the 1935 census did not ask residents for any specific birthplace information. 1945 nominal census data, which asked residents for their 1935 occupation, suggests that a small number of Grand Falls-born women had worked as domestics in Grand Falls in 1935. Because of unreliability of data on this it is perhaps more important to interpret the social origin of migrants in terms of the perception of those interviewed.

²²*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921, 1935, and 1945.*

erroneously lead to the adoption of a modernization framework for understanding migration. The following discussion of migration is informed by the approaches of migration scholars who have demonstrated that industrialization did not simply mean that people left static rural societies for the city.²³ Internal migrations, they argue, were commonplace in many regions of Europe before the onset of rapid industrialization and those population displacements were integral to rural economies.²⁴ Newfoundland was no exception. In the past as in present, seasonal migration, permanent out-migration, and internal migration were embedded in patterns of work and integral to the survival of the rural household.²⁵ It is thus important to view “the collective and communal nature of the migration process, embedding the decision to migrate in home conditions wrought by economic, demographic, and political change and mediated by local knowledge and tradition.”²⁶ In addition, unlike in many other places, the state had almost no direct involvement in recruiting young women to take jobs as domestics in Newfoundland; their migration was thus largely negotiated within the rural household, or between households

²³Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch, *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996).

²⁴This point is also made in Margareta Matovic, “Maids in Motion: Swedish Women in Dalsland,” Christaine Harzig ed., *Peasant Maids - City Women*.

²⁵For examples of scholarly writing on outmigration from Newfoundland see, Ron Crawley, “Off To Sydney;” and Patricia Thornton, “The Problem of Out-Migration.”

²⁶Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch, *European Migrants*, 9.

in town and countryside.²⁷ More specifically, these women's migration formed part of a broader pattern of informal labour recruitment by residents which was increasing during the interwar years, and contributed to the demographic pressure on the community and its vicinity.

4.2 Source districts and communities of Newfoundland-born Grand Falls residents

The 1921 Newfoundland birthplace data for Grand Falls residents suggests a number of characteristics of migration. First, the men, women and children, who were Newfoundland-born, came from over 300 distinct source communities, most of which were in the districts of Notre Dame Bay; Bonavista Bay; Trinity Bay (especially the north shore); Conception Bay; and St. John's.²⁸ Table 4.2 shows that an overwhelming majority of permanent residents came from communities in these districts. For example, the Notre Dame Bay communities supplied 21 per cent of migrants, followed by Conception Bay

²⁷Marilyn Barber emphasizes the role of the state (the Manitoba government and the federal government) and ethnic and religious organizations in recruiting young women from abroad to fill the domestic service jobs in Winnipeg and in the province's other urban centres in the 1910s and 20s. See Marilyn Barber, "The Servant Problem in Manitoba," in Mary Kinnear ed., *First Days, Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History* (University of Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1987) 100-120. Marjorie Cohen discusses the impact of the servant shortage on the rural economy of Ontario in the late 19th and early 20th century as well as the role provincial and federal governments played in supplying migrants to both town and countryside. See, Marjorie Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development*, 138-140.

²⁸*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921*. Because of this large number of individual communities listed in the census schedule as birthplaces of residents, these communities have been broken down into districts of the island.

with 17 per cent, Bonavista Bay 13 per cent, Trinity Bay 11 per cent, St. John's, 11 per cent, and Placentia Bay, 9 per cent.²⁹ Ten percent of the 1921 population was born outside of Newfoundland, in Britain, Scotland, Canada, and the United States. While other factors, explored below, contributed to the migration of people from these communities, it is significant that most of these districts were accessible to Grand Falls by railway. By 1898, the railway's main line reached the west coast terminus of Port aux Basques, linking the communities of Placentia, Conception Bay, Bonavista, and Trinity Bay to the interior of the island and the west coast. Moreover, in the late 19th century branch lines connected Harbour Grace Junction (Whitbourne) to Placentia, Burnt Bay (Lewisporte) to Notre Dame Junction, and Bonavista was connected by branch line at Shoal Harbour (Clareville) in 1911.³⁰

Second, fewer Grand Falls in-migrants were born on the island's south coast, the Burin Peninsula, Northern Peninsula, the west coast, or the interior settlements, which, when combined, represented less than five per cent of birthplaces. Interestingly, those few who did come from the south and west coasts, in the period before the Corner Brook mill

²⁹These percentages were calculated from the data contained in Table 4.2. The total population upon which these figures are based excluded the residents who did not indicate birthplace.

³⁰James Hiller, "The Newfoundland Railway, 1881-1949," *Newfoundland Historical Society Pamphlet no.6*, (St. John's: Newfoundland Historical Society, 1981) 11, 19

opened, were from communities such as Indian Harbour, Burnt Islands, and La Poile, located near Port aux Basques – the railway’s west coast terminus.³¹

Third, while gender differences did ultimately matter in migration patterns, 1921 birthplace data indicate little disparity existed between men and women, suggesting that in the first decade of the town’s existence women began to accompany their husbands, or at least they eventually joined them.³² For example, in 1921, the husband and wife of 46 per cent of the 256 Newfoundland-born couples living in Grand Falls were born in the same community. The other 54 per cent were generally marriages between Newfoundland-born couples from different communities, and a few marriages between Newfoundland-born women and men from outside of Newfoundland.³³ With some exceptions, the other 56 per cent were generally marriages between Newfoundland-born couples from different communities, but largely in the same districts of the island. The overall lack of gender difference between source communities may also be reflective of the recruitment of young women domestics by their relatives and kin from similar communities and districts on the island. In addition, historical geographer Patricia Thornton has demonstrated that outmigration from Conception Bay, Bonavista Bay and Trinity Bay -- all catchment areas

³¹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

³²Jim Dobson, “An Analysis of the Census and Enumerator’s Record of Grand Falls for 1921,” unpublished paper, (Memorial University, n.d.) 11.

³³*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

for Grand Falls residents -- was neither age, gender or class specific before 1920. This, Thornton suggests, meant that most migrants were responding to push factors.³⁴

Table 4.2: 1921 Birthplaces of Grand Falls residents by region and gender, not including Grand Falls as a birthplace, 1921 (N=2697)

	Trinity Bay	Bonavista Bay	Conception Bay	Placentia Bay	Notre Dame Bay	West Coast	Central
M	151	173	233	119	267	26	36
F	124	157	195	97	244	18	39
total	275	330	428	216	511	44	75

	South Coast	Burin Peninsula	White Bay	Northern Peninsula	St. John's	Canada, U.S., England, Scotland	Other*
M	23	5	2	3	151	141	
F	18	3	2	4	122	101	
total	41	8	4	7	273	242	243

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921*. Note that the data on birthplace contained in the census schedules was community-based data. The high number of individual communities represented as birthplaces made it necessary to group them into districts.

*Those listed as "other" were residents who did not claim a birthplace in the 1921 census.

Some individual communities were over-represented as birthplaces in 1921 (Table 4.3). These were generally larger urban centres, where workers would have had previous

³⁴Patricia Thornton, "The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada," 22.

experience as tradesmen, or in occupations such as sales, accounting, or banking.³⁵ For example, St. John's supplied the most migrants from a single centre before 1921.³⁶ The communities of Greenspond and Gambo on the northeast coast supplied at least 84 migrants each. The former was a declining sealing and fishing centre, and the latter had been the location of a previously established sawmilling operation. When taken together, the larger Conception Bay centres of Holyrood, Bay Roberts, and Harbour Grace, represented the most concentrated source communities for in-migrants. These were communities that had been consistently losing population from the late 19th century into the post World War I period. The Notre Dame Bay communities of Pilley's Island, Twillingate, and Fogo, which were located in close proximity to Grand Falls, but not on the railway, were also key catchment communities (Table 4.3). In total these communities supplied nearly 30 per cent of migrants to Grand Falls.

Other 1921 birthplaces, not shown in Table 4.3, which reached double-digits, were Argentia in Placentia Bay; the Notre Dame Bay and interior communities of Exploits,

³⁵William Reeves has pointed out that declining sealing centres such as Harbour Grace and Carbonear did not only lose work for men on the fleets but tradesmen working in ancillary industries also experienced unemployment during this period W.G. Reeves, "Our Yankee Cousins," 455.

³⁶Some of these were men who worked as tradesmen or public servants in St. John's, and came to Grand Falls to secure similar jobs in the mill town. Interview with Donald G., and interview with Iris B.

Fortune Harbour, Glenwood, Little Bay, and Tilt Cove; the Trinity Bay communities of New Harbour, and Trinity; and Salvage in Bonavista Bay.³⁷

Table 4.3: Selected Birthplaces of Men and Women, Grand Falls, 1921* (N=864)

Birthplace	M	F	total	% of all birthplaces (n=2697)
St. John's	151	122	273	10.1
Twillingate	33	49	84	3.1
Greenspond	48	31	84	3.1
Gambo	37	33	70	2.6
Placentia	37	31	71	2.6
Holyrood	41	25	70	2.6
Harbour Grace	36	29	65	2.4
Bay Roberts	31	26	57	2.1
Pilley's Island	26	22	50	1.9
Fogo	29	11	40	1.5
Total	469	379	864	28.9

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921*

*Grand Falls is excluded as a birthplace in this table.

³⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

Due to a lack of sources on birthplaces of Grand Falls residents for the 1920s and 1930s, it is impossible to determine exactly how the patterns of migration, which accounted for the core permanent workforce, changed over time.³⁸ However, an examination of 1945 manuscript census data on “birthplace” – which was recorded only by district -- and “1935 residence” – also recorded by district -- indicates a slight change in the composition of the workforce and their families. Fewer people moved to the mill town to take up permanent residence between 1935 and 1945 than in previous decades. Of those 109 men and 285 women (over the age of 10 years) who did not live in Grand Falls in 1935, most were born in the districts of Bonavista, Trinity Bay and Notre Dame Bay. These areas were particularly hard hit by the fisheries crises of the post World War I period, and by the decline of other sectors of the local economies. 1945 birthplace data also shows that Placentia Bay and Conception Bay were decreasing in importance as source areas, and that a few migrants had come from the mill town of Corner Brook after 1921, representing another departure from the earlier pattern. The over-representation of women as new in-migrants in the 1935-45 period, may have been due to factors such as the influx of war brides, the absence of men who went overseas in World War II, the narrowing of the labour market for jobs in the mill for men, and the continuing demand for domestic servants, who were generally in-migrants.

³⁸The 1935 census did not ask residents their birthplace. It only recorded statistics on country of origin.

4.3 Migration patterns and changing push factors

Almost no groundwork has been laid for understanding the details of internal migration towards industrial enclaves, such as Grand Falls during the early 20th century. Historical geographers have contributed greatly to our understanding of the connections between internal migration in the 19th century, the settlement of the island's more remote and northeastern regions -- often referred to as "frontiers" -- chain migration, and the exploitation of the resources of the sea.³⁹ We still know little about the origins of those who found wage work in the early mining towns of Notre Dame Bay, Grand Falls, and Bishop's Falls and the links between land-based industry, the decline in the fisheries in certain regions, and internal migration patterns. It is important to keep in mind that many of the town's pioneering workers were recruited by the AND Company because of their previous experience as tradesmen, in construction, lumbering, the railway, or in other wage earning occupations. A substantial number of the mill's semi-skilled and unskilled workers, however, would have been drawn to the town because of economic and social change in their communities and regions of origin. Existing research on early 20th century social and economic conditions combined with the birthplace data on the Grand Falls population, considered above, allows us to speculate on why some regions of the island supplied migrants to Grand Falls rather than others. In so doing two major trends are discernable.

³⁹The essays in John Mannion ed., *The Peopling of Newfoundland*, explore the themes of settlement and migration in the 19th century.

First, it appears that the core permanent workforce had arrived in Grand Falls before 1921 -- a migration that was predominantly male-led. Some of these men and their families were from communities and regions on the island (such as Conception Bay) that had been experiencing drastic economic decline in their fisheries since the mid 19th century. Others came from communities and regions that had relied in part on mining and small-scale sawmilling, which were sectors that had just begun to decrease in importance around the time the Grand Falls mill was built. Second, those northeast coast communities that continued to supply the most migrants to Grand Falls into the 1920s and throughout the 1930s, were generally located in close proximity to the town. They were also communities which had begun to experience decline in a number of traditional economic and subsistence activities, such as small-scale agriculture, fishing, and small-scale sawmilling. To a certain extent, therefore, many of the Grand Falls migrants were from communities and districts that had already begun to shift their orientation from the sea to the land before the Grand Falls mill was built -- a pattern which certainly intensified once the AND Company established its hegemony in the island's interior.

Not surprisingly then, Conception Bay communities of Holyrood, Harbour Grace, Bay Roberts, and Carbonear supplied a large number of migrants to Grand Falls from an early date. While Conception Bay was the most populated and successful fishing region in the 18th and early 19th centuries, it began to decline in the mid 19th century, as the northeast coast districts of Bonavista, Trinity, Fogo, and Twillingate attracted most of the permanent settlers. The Labrador and the seal fisheries, which were of particular

importance to the Newfoundland fishing economy during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and to the economies of Conception Bay communities, had begun to decline by in the early 20th century.⁴⁰ The Labrador fishery provided many men with seasonal employment on schooners, where they worked for a share of the voyage. Others migrated to Labrador with their families, where they prosecuted the fishery from “shore stations” in the summer.⁴¹ Conception Bay was affected by declines in the Labrador fishery earlier than most other regions of the island. Equally important, in the early 19th century the island’s most important sealing centres were located in Conception Bay. By the end of the century, however, the introduction of steam-powered vessels, over-exploitation, and declines in demand in the international market for seal oil meant a shift in concentration of

⁴⁰The Labrador fishery, which was firmly established by the late 1820s, consisted mainly of two types of fisheries: the stationer fishery and the floater fishery. In the former, fishers “established themselves on shore, catching and curing their fish in one place,” and the latter was comprised of “those who lived on board their ships and moved around to the various fishing grounds.” For a more detailed discussion of the Labrador fishery, see Shannon Ryan, *Fish Out of Water*, 39,46-55. By 1920 the number of schooners fishing at Labrador was approximately half that in 1910. Jeffrey A. Hutchings, “Spatial and Temporal Variation in the Exploitation of Northern Cod, *Gadus morhua*: A Historical Perspective from 1500 to Present,” in Daniel Vickers ed., *ISER Conference Papers – No.5, Marine Resources and Human Societies in the North Atlantic Since 1500* (October, 1995) 48-49, 54.

⁴¹Michael Staveley, “Population Dynamics in Newfoundland,” in John Mannion ed., *The Peopling of Newfoundland*, 69. Staveley suggests that in 1884, 44 per cent of the district of Carbonear summered in Labrador, 26.6 per cent of this migration included men, and 17.4 per cent included women and children.

sealing to St. John's, where more capitalized firms took over.⁴² This shift to St. John's meant that many of those men who had depended on sealing for winter time employment were forced to look elsewhere.⁴³ Late 19th century fishery-related decline had also affected communities in Placentia Bay, in which the failure of the herring fisheries after 1900 caused many to outmigrate;⁴⁴ others found work on railway construction in the late 19th century.

Between 1891 and 1911, Conception Bay communities of Port de Grave, Carbonear and Harbour Grace lost more population due to out-migration and internal migration than any others on the island. This pattern persisted into the 1930s.⁴⁵ Many men from these communities moved in and out of different forms of wage work, on the

⁴²Sean Cadigan has suggested that sealers' winter employment was linked to their roles in household production in the fishery, and that there was much competitiveness and conflict over share payments on sealing vessels. See Sean Cadigan, "The Merging of Farm, Fishing, and Wage Labour," 10. Others such as Briton Cooper Busch have suggested that sealers resembled industrial workers because of their common experiences and patterns of working together, "The Newfoundland Sealers' Strike of 1902," *Labour/Le Travail*, 14 (Fall, 1994) 213-71.

⁴³In particular, the Conception Bay sealing centres, and the Cape Freels area (including Greenspond, Newtown, Wesleyville, Catalina, Trinity, and Bonavista) were hard hit by the decline. See Shannon Ryan, *The Ice Hunters*, Figure 3, np.

⁴⁴W.G. Reeves, "Our Yankee Cousins," 454.

⁴⁵Carbonear lost 22.2 per cent of its population between 1891 and 1901. Harbour Grace lost 19.6 per cent between 1891 and 1901, and 15.6 per cent between 1901 and 1911. Port de Grave lost 16.6 between 1891 and 1901 and 15.5 between 1901 and 1911. W.G. Reeves, "Our Yankee Cousins," 475. Between 1921 and 1935 the district of Carbonear - Bay de Verde lost 12.4 per cent of its population and Port de Grave lost 12.4. "Other Districts Showing Population Loss between 1921 and 1935," Department of Public Health and Welfare, *Tenth Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1935*.

docks in St. John's, in the Bell Island mines, and in railway construction.⁴⁶ A large number of residents from these regions left their homes temporarily or permanently to work in the Cape Breton steel and mining industries, the Gloucester fishery, and in cities such as New York and Boston.⁴⁷ Others sought work as loggers and in the pulp and paper mills of Maine in 1909.⁴⁸

Statistics on outmigration suggest that much of this migration was temporary. Between 1901 and 1911, 84,613 men and 31,174 women left Newfoundland; 80,057 men returned (net loss of 4,556) and 28,246 women returned (net loss of 2,928).⁴⁹ Oral history accounts underline similar patterns.⁵⁰ One woman who grew up in Grand Falls explained that her father, born in Conception Bay, had worked on the Newfoundland railway and then in the Sydney mines before moving to Grand Falls before World War I.⁵¹ The correlation between traditionally high-migration regions, such as Conception Bay and

⁴⁶Jessie Chisholm, "Organizing on the Waterfront;" and Peter McInnis, "All Solid Along the Line."

⁴⁷See W.G. Reeves, "Our Yankee Cousins," Chapter 9, "The Decision to Migrate: 'Permanent' Emigrants and 'Birds of Passage,' 1898-1910," Ron Crawley, "Off to Sydney."

⁴⁸W.G. Reeves, "Our Yankee Cousins," 492.

⁴⁹"Table 1: Population, Sex, Condition, Denomination, Profession etc." Colonial Secretary's Office, *Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1911*, xx.

⁵⁰Alphonus Duggan grew up in Holyrood, Conception Bay and then moved to Glace Bay, Nova Scotia and then to Grand Falls. Alphonsus Duggan, "Sixty Years of Social Life."

⁵¹Interview with Molly M.

Placentia Bay, where the population had previous experience working in wage labour, and source communities of in-migrants to Grand Falls suggests that the movement of people to the town represented a continuity with their past lives.

Not all migration to Grand Falls was directly related to social and economic change in the fishery. The mining communities of Notre Dame Bay, such as Tilt Cove, Little Bay, and Pilley's Island, supplied a substantial number of migrants to Grand Falls in the first decade of the mill's operation. In 1921, 115 Grand Falls residents were born in one of these Notre Dame Bay mining towns. By 1945, only 12 residents claimed these communities as their birthplace, indicating that this migration coincided with the mine closures of an earlier period.⁵² Established in the mid 19th century, these mines had closed and shut down by the early 20th century. For example, in 1901, 573 men were employed in the Notre Dame Bay mines, which declined to 230 by 1911.⁵³ The mine at Tilt Cove, which had a population of 1,004 in 1891, had closed down in 1920, and the community's population decreased to 90.⁵⁴ In an interview, one woman who grew up in Grand Falls in the 1920s explained that her father and mother had moved to Grand Falls in 1911 from Pilley's Island. Prior to her parents' migration, her father had worked as a miner in

⁵²*Census (nominal) of Newfoundland*, 1921.

⁵³John R. Bennett (Colonial Secretary), *Report on the Census of Newfoundland, 1911* (St. John's: J.W. Withers, 1914).

⁵⁴Philbrook, *Fisherman, Logger, Merchant, Miner*, 82. Some of these men were later absorbed into the logging operations of the Corner Brook mill.

Pilley's Island, Tilt Cove, and Little Bay, and he had met and married her mother in Little Bay, the place of her birth.⁵⁵ In the 1930s, some Pilley's Island households relied on a combination of fishing and logging for the Corner Brook mill, but Grand Falls had absorbed some of those workers in an earlier period. One Buchans miner told the Newfoundland Royal Commission that a number of former miners from Tilt Cove had found work at Buchans.⁵⁶

Bonavista and Trinity Bay communities were some of the most consistent suppliers of migrants to Grand Falls from the town's inception until at least World War II. Residents from these districts appeared disproportionately in the 1921 census, and in 1945 close to 300 men and women claimed the Bonavista peninsula (including the North shore of Trinity Bay) as their place of birth.⁵⁷ Once a successful collection of fishing and logging communities, this area suffered extreme hardship during the fisheries crises of the 1920s and 1930s.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Interview with Gloria B. Research on the communities of origin of Bishop's Falls residents of the 1930s reveals that at least 17 men and 15 women (excluding their children) moved to Bishop's Falls from Pilley's Island, Tilt Cove, and Little Bay between 1900 and 1920. Maxwell Taylor, "Bishop's Falls Residents," *The Newfoundland Ancestor*, 6,1 (Spring, 1990) 5-8.

⁵⁶"Evidence of Mr. Glavin -- miner," Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

⁵⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1945.

⁵⁸Sean Cadigan, "The Historical Role of Marginal Agriculture in Sustaining Coastal Communities On the Bonavista Peninsula," unpublished paper (Eco-Research Program, Memorial University, 1994).

In 1909, when the Grand Falls mill opened Newfoundland was recovering from a devastating fisheries crisis of 1908.⁵⁹ Both the Fishermen's Protective Union (FPU), an organization of producers established in Herring Neck, Notre Dame Bay in 1908, and the Board of Trade, representing the interests of the mercantile elite, were established as a direct response. A host of problems plagued the cod fishery in the early 20th century, including deterioration in standards of cure, over-production and periodic catch failures, foreign competition, rivalry among domestic fish exporters and an unstable and unregulated system of exporting.⁶⁰ After World War I, the export value of salt cod collapsed rapidly, from \$14.46 per quintal in 1918 to \$6.86 in 1922.⁶¹ By 1931, the export value had plummeted to \$4.52 per quintal, consequently causing many fishing families to abandon the fishery altogether and to migrate out, or to rely on a sub-standard public relief system.⁶² In fact during the interwar years, the FPU leader William Coaker joined Liberal party supporters in promoting expanded opportunities for employment in land based industries.⁶³

⁵⁹Ian McDonald, *"To Each His Own,"* 1-14.

⁶⁰Ian McDonald, *"To Each His Own,"* 14; and Robert Hong, "An Agency for the Common Weal," Chapter 2.

⁶¹Ian McDonald, *"To Each His Own,"* 152-153.

⁶²Ian McDonald, *"To Each His Own,"* 153.

⁶³James Hiller, "The Politics of Newsprint;" Ian McDonald, *"To Each His Own,"* Sean Cadigan, "The Merging of Farm, Fishery and Wage Labour."

General factors such as these contributed to the abandonment of the fishery for many from the northeast coast of the island. In 1933, two male wage workers for the AND Company and ASARCO stated they were former fishermen who had given up fishing and sought wage work in Grand Falls and Buchans. One of them, a groundwood worker at the Grand Falls mill, said:

the little fishing village I belonged to, there was about 3,000 population, and schooners in the harbour. It was sail-makers, shipwrights and everything. But now it is gone. It went like a cloud in the morning. It is all around the coast.⁶⁴

Oral history evidence also reveals that fishermen from communities such as Bay Roberts in Conception Bay also migrated to Grand Falls as late as 1919.⁶⁵

The declining fisheries would have exacerbated other social and economic factors on the Bonavista Peninsula. In the years leading up to the 1930s, according to recent research, resident demand on the resources of the Bonavista Peninsula, such as small-scale agriculture, lumbering, and small-scale sawmilling, for subsistence survival, had exceeded the supply of resources.⁶⁶ These conditions made it increasingly difficult for the local

⁶⁴“Evidence of Mr. J.S. Bragg,” Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.”

⁶⁵Interview with Michael P. He said that he moved to Grand Falls as a small child in 1919. His father was a fisherman in Bay Roberts.

⁶⁶The research on the Bonavista Peninsula was conducted by a team of researchers from across the disciplines at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The findings are summarized in, Rosemary Ommer (principal investigator), *Final Report of the Eco-Research Project, “Sustainability in a Changing Cold-Ocean Coastal Environment,”* (St. John’s: ISER, 1998); see also Rosemary Ommer, “Merchant Credit and the Informal Economy.”

population to survive in the region, which intensified during the fishery collapse of the 1930s.⁶⁷ Interviews with older Bonavista Peninsula residents showed that in all these communities men had migrated to other parts of the island or to the "Boston States," for one to two years, and men had gone to the woods for six weeks to three months, sometimes travelling on foot for up to 50 miles to join the lumbercamps and work in the Grand Falls mills.⁶⁸

In the areas closer to Grand Falls, such as Twillingate, Notre Dame Bay, and the south shore of Bonavista Bay, the emergence of the logging and sawmilling industries of the late 19th century, and the subsequent development of pulp and paper, with its subsidiary industries, influenced internal migration patterns. These communities were not only suffering from the downturn in the fishery (especially the Labrador fishery), but the depletion of timber lands, and the increasing dominance of the AND Company in the region, meant further negative impacts. In fact several communities in the interior and on the Bonavista Peninsula, such as Gambo, Glenwood and Millertown owed their existence

⁶⁷In the late 1920s and 1930s, entire families in Bonavista Bay South, for example, were scattered along the railway tracks cutting wood for contractors. Most of these families never gained access to Grand Falls. "Magistrate B.J. Abbott Reporting to Department of Natural Resources," Department of Natural Resources, GN38, S6-1-6, File 8, PANL.

⁶⁸Rosemary Ommers (principal investigator), *Final Report of the Eco-Research Project*, 17.

to the forest industry, and to a lesser extent the railway.⁶⁹ Some men who moved to Grand Falls from communities such as Gander Bay and Gambo had previous experience working on the railway or in the sawmilling industry.⁷⁰ According to J.P. Curran, the division of labour in logging communities was more specialized than in inshore fishing households, and the orientation of many of these people was inland.⁷¹ In 1934, St. John's lumber merchant Reuben Horwood underlined the connection between the fishery, wage work on the railway, and logging:

With the advent of the extension of the railway fishermen turned more and more from what had been their occupation to employment on the land...The railway paid cash, and although the wages were low cash employment had an attraction...but even in the case of railway employment the winter was still a slack time in which the navy had to become a lumberman. The result was there was always too many lumbermen.⁷²

In general, residents from all regions of the island faced significant barriers to outmigration in the late 1920s, and throughout the 1930s. In fact from 1929 to at least 1934

⁶⁹The population of Gambo increased from 107 in 1901 to 344 in 1911, decreasing to 305 in 1921. Glenwood's population decreased from a high of 245 in 1901 to 57 in 1921. J.P. Curran, "The Process of Mechanization in the Forest Industry," unpublished MA thesis (Memorial University, 1971) 17.

⁷⁰Interview with Glenn C., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1997.

⁷¹J.P. Curran, "The Process of Mechanization in the Forest Industry in Newfoundland," 18-20.

⁷²"Deposition of Reuben Horwood, lumber merchant," to F.G. Bradley Commission on Logging, St. John's, 14 April 1934, *F.G. Bradley Papers*, Box 3/4, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Newfoundland had gained population due to the return of those who could not make ends meet in Canada, or in the United States.⁷³

During the interwar years in other Notre Dame Bay communities, families were abandoning the fishery to move to Grand Falls and other inland industrial centres; as one fisher-logger, from Fortune Harbour, Notre Dame Bay, who found work at Buchans, told the 1933 Royal Commission, "I would sooner be at fishing, but fishing is no good. If fishing could come back again..."⁷⁴ Magistrates' reports also contain evidence of some Notre Dame Bay communities abandoning the fishery during this time. From the early 20th century in Boyd's Cove most of the men fished in the Fogo Island fishery and supplemented their income by logging. By 1936 the magistrate reported that many of these men found the fishery "less remunerative than other industries and have given it up and sought employment elsewhere. I find the majority of people employed all year round, mostly with the Anglo Development Company."⁷⁵ The men of a neighbouring community, which had previously depended on the turbot and cod fishery, had given up their fishing gear and their boats to seek other employment and they contemplated marketing

⁷³In 1929, for example, Newfoundland had lost 369 due to emigration. By 1930 the population increased by 2463 due to immigration. This trend continued until 1933 when the number of immigrants tapered off to 690. "Comparative Statement, Immigration, Emigration, Birth, Marriage and Death Rates from 1900 to 1934," n.d., Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-1-1, File 24, PANL.

⁷⁴"Evidence of Mr. Glavin, miner," Newfoundland Royal Commission.

⁷⁵"Magistrate B. J. Abbott Reporting to Department of Natural Resources," Department of Natural Resources, 16 April 1936, GN38, S4-3-3, File 1, PANL.

vegetables in the industrial centres, such as Grand Falls and Botwood.⁷⁶ Exploits, another Notre Dame Bay community, which had traditionally depended on the Labrador fishery and the spring-herring fishery had only one schooner operating in 1936. These men were encouraged to sell "more fish in its fresh state" in places like Botwood.⁷⁷ Another magistrate observed that the people of Comfort Cove, "not far from the railway at Lewisporte," migrated seasonally for wage work to an unspecified industrial centre [most likely Grand Falls] for five months of the year after the herring fishery collapsed.⁷⁸ Gander Bay was another northeast coast community that had shifted its orientation inland, as the magistrate said: "they use the Gander River as an access to these centres [ie:Grand Falls], hence the cost of travelling is not as great as in other parts of the country."⁷⁹ Social and economic conditions along the northeast coast varied greatly and drastically from community to community. We thus far know little about the ways in which economic change and transformations in the nature of subsistence activities and economic activities affected social relationships between household members.

⁷⁶"Magistrate B.J. Abbott Reporting to Department of Natural Resources," Department of Natural Resources, 20 April 1936, GN38, S4-3-3, File 1, PANL.

⁷⁷"Report of Mr. Ernest Cotton on the Domestic Conditions in the Logging Areas of Bonavista Bay to the Department of Public Health and Welfare," 1937, Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S4-3-2, File 1, PANL.

⁷⁸"Magistrate B.J. Abbott Reporting to Department of Natural Resources," 8 April 1936 Department of Natural Resources, GN38, S4-3-3, File 1, PANL.

⁷⁹"Magistrate B.J. Abbott Reporting to Department of Natural Resources," 3 July 1936, Department of Natural Resources, GN38, S4-3-3, File 1, PANL.

There is some evidence to suggest that social and economic change in these regions redefined the roles of sons and daughters within the rural household. Age and gender frequently determined the type of work allocated to family members in the household economy. In communities that relied on the logging industry boys would leave home for work in the woods at Millertown and Badger (AND Company operated) while their fathers stayed home repairing nets and looking after the fishing boats, indicating a loss of fishery-related skill for some young men in the region affected by the forest industry.⁸⁰ Moreover, one magistrate stated that since the men of Boyd's Cove worked year-round for the AND Company, they had not had the time to clear the land for small-scale subsistence agriculture which, in turn, would have meant their wives and children were no longer engaged in that type of household work.⁸¹ It is also probable that in communities hard hit by the fishery decline, the shore work of daughters was less and less needed. Thus, the declining fishery and its eventual collapse meant that fewer fishing households were able to hire young women to do fishery-related and domestic work in the 1930s. In addition, this shift inland in orientation among some fishing families undoubtedly influenced the location of their daughters' employment in Grand Falls.

⁸⁰"Magistrate Report to Department of Public Health and Welfare from Twillingate District," n.d. GN38, S4-3-3, File 2, PANL. See also J.P. Curran, "The Process of Mechanization," 30, for a discussion of the division of labour between fathers and sons in the logging and fishing households.

⁸¹"Magistrate reporting to Department of Natural Resources," Department of Natural Resources, 16 April, 1936.

4.4 Domestic service and chain migration in the interwar years:

The 1921 birthplace data, broken down by region, shows that the migration patterns of young women domestics to the company town were similar to those of the core permanent workforce and their families. For instance, 22.2 per cent of domestics were born in Notre Dame Bay, 22.1 per cent in Trinity Bay, 17.8 Bonavista Bay, 15.7 per cent Conception Bay, and 13.7 Placentia Bay.⁸² Few young women, 6.3 per cent, had moved from the south coast and the west coasts of the island; even fewer had come from the interior settlements, as these only represented 2.2 per cent. In terms of individual communities, there did not appear to be any highly concentrated migration patterns. For example, of a total of 114 domestics working in Grand Falls in 1921, 76 were born in different communities. Equally important, there was at least one permanent Grand Falls resident born in each one of those 76 communities. (See Appendix F for list of communities).

Table 4.4 indicates the names and regions of those communities that represented the birthplaces of three or more domestics. These included Chance Cove, Trinity Bay, Placentia, Placentia Bay, Greenspond, Bonavista Bay, Holyrood, Conception Bay, and Little Bay, Notre Dame Bay. One major distinction between the birthplaces of the permanent core residents and domestic servants is that no domestics were born in St. John's, at least according to census birthplace data. By contrast, as described above, St.

⁸²*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

John's had provided a large number of migrants among the general Grand Falls population. This distinction, as revealed in the 1921 census schedules, provides further evidence that the initial migration of young women was a rural to urban migration and time specific in its character. While young women who were born in St. John's would not necessarily have migrated to places such as Grand Falls to work as domestics, by the 1930s young women who were born in rural communities began to migrate to Grand Falls after working in households in St. John's.

Table 4.4: Number of domestics born in selected communities, Grand Falls, 1921

Birthplace	No. Domestics
Chance Cove, T.B.	4
Placentia, P.B.	4
Greenspond, B.B.	4
Bonavista, B.B.	4
Holyrood, C.B.	3
Britannia, T.B.	3
Little Bay, N.D.B.	3
Brigus, C.B.	3
Woody Island, P.B.	3
Total	31

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921*

Furthermore, small communities such as Chance Cove, appear as concentrated sending communities for domestics but not for the general population, probably because, a young woman from Chance Cove had informed her friends and relatives of positions in Grand Falls.

In the absence of parallel birthplace data for the 1921 to 1945 period, it has been necessary to rely on oral history. Interviews with former domestics, former employers of domestics, and other community residents, have indicated that domestics who worked in Grand Falls in the 1920s and 30s, were exclusively from outside Grand Falls and that the hiring of domestics was done primarily through word-of-mouth, which in turn, followed the migration patterns of the general population. For example, in responding to a question about how domestics were hired, former employers of domestics stressed family and community links. One mill worker who reached his teens in the 1930s recalled how his mother found household help: "We belong to Gambo and if we were looking for a servant girl we went to Gambo. Somebody out in Gambo had a daughter of working age they sent them in and they'd rather send them into someone they knew. In a lot of cases we used to get our own relatives."⁴³ Furthermore, a woman whose parents had moved to Grand Falls from St. John's in the early 1920s explained that her family's domestic servants came from Fortune Harbour, Twillingate, and Placentia, describing the process as follows:

⁴³Interview with Richard S.

Well I think a lot of that had to do with, many men came from Fortune Harbour to work in the mill in the beginning. If they had relatives they would come in and leave their families home and a lot of their daughters came and they could stay in the workmen's hotel and go back. I have a lot of friends who came from Fortune Harbour. The same was true for Placentia a lot of their nieces would come here from Placentia and they would tell their sisters. They got to know, too, you see, and it spread that way.⁸⁴

Another Grand Falls resident indicated that her parents hired young women from Notre Dame Bay:

I think it was because somebody else was here and let them know there was work here. Some family that lived in Notre Dame Bay and contacted them to see if they would like to come....she would have a friend and probably the people that she lived with would find somebody else who wanted some help.⁸⁵

The active recruitment of young women by potential employers through family connections, as it occurred in Grand Falls, was not unusual. Women who grew up on the Avalon Peninsula in the same time period also stated that they were often approached by potential employers on the side of the road, at family gatherings, or while they were out playing in the yard.⁸⁶

These patterns of recruitment of domestics continued throughout World War II. For example, the communities of origin of domestics as indicated by "birthplace" and "residence in 1935" data in the 1945 manuscript census schedules, shows that the

⁸⁴Interview with Carmel B., Grand Falls, 1997.

⁸⁵Interview with Violet T., Grand Falls, 1996.

⁸⁶O'Dwyer interviews, 8, 21.

birthplaces of domestics had changed to reflect changes in the origin of the town's permanent population. For example, in 1945, 32 per cent of domestics were born in Notre Dame Bay, and 28.8 per cent in Bonavista and Trinity Bay, reflecting the continual migration of residents from these areas.⁸⁷ The relative decline of Conception Bay, 3.7 per cent, and Placentia Bay, 4.9 per cent, is also indicative of changes in broader migration patterns. In 1945, however, 13.5 per cent of domestics were born in Grand Falls or in neighbouring towns, such as Windsor, Peter's Arm, and Badger.⁸⁸ The other 16.4 per cent of birthplaces included St. John's, Corner Brook, the Northern Peninsula, and the west and south coasts.

A gender disaggregated analysis of population change in Grand Falls during the interwar years shows that, the ratio of men to women among the adult population, which typically of company towns, favoured men in 1921, began to favour women by 1935. For example, in 1921 the women to men ratio was 83:100, which reversed by 1935, when the ratio was 106:100 (women to men). Between 1935 and 1945, the ratio continued to favour women when there were 105 women to 100 men (See Appendix C). This gender imbalance was even more exaggerated among the unmarried adult population, as it shifted from 65:100 (women to men) in 1921 to 114:100 (women to men) in 1935, levelling off

⁸⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

⁸⁸*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

to 104:100 (women to men) in 1945. (See Appendix C).⁸⁹ While in-migration of young women domestics might not fully explain this gender imbalance, it would certainly have been a factor. Gender did matter in the waves of migration that brought temporary AND Company employees, older relatives and siblings of mill employees, and young women domestics to the town in the interwar years. The migration of young women is best understood as distinct, but interconnected to the migration of mill workers and their wives, for these migrants were not interchangeable. It must also be understood within the context of young women's lives and experiences within their communities of origin and within their households.

Historians and sociologists have provided a context for understanding the structural limitations within which women operated in this period, including factors that restricted their access to and control over the resource such as the patriarchal organization of the family fishery, patriarchal law outside, and the relatively rigid sexual division of labour.⁹⁰ As Barbara Neis and others have suggested, the source of power and control of women's and children's access to wealth from the fishery was in fathers and husbands

⁸⁹Rex Lucas states that towns of single industry were almost always defined by a surplus of men in those age groups. Rex Lucas, *Minetown, Milltown, Railtown*, 95.

⁹⁰For the 19th century, see Sean Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay*, especially Chapter 4; for the 20th century see, Marilyn Porter, "She was Skipper on the Shore Crew;" and Barbara Neis, "From 'Shipped Girls'." For the legal context see Linda Cullum and Maeve Baird, "A Woman's Lot," Linda Kealey ed., *Pursuing Equality*.

control over houses, land, fishing technology, skill, as well as inheritance practices.⁹¹ We also know much about women's roles as producers of household necessities, such as food and clothing, as caregivers for children, the elderly, and husbands, and as an integral part of the family fishery through their work on the shore.⁹² During this period, the literature also suggests, many young women who could not marry young were forced out of their households of origin to find work; some of them went to work for nearby fishing families, others left the island to find paid work or marriage partners, and others went to St. John's, Grand Falls or Corner Brook. Little is known about how daughters made these decisions to leave home, for while structural factors "set the limits of the possible and the impossible within which people moved," the decisions they made took place "at the level of their close, immediate surroundings."⁹³ A closer look at the pre-migration lives of those who moved to Grand Falls needs to be understood within the restrictions that shaped their lives, as well as within the detail and nuance of their particular situations.

4.5 Migration, domestic service, and the rural household economy

The links between economic transformation, the household economy, gender and migration can be untangled by examining the types of households that supplied their

⁹¹Barbara Neis, "From 'Shipped Girls' to 'Brides of the State,'" 189-95.

⁹²Hilda Chauk Murray, *More than Fifty Percent*.

⁹³Ewa Morawska, "Labor Migrations of Poles," in Dirk Hoerder et al.eds., *European Migrants*, 4.

daughters to Grand Falls.⁹⁴ The difficulties of locating documentary evidence on the details of women's pre-migration lives has been alleviated somewhat by the availability of the manuscript census schedules for 1921, which asked residents their birthplace. By taking the Grand Falls schedules as a point of departure, and by tracing young women domestics back to 25 communities of origin through the manuscript census schedules, it became apparent that fourteen young women who worked as domestics in Grand Falls in 1921 were enumerated twice: in Grand Falls as domestic servants, and in their households of origin.⁹⁵ The complexity and seasonal nature of work meant that it was difficult for census enumerators to capture the population in one place at one time.

Administrators placed in charge of producing an "accurate" 1921 census frowned on double-enumeration, instructing local enumerators to wait for community members who were away from home to return (over a six month period) before submitting the schedules. In 1921, the Secretary of Public Welfare underlined the challenge:

⁹⁴Households are differentiated from families in the following analysis. Kinship forms the primary basis for families and households are mainly economic units based on income pooling. These definitions were adapted from Marcel Van Der Linden's discussion of the working-class household, in "Connecting Household History and Labour History," *International Review of Social History*, 38 (1993) 164.

⁹⁵One of the limitations of this methodology is that the manuscript census schedules for Bonavista Bay, Fogo, and Bay de Verde, and Labrador are missing for 1921. *Census 1921 Nominal Index* (unpublished), Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Thus, it was impossible to trace women back to communities in those districts. Second, if a family moved between the time their daughter was born and the time the census was taken in 1921 then it would be impossible to trace her back to her community of origin from Grand Falls.

Many of the people at the time of the enumeration were not at their homes, but were at Labrador or in other parts of the Colony. The Enumerator, however, had to enter them with their places of residence, and particular oversight had to be exercised to ensure that they were not entered twice, that is, at their temporary place of working and also at the place where was their regular residence.⁹⁶

Many enumerators did not follow these instructions, which was apparent in the instances of double-enumeration. Though limited in scope, this kind of analysis illustrates the type of households from which these women came, their connection to a household economy in rural Newfoundland, and further evidence that the chain migration of young women had begun as early as 1921.

Alice B. (14 years) and Bonnie M. (16 years) were both employed in Grand Falls as domestic servants in 1921. They had much in common. They were both employed in households headed by semi-skilled mill workers; they both originated from the district of Placentia-St. Mary's (Alice B. was from Point Verde and Bonnie M. was from Fox Harbour); and both of their parents were widowed.⁹⁷ Alice B.'s father, a widower, told the enumerator his primary occupation was in the fishery, with supplementary income from small-scale farming. Her three sisters, between 12 and 16 years, also lived in the

⁹⁶The government even suggested that "in some cases the Revising Officers held the sheets over until the people returned home, in order that they might be properly checked. Copies of each Enumerator's Returns were given to the respective Clergymen in the division, and the correctness of the Census depends in a great measure upon the assistance in ..." *Report of the Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1921.*

⁹⁷I found another woman (Annie T.) who at the age of 34 went to Grand Falls from her widowed mother's household in Moreton's Harbour, Notre Dame Bay.

household. Bonnie's mother, a widow, declared no occupation but her oldest child, a boy, stated "fisherman" as his present occupation. There were also five daughters living in the household. The family for whom Bonnie M. worked in Grand Falls was headed by Theo S., who was also born in Fox Harbour, indicating some connection between them.

The background of 22 year old Grace P. of Shoal Harbour (Clareville) Trinity Bay indicates that not all women who moved to Grand Falls were from fishing families, as her father, at 66, stated "farmer" as his primary occupation and her 18 year old brother worked for the Reid Newfoundland Company.⁹⁸ Grace P. was representative of other young women migrants because her younger siblings (14, 12, and 10) were in school at the time the census was taken. Most of the daughters in these households were the only young women of employment age in the household.⁹⁹ The only obvious connection between Grace P. and the Grand Falls household in which she worked was they shared

⁹⁸Grace's parents were born in Hants Harbour, suggesting they had moved at least once before settling in Shoal Harbour.

⁹⁹Susie C., for example, was enumerated in Grand Falls and in Trouty, Trinity Bay in 1921. Her father and her two brothers worked as cod fishermen and the father supplemented his earnings with farming. At 16 years old, Susie C. worked as a domestic in a Grand Falls hotel. Her only younger sibling, at 11 years old was a student. Bettie D. of Old Shop, Trinity Bay was also double-enumerated in 1921. She was the only daughter (22) listed in her parents' household. At 59 her father listed cod fisherman as his present occupation and Bessie was listed as "domestic." Millie H. of New Harbour Trinity Bay was also the daughter of a cod fisherman. At 17 Millie H. was the only daughter of employment age in 1921; her six younger siblings ranged in age from 14 to 6 months. They were all boys except for her four year old sister Elsie.

Methodism as their denominational affiliation.¹⁰⁰ Ann E. of Norris Arm, whose father was a “lumberman,” also went to Grand Falls to work in service. Norris Arm was a community located on the Exploits River system, which historically served as a winter location for fishing families to cut wood for their own use.¹⁰¹

Interestingly some of the women who were double-enumerated had “domestic servant” inscribed beside their name in their Grand Falls employers’ household and the designation “in service” (implying they had out-migrated) inscribed beside their name in their household of origin. Nineteen year old Sylvia S. of Chance Cove, Trinity Bay, for example, was “in service” according to the schedule. Her 17 year old sister was also “in service,” and their five younger siblings were in school. Her father and her oldest brother were engaged in fishing, lumbering, and farming. It is likely that either the earnings of the two oldest daughters were necessary for the family budget or these young women were forced to leave home to relieve their parents of two mouths to feed.¹⁰² One woman, who was enumerated in both Grand Falls and Twillingate, was listed in the census as the last member of her parents’ household, even though the succession of names followed age in

¹⁰⁰*Census (nominal) Newfoundland 1921*. The birthplaces of the Grand Falls employers were Twillingate and Norman’s Cove (were they in the same general region as Shoal Harbour).

¹⁰¹Exploits Valley Tourism Association, *History of Communities Along the Exploits Water System*.

¹⁰²The birthplace of the wife of the household head for whom Sylvia S. worked in Grand Falls was Rantem, Trinity Bay. Rantem was only a few kilometres away from Chance Cove, which indicates a community-based connection.

descending order. Thus, even though Wenona R. was 21 at the time of enumeration, her name followed that of her eight-year old sister in the order of household members, which may also indicate Wenona R.'s absence from the household. Perhaps these young women's parents perceived them as directly linked to their household even though they were away from home working in service, emphasizing the fact that co-residence was not necessarily a factor in the operation of households.¹⁰³

The pattern of viewing young daughters' employment in service as a temporary migration is further exemplified in the 1921 manuscript census of Holyrood, Conception Bay. Fortunately, in this community the enumerator double-enumerated knowingly, inscribing the names and occupations and location of employment of all household members who were away from home working.¹⁰⁴ In general, the occupational make-up of this small community was diverse: household heads generally worked for the Reid Newfoundland Railway, they fished, farmed and did construction work, worked as labourers, or for the government. Many of their daughters worked away from home as domestic servants. The diversity of employment patterns in Holyrood is illustrated by the work history of the following family. In this household the head's (a widower) primary

¹⁰³Marcel Van Der Linden's discussion of defining households allows for a more fluid use of the concept. See "Connecting Household History and Labour History," 164-165.

¹⁰⁴*Newfoundland Census (nominal)* 1921. It was unusual for a census enumerator to inscribe consistently the whereabouts of family members living away. In fact, it was against the intentions of the census to do so.

occupation was farming and his 28 year old son was a labourer who supplemented his income by farming. The four daughters, 26, 24, 22, and 20 respectively, were doing housework in Montreal, Canada. The daughters of other Holyrood families were working in Sydney, Nova Scotia, New York City, Buffalo, Boston, St. John's, and Grand Falls, suggesting that family connections were influential in determining the destination of daughters who migrated out.¹⁰⁵

Holyrood was a key catchment community for migrants to Grand Falls. The 1921 census indicates that 41 men, 25 women, and 4 domestics were born in Holyrood (Table 4.2). According to the census schedule for instance, at 16 years, the present occupation of Mary L. of Holyrood was "Housework -- Grand Falls," and her 14 year old sister's job was "Housework -- St. John's."¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, Mary L. could not be located in the census schedule for Grand Falls, but a seventeen year old domestic by the name of Ida L. of Holyrood worked in the Grand Falls household of Norman W., who was also of Holyrood in the same census year.

Significantly, the Holyrood census enumerator also double-enumerated men who were employed in Grand Falls as paper makers, labourers, and a doctor. These men, who appear in the census twice, were most likely strongly connected to their families in Holyrood, even though if we only found them in the Grand Falls census it would appear

¹⁰⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

¹⁰⁶*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

they had shed their connections to their communities of origin. Thirty-one year old Ted D., for example, the only son listed in his parents' household, had "Doctor -- Grand Falls" inscribed beside his name. "Mill Man -- Grand Falls" was the present occupation of Jerrett L., who at 34 years and single was still listed as a member of his parents' household. Another man who was a "Mill Man -- Grand Falls," according to the schedule, had left his wife and three children in Holyrood, to live with his parents while he earned wages in Grand Falls in 1921.¹⁰⁷

The instances of double-enumeration in a relatively wide catchment area, where household members engaged in a diversity of economic activities, suggest that co-residence was not a necessary determinant of membership in a household economy, and that local knowledge and tradition as well as push and pull factors influenced this pattern and nature of migration. Despite the extensive infrastructure of a town such as Grand Falls, not all those who moved there considered the move as a permanent one. Indeed scholars who have researched migration within the context of marginalized economies in relation to capitalist development are now beginning to determine that migrants from peripheral regions often moved to fill labour demands in capitalist enterprises, but their migration was not always about taking up permanent residence. In many cases this migration has been characterized by its circularity, and distinct from the flow of urban

¹⁰⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

peasants into industrialized centres.¹⁰⁸ Recent research on farming households in Atlantic Canada has revealed similar patterns.¹⁰⁹

In the period before 1921, Grand Falls domestics were generally, though not exclusively, from poorer fishing and logging families, but not from the most impoverished.¹¹⁰ Though the primary occupation of their fathers varied, they were most commonly petty-commodity producers, stating their primary and secondary economic activities as fishing, fishing-carpentry, fishing-farming, fishing-logging, fishing-hunting, farming and logging.¹¹¹ A small minority of the fathers were unemployed, and a few

¹⁰⁸Samuel Martinez, *Peripheral Migrants: Haitians and Dominican Republic Sugar Plantations* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995) 18. Martinez found that migrants often endured hard and excruciating working conditions in the Dominican Republic in hope of accumulating some capital to return home and become better farmers. The rural small-scale agricultural economy of Haiti kept families and communities tied to the Haitian land, and these workers were not entirely transformed by capitalist development; instead the circular migrants' temporary move formed part of a continuum of maintaining the family farm.

¹⁰⁹Rusty Bittermann, "Farm Households and Wage Labour in the Northeastern Maritimes in the Early 19th Century," in Daniel Samson ed. *Contested Countryside*; Ron Crawley, "Off to Sydney," also underlines the fact that Newfoundlanders often returned home. Their Sydney employers shaped their labour market demands in part around their view that Newfoundland workers made good temporary employees.

¹¹⁰This assumption is based on relief inspectors' and magistrates' reports from the key catchment areas, which provided extensive descriptions of the most destitute. These families were largely isolated by their poverty, with little access to transportation and communication links, as well as lacking in basic necessities such as food and clothing. It is unlikely that their daughters would have migrated out.

¹¹¹Occupations of heads of households of daughters who moved to Grand Falls were derived from a variety of sources, such as oral history and by cross referencing women who worked in Grand Falls in 1921 and communities of origin. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921*.

women came from households headed by a widowed parent. These women often grew up in large families and they were not always the only daughter who did paid housework. Many of them were beginning to be forced out of the fishery, as the trade in salt cod declined as did other sectors of the local economy. Their cash earnings were, however, undoubtedly crucial to their household economies.

Patricia Thornton's research on household economies in the Strait of Belle Isle from the 1920s to the 1940s demonstrates connections between seasonal variation in household exploitation of resources for subsistence purposes and their cash earnings. While rural households survived by subsistence production, wage work, and survival in a precarious environment, she suggests that cash "was the nucleus around which the rest of the household economy was built." Thus family members migrated out to earn cash.¹¹² In fact, she found that in the 1920s, until 1940, around 70 per cent of income in outport households came from subsistence production, but cash was essential because it tended to generate a "multiplier effect."¹¹³ A household reduced the amount of cash needed to purchase basic foodstuffs and fuel by producing as much as it could, and "limited the use of cash to those goods it could not produce profitably, if at all."¹¹⁴ The implications of

¹¹²Patricia A. Thornton, "Dynamic Equilibrium," 145.

¹¹³Patricia A. Thornton, "Dynamic Equilibrium," 147.

¹¹⁴Patricia A. Thornton, "Dynamic Equilibrium," 154.

this dual economy for individual members of households were that migrants remained connected to their households:

the mechanism of temporary out-migration for additional wage income provided a strong bond between a rural household living in the Strait and its members living in urban centres. Ultimately, this often created a migration channel which resulted in the wholesale movement of extended families to the city, the urban members providing immediate subsistence needs and connections as well as information.¹¹⁵

Thornton's inclusion of a daughter's wages from domestic service as an item in the commercial income column of a prototypical household budget for the Strait of Belle Isle underlines the importance of their earnings to the household economy.¹¹⁶ That daughters' earnings in service were an important component of the household economy did not, however, necessarily mean that they had effective control over their labour.¹¹⁷

In the 1930s, for instance, the Commission of Government considered widows eligible for permanent poor allowances if their sons were under the age of 16 and if their

¹¹⁵Patricia A. Thornton, "Dynamic Equilibrium," 157.

¹¹⁶Patricia A. Thornton, "Dynamic Equilibrium," 146.

¹¹⁷Robert Sweeny's research on merchant account books from Bonavista highlights the patriarchal political economy of the fishing household. He found that despite the importance of the labour of fishers' daughters in the creation of value (in curing cod or conducting other reproductive labour in and out of the household), domestics who did this kind of work were credited "only \$14 to \$18 for their entire year's work" on somebody else's account. Robert Sweeny, "Merchant Credit Strategies in Outport Newfoundland," in James Candow and Carol Corbin eds., *How Deep is the Ocean?: Essays on Canada's Atlantic Fishery* (Sydney, N.S.: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1997) 136.

daughters were under the age of 17.¹¹⁸ Otherwise it was believed their children would support them. In addition, relief inspectors who, under the Department's regulations, were responsible for reviewing each relief case individually often considered the activities of daughters in their decisions. For example, one relief inspector contemplated cutting off the relief ration of one family on the basis that the daughters were not sending money home to their father. Instead, the inspector noted, they were using their wages to buy clothes, and he noted "I am cutting this relief down to \$6.00 per month as I [also] believe his son is making some money."¹¹⁹ The same inspector viewed families with more "industrious" daughters more favourably. One household headed by an inshore fisherman was granted its full relief ration because the inspector believed, "[t]hey are very industrious and have tried various places to get employment and may get a job in Rencontre mine in the spring. He has a daughter working at Belleoram earning \$4.00 per month and \$2.00 of which she sends home."¹²⁰

¹¹⁸"Qualifications For Recipients of Permanent Poor Allowances Including Scales of Payments," n.d., Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-1-6, File 6, PANL.

¹¹⁹Const. Martin, Relief Inspector for Bay L'Argent reporting to the Department of Public Health and Welfare," 20 February 1937, GN38, S6-6-1, File 9, PANL. This family's two daughters were working in Corner Brook and Rencontre East, where they earned \$7.00 and \$3.00 per month respectively.

¹²⁰"Relief Inspector for Bay L'Argent reporting," 20 February 1937.

4.6 Women's unpaid work before migration

Oral history enables us to begin to understand both the specific and general circumstances under which young women left their homes to go to Grand Falls, and how this migration was mediated by the ever-changing combination of social and economic circumstances, patriarchal relations in fishing households, and traditional patterns of work. It also enables us to understand that though these women's choices were restricted, they were not passive victims of oppression.

Interviews with former Grand Falls domestics suggested that domestic work was central to their identities before they migrated to the company town, because many of them had gained considerable experience doing paid and unpaid domestic and fishery-related work before they migrated. The nature of their pre-migration work was shaped by factors such as the economic activities of their parents' households (varying seasonally) the number of sons and daughters living at home, and the health of fathers, mothers, and siblings.¹²¹ The story of Martina L., who moved to Grand Falls in 1929 from Fleur de Lys in White Bay, underscores this pattern of experience.

Martina L. was the oldest daughter in a family of six children, two girls and four boys. Her father was a fisherman, who also did carpentry, worked in the woods in the winter, and sometimes cut railway ties for a minimal amount of money. Her brothers were

¹²¹See Robin Haines et al., "Migration and Opportunity," for a discussion of British women immigrants to South Australia to work as domestics. These women migrants had significant domestic work experience, according to the study, which was based on passage records.

engaged in similar kinds of work. When she was twelve her father died and she had no choice but to quit school to help her mother carry out the various household duties that were necessary for their family's survival. Her sister was ten years younger and married at the age of eighteen, therefore lessening her long-term responsibilities to her parents' household. Martina L., however, worked long hours doing domestic and fishery-related work in her parents' household:

I did everything my dear. I was seven years old when I mixed my first bit of bread. I used to wash and scrub. We had bare boards, we had no carpets...And when I got old enough and big enough to cook, I did the cooking. I used to wash dishes and make beds, everything that was to be done. Because when Dad died, Lord mercy on him, Mom had to get out and work to earn our bread and I had the house to look after. I had to leave school when I was twelve years old and do housekeeping. I was in Book Six. I had to leave school because Mom had to get out and go to work. She would work in the garden, work in stages, she would look after houses and whatever she could lay her hands on, she would do it.¹²²

Her widowed mother's varied and short-term work, within and outside of the household, meant that Martina L.'s responsibilities at home increased.¹²³ While her mother eventually remarried, as few women could survive during this period without attaching themselves to a man, her stepfather was a widower with six children, which doubled the size of the family.

¹²²Interview with Martina L.

¹²³For a number of years, Martina L.'s mother was a postmistress from her home, for which she earned \$12.50 quarterly.

Like most women who lived in fishing households Martina L. did not go out to catch the fish, but she was involved in shore work, which involved putting away the fish and preparing it for market. The nature of her work changed over the years. After she spent a small amount of time “tending the tables” where the fish had been laid, she moved on to “cutting throats,” which involved slitting the fish’s throat and belly nearly to the tail. Her job became more specialized over time, as she was given jobs such as “heading” and “splitting” which were generally perceived as a male preserve because of the brute strength required. “Heading” involved breaking off the head and taking out the stomach, and “splitting” involved taking out the back bone and washing the fish before salting. Typically, she also worked in the family’s vegetable garden with her mother and siblings. In response to a question about whether she was paid for the work she did at home she replied: “No because it was family work. We didn’t get paid for doing work like that. We used to wash the fish then and take the fish and spread it out. Everyday there was so much work to be done with fish...”¹²⁴ Within the family fishery, daughters’ work within the household created value for the household, but they did not always expect to be paid for it.¹²⁵

¹²⁴Interview with Martina L.

¹²⁵In her case study of the Fogo Island fishery, Bonnie McCay argues that it was not until the 1970s that women began “to expect that one should get paid for one’s work.” See, Bonnie McCay, “Fish Guts, Hair Nets, and Unemployment Stamps: Women and Work in Co-operative Fish Plants,” in Peter Sinclair ed., *A Question of Survival*, 113.

Another woman, from Musgrave Harbour on the northeast coast, who eventually moved to Grand Falls, did not remember doing fishery-related work in her parents' household; rather, she stated, "My mother had me trained. I didn't do any fish work, my father was a fisherman."¹²⁶ Fishery-related experience for young women varied regionally, and did not always prove central to their early lives; many instead were forced out of their households. Most young women were trained by their mothers from a young age in household production and domestic tasks;¹²⁷ the ability of all mothers to work alongside their daughters was, however, often hampered by illness, childbirth, and death.

Stella B., who grew up in a small coastal community near Twillingate, worked in her family's vegetable garden and performed fishery-related tasks in her parents' household before leaving home for Grand Falls in the late 1920s. Her father operated a schooner on the Labrador. When Stella B. was still in school, her oldest sister moved to St. John's to take a situation as a domestic, her younger sister was physically disabled, and her mother was ill. Since she was the only daughter remaining in the household and capable of doing the work, her parents depended on her labour. Though the domestic tasks she performed inside and outside were arduous, she described her participation as an honour:

¹²⁶Interview with Sarah C., Grand Falls, 1998.

¹²⁷On daughters' apprenticeship to their mothers in Stephenville, Newfoundland; see Cecilia Benoit, "Mothering in a Newfoundland Community: 1900-1940," in Katherine Arnup, Andr e L evesque, and Ruth Roach Pierson eds., *Delivering Motherhood*, (London: Routledge, 1990).

I was the only one of the girls who went out with the men working. I was always the one that Dad called. If he was up in the garden at the potatoes, he'd come in and he'd say to Mom, "Tell [Stella] when she comes out of school to take off her school clothes and come out with we..." I must have been some important.¹²⁸

While her father was away fishing on the Labrador, which usually involved months of absence from home, Stella B. and her younger brother were expected to catch the caplin. Male absence from home for extended periods often reshaped the roles of sons, daughters and wives in the rural household, as they often performed tasks which would normally have fallen to the husband/father. When asked if she got paid for her work in the fishery, Stella B., like Martina L., replied that she did not. However, she did note that her father gave her gifts of clothes:

My Dad used to buy clothes for me. He knew I deserved it and when Christmas came Dad and Mom used to go down with their fish and he'd always buy a Christmas present for me. It was a pretty blue coat. I thought I had me fortune. I had this coat for Christmas and the rest of the sisters said "how come you got a coat and I didn't." I said "I worked for it." He would always give me some clothes. He couldn't pay me. They wouldn't have no money in the winter. A fishermen's life is not an easy life.¹²⁹

When she was asked what her mother did, Stella B. replied, "Mom used to do light work...but Dad wouldn't let her do too much"¹³⁰ because she was ill. Stella B.'s responsibilities for unpaid domestic work in her parents' household, therefore, increased:

¹²⁸Interview with Stella B., Summerford, Newfoundland, 1996.

¹²⁹Interview with Stella B.

¹³⁰Interview with Stella B.

My mother was sick nearly all the time and spent a lot of time in bed and I used to go to school and a good many mornings I had a lot of work to do before to get to school. Mom was the kind everything had to be finished. I had to wash the dishes and make the beds, do everything we could and clean up the kitchen some mornings. On good many mornings I went to school with a book in my hands learning my spelling. Because if I got in and didn't have my spelling right the teacher would give us the strap and throw us up in the corner.¹³¹

While the links between health and patterns of young women's paid and unpaid work have not yet been thoroughly researched, it has been established that many young women had to take on the role of "woman of the family" if their mothers were either incapacitated or dead, which were responsibilities some women have described as "regular maid's work."¹³²

Households which depended on petty commodity production and the exploitation of a variety of resources needed large families to safeguard them against illness, disability, old age, and death; if they did not have access to daughters and sons, they sometimes needed the help of a young woman from another household.¹³³ For example, Doris A., who left her northeast coast home at the age of 17 to work as a domestic in the nearby

¹³¹Interview with Stella B.

¹³²Linda Cullum and Maeve Baird, "A Woman's Lot," in Linda Kealey ed., *Pursuing Equality*, 78. O'Dwyer interviews, 6 and 26, underline the connection between hiring of domestics and women's poor health.

¹³³For a discussion of family size and household production, see Paul Phillips and Erin Phillips, *Women and Work*, 84.

community of Change Islands in the 1930s, described the variety of tasks she performed as those that would have otherwise been the preserve of the household head's wife:

The next year I went out with a girl whose mother wasn't well...she was crippled up with arthritis. That was in Fairbanks...They had their own business. They had their own fishing gear. He was a shareman. We always had cows. I used to milk the cows. I'd do it all, my dear. We used to do the wool. You had to card it and spin it and twist it. Everything grow: potatoes, carrots, turnips, beets, we had everything.¹³⁴

The broader social and economic context of government retrenchment of social and medical services most likely led to an increase in young women's shouldering of the burden of unpaid domestic and caregiving work within households in the interwar years.¹³⁵ Besides the ongoing curtailment of relief provisions, in the late 1920s, there were drastic declines in the number of doctors, and there was a near elimination of all the island's nursing stations, which provided services to rural regions throughout the early 1920s.¹³⁶ It is therefore not surprising that in interviews poor health of parents, other relatives or employers often impacted young women's roles within the household, the type of tasks they did, the amount of responsibility they had, and their decisions to leave.¹³⁷

¹³⁴Interview with Doris A., Grand Falls, 1998.

¹³⁵*Amulree Report*, 595-607.

¹³⁶ In 1911 there were 119 doctors on the island, decreasing to 110 in 1911, and to 83 by 1933. Furthermore, in the early 1920s there were 25 nursing centres on the island which had decreased to four in 1933. *Amulree Report*, 211-17.

¹³⁷O'Dwyer interviews, 1, 2, 4, 10, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 22, and 29. These women mentioned that one, or both of their parents were ill when they were growing up as a factor in the type of work they did when they lived at home and whether they went away or not. Stella B., Martina L. and Doris A. all described illness of their mothers, or death of

In general most of the women interviewed viewed their departures from home as inevitable and linked to leaving school. When asked how her parents reacted when she left home for the first time, one woman stated: "My mom never had no education. If you could read or write that was it then. When I got up to primary, then [I left]."¹³⁸ Another woman, who left her northeast coast home to work in St. John's before moving to Grand Falls, replied to a series of questions about her departure in the following way:

Q: When did you leave home?

A: I left I suppose when I was, what, 14 or 15, went to St. John's. I went to work.

Q: Why did you leave home?

A: There was no money, my dear, then...there was nothing.. You could forget school...I learned how to read and write when I was in Grade Three. I left, I had to.

Q: What did your parents say?

A: Never said anything. They knew I had to go. They all left one by one. The boys went to one place and another. Went to war, went to forestry. My father went to forestry, too, along with my brother.¹³⁹

Significantly, while her choices were restricted, she perceived her migration as a continuity with the departure of her brothers and father.

a parent as a factor in shaping their decision to leave. On health care and women's issues in Newfoundland and Labrador, see Cecilia Benoit, *Midwives in Passage* (St. John's: ISER, 1991).

¹³⁸Interview with Doris A.

¹³⁹Interview with Mary C.

Women living in coastal communities had limited access to formal education in the interwar years, as education was not compulsory in Newfoundland at that time. The literacy rate of domestics working in Grand Falls in 1935 was approximately 60 per cent, compared with a rate of 100 per cent for young woman who grew up in Grand Falls.¹⁴⁰ In 1935 in Newfoundland, 23 per cent of children between 6 and 14 years old did not attend school for one month.¹⁴¹ The majority of those not attending school were not from towns like Grand Falls, where formal education was readily encouraged by the AND Company and the community's leadership.

Stella B. made her decision to leave her parents' household to move to Grand Falls independently, in consultation with her mother, and in defiance of her father:

I dare say I was thirteen when I went away to Grand Falls. That's one summer when Dad went on the Labrador. [Her Mother said], "You knows your father's going to be mad when he comes home and you're gone," [to which Stella B. replied], "well I don't care it's a big family...I'd like to get out and earn some money myself and buy a bit of clothes, [to which her mother responded] "No trouble to know your father's gone...you wouldn't be going in there [to Grand Falls] this day." "That's O.K." [Stella B. said] "He won't say nothing...When Dad come home again and he wants me to

¹⁴⁰*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935*. Nine out of 153 domestics could not read and write in 1935. The rate for domestics, however, was higher than the rate of general population.

¹⁴¹This percentage is based on 1936 Department of Public Health and Welfare statistics that of 60,122 school age children (between 6 and 14 years old), on the island, 14,320 did not attend school for one month of the previous year. "Draft Despatch re: school attendance," March 1936, Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-1-5A, File 4, PANL. The Department pointed to lack of clothing; poor health, the need for older pupils for home duties, lack of books; inability to pay fees, and no schools as reasons for these low levels of attendance.

come home I'll come home." But I never came home 'til December month.¹⁴²

While power imbalances between fathers, mothers, daughters, and sons played a part in determining where young women went to work and when they left, perhaps Martina L.'s description of her departure from home as inevitable best symbolizes the lack of choice that many of these women had during this period:

Mom didn't mind, because she knew I had to get out on my own, because that's what we always used to do then. When we'd get to the age that we were leaving home, we'd go somewhere. We had to go away from home because there was no place home to go to work, because everybody had their own help. Mom didn't like it but she knew I had to go. I was going out on my own and I had to take care of myself.¹⁴³

The silence of Sarah C. when asked how her parents reacted when she left home illustrates too these women's lack of choices:

Q: What did you do in your parents' house?

A: Housework. 'Til I went to St. John's and I was in there for seven years and then I left and went to...

Q: What did you do in St. John's

A: Housework. I was there for seven years in St. John's and then I went to Botwood.¹⁴⁴

Equally important, though parents could not always keep daughters at home for economic reasons, they were often sorry to see their daughters leave; and their departures were

¹⁴²Interview with Stella B.

¹⁴³Interview with Martina L.

¹⁴⁴Interview with Sarah C.

often eased in instances of kinship connections:

I leaved home when I was fifteen years old. I come down here with my sister. They [my parents] knew I'd be all right with my sister. My other sister went to St. John's.... It was all housework.¹⁴⁵

4.7 Shipping out and paid domestic work before migration

Many young women who moved to Grand Falls would have had previous experiences working in domestic service for pay before migration, further enhancing the centrality of unpaid and paid domestic work in their lives. In Newfoundland during this time, it was typical for young women from fishing families, who were not needed at home to work for a family member in a nearby community, in merchant houses as domestics, or in households of more successful fishers.¹⁴⁶ Some of these arrangements were short-term -- for the summer months -- others were negotiated as longer-term arrangements between adults. This was widely known as "shipping out."

The term "ship" derived from the migratory fishery when planters would "engage a person for service as a member of a fishing or sealing crew; to agree to serve in a crew."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵Interview with Nellie M., Grand Falls, 1998. In 1923, at the age of fifteen, Nellie M. left her parents' household in Dildo, Trinity Bay, to work as a domestic in her sister's Grand Falls household.

¹⁴⁶Bonnie McCay also discusses young women hired out as "servant girls" in the Fogo island fishery, See Bonnie McCay, "Fish Guts, Hair Nets, and Unemployment Stamps," 111.

¹⁴⁷G.M. Story et al. eds., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) 472.

By the middle of the 19th century, the meaning of the term changed to encompass a work arrangement whereby a person would “engage for domestic or other employment on land or in activities other than the fishing enterprise; to agree to such service.”¹⁴⁸ By the mid 19th century, according to George Story, “ship” could mean to sign a contract to work in the woods for specified length of time; similarly a young woman, or daughter, employed for household work was said “to be shipped to her employer.”¹⁴⁹ Although Story does not elaborate on why Newfoundlanders retained the term “to ship” to describe logging and domestic service, it is likely that transformations in the economy affected these occupations more than others. Remuneration for these both domestic service and logging was based on a contract even if only implicitly.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸G.M Story et al., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, 482.

¹⁴⁹G.M. Story et al., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, 482.

¹⁵⁰In Newfoundland during the interwar years, domestic servants’ working arrangements were outside the state’s regulatory structure, such as it was. Master and servant legislation of the time, which was intended to ensure labour peace and guarantee a supply of labour in the fisheries, made no specific reference to domestic servants. In addition, after 1858 master servant legislation required employees to sign a written contract, but most domestics working in private households during this period did not. Domestics would have had to sue their employers in the event of a grievance. This would have prevented many young women from pursuing action against employers. For the Act, see “Of Masters and Servants,” Chapter 123, *The Consolidated Statutes of Newfoundland*, Vol. II, 1916 (St. John’s: Robinson and Company, 1919). For a discussion of the 1858 legislation, see Fred Winsor, “The Newfoundland Bank Fishery,” 157. It has been argued that in Canada after World War I, domestics were specifically excluded from legislation governing workplace relations because they were viewed as “safe within the family.” Nicola Cunningham, “Seduced and Abandoned: The Legal Regulation of Domestic Workers in Canada,” unpublished Masters of Law thesis (York University, 1991).

Such arrangements were common in early 19th century Upper Canada when farm women often employed their neighbours' daughters as "help" after consulting with these girls' parents. The disparity between employer and employee in these negotiated arrangements was less pronounced than in more formal domestic service arrangements; the young woman would work *with* the family, as opposed to *for* the family, in exchange for a small wage and room and board.¹⁵¹ There was a major shift from "help" to domestic service in the late 19th and early 20th century, as the demand for daughters' labour in household production decreased.¹⁵² The co-existence of both patterns of women's work in Newfoundland meant that young women often moved in and out of these types of situations throughout the interwar years.¹⁵³

For example, Martina L. was a domestic servant in three different communities before she moved to Grand Falls. She went to Coachman's Cove -- a six-mile walk from her home -- to help her aunt, who had just given birth to a child, with household chores

¹⁵¹Elizabeth 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).

¹⁵²Elizabeth Jane Errington, *Wives and Mothers*, 130. Faye Dudden, *Serving Women*, makes a similar argument for the United States.

¹⁵³See Stella Ryan's *Outport Girl* for a vivid account of the variety and complexity of paid and unpaid work experiences of a young woman who grew up in Robert's Arm, Notre Dame Bay, in the interwar years. This woman moved from Robert's Arm to Pilley's Island and back a number of times to work in a variety of households, including that of her step-brother and his wife who ran a boarding house for loggers who worked for Bowaters. Her work experiences were shaped by a combination of economic necessity, family need, as well as demand.

while her uncle was away in Philadelphia. Her explanation of her payment is suggestive of the complex connection between male absence, patterns of outmigration, and the exchange of goods and services between family members:

I stayed out there one whole winter...she was going to have a baby and Uncle Dave...he was...that was when there was a big rush that went up to Philadelphia and Uncle Dave went too....When Uncle Dave came home he brought me a pair of boots and the legs of them were this long. And that's the payment I got. Right up to my knees. Grey boots they buttoned right down to the toe. I was made up, my dear...I had a beautiful pair of boots....And that summer he gave me a pair of overshoes, they were black shiny and the heel was about that high and what I had for my Sunday shoe all that summer was that over shoe with a heel of a shoe put in it. I was a queen....If we got a new garment of clothes we'd take the best of care of that.¹⁵⁴

When her aunt had recovered, Martina L. moved to the Grey Islands¹⁵⁵ -- a now-resettled community in White Bay -- where she worked in households doing fishery-related work and domestic labour:

The last time I worked to have a lot of work to do with fish was at Grey Islands. That's what I was doing down there and doing housework too. After I left and went away from home I never did any more fish after that unless I was home when they were working at it. Like up to the house you know.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴Interview with Martina L.

¹⁵⁵In the early 19th century the Grey Islands, which included Bell Island and Groais Island, were favoured sealing and fishing stations for Conception Bay and Notre Dame Bay fishers. By the late 19th century they were permanently settled by those who relied on the seal and cod fisheries. The population was resettled to various locations in White Bay in the 1960s. Joseph R. Smallwood ed., *Encyclopaedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, 1981-94) Vol.2, 744.

¹⁵⁶Interview with Martina L.

Little Bay Islands was Martina L.'s last place of employment in service before going to Grand Falls. During the winter she was there she met other young women domestics and her memories centred on the fact that she was part of a group of other domestics in her time off:

When I was on Little Bay Islands I worked with Mrs. T. and when she didn't want a servant girl anymore I worked with her sister and I stayed there for two and half years. I loved Little Bay Islands....There was a lot of servant girls ...every girl had the same night out and there was one lady, Mrs. Howell, and there was eight of us girls and she started a club for us called "the Girls Own" and that's where we learned how to do fancy work. Some nights we'd bring a basket with us and have tea. We gave her a surprise party and each one of us gave her a little gift, well, she didn't know what to do, my dear....It was in the winter time, you know, and we had nowhere to go.¹⁵⁷

She did not relate having a similar experience since.

She left Little Bay Islands at Christmas to return home briefly before moving to St. John's to join a friend who had found her a situation. Her plans were changed, however, because one of her uncles was home from Grand Falls where he worked as a grinderman, and he convinced her to come with him:

Uncle Joe was home from Grand Falls and he was looking for a couple of girls. There was people in there wanted girls. Servant girls you used to call them...Uncle Joe said to drop St. John's and come to Grand Falls with me, he said, "You have people belong to you in Grand Falls and you have no one in St. John's." So that's what I did.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷Interview with Martina L.

¹⁵⁸Interview with Martina L.

That winter she boarded a freight train at Lewisporte with her Uncle and never returned home. To a certain extent, therefore, kinship connections played a role in all of the situations she found, including her move to Grand Falls.

Stella B. did not work for pay outside her parents' house before she moved to Grand Falls. However, she had a friend working as a domestic for Mr. Cohen, a local businessman in Grand Falls Station. Upon her arrival she recalled meeting Mr. Cohen because he knew of mill workers who were looking for domestic servants in their homes.¹⁵⁹

Some women had previous experience working as domestics in St. John's. For example, Margaret C. explained that she first moved to St. John's when she left her parents' home because she had an aunt in St. John's "living with some people who wanted a maid."¹⁶⁰ In response to a question about why she left St. John's to go to Grand Falls she replied: "Why Grand Falls? Spice of life I suppose. There was a job opening there. I didn't know anything about it but I come. It must have been me nerve, I guess?"¹⁶¹ Sarah C. also first moved to St. John's because she had a friend working as a domestic who had found her a situation. She worked there for seven years before moving to Botwood to work for an AND Company manager as a cook.¹⁶² Underlining the variety of

¹⁵⁹Interview with Martina L., and Stella B.

¹⁶⁰Interview with Margaret C.

¹⁶¹Interview with Margaret C.

¹⁶²Interviews with Margaret C., and Sarah C.

circumstances that led these women to the mill town, another woman recalled moving to Grand Falls from Carbonear in the late 1930s, because she had read about the town in her school geography text book.¹⁶³ She was also resistant to the idea of moving to the much larger centre of St. John's.

Many women living in the catchment area for Grand Falls did not make the move. Doris A., the only daughter in a family of six children in a northeast coast town, recalled working in three households in her home community before she left to work for a family in a nearby place: "I had a first cousin who went to Change Islands and she had heard that this missus wanted a girl so she told me...I went down with her. I was 17 or 18." When asked if she ever went to St. John's or Grand Falls, she responded, "No, because we didn't know much about that because we were only in outports...There was no Trans Canada highroads...we didn't know much about that."¹⁶⁴ Interestingly, she remembered that her brothers worked in Corner Brook and Grand Falls temporarily when they were not fishing on the Labrador.

The establishment of the pulp and paper industry within the region created a labour market which became increasingly stratified over time, by gender and by occupational status. It reinforced and perpetuated pre-existing social inequalities within the catchment area and created new inequalities, such as that between daughters of mill workers and

¹⁶³Interview with Alison G., Grand Falls, 1996.

¹⁶⁴Interview with Doris A.

migrants. The migration of the core permanent workforce and their families, and the migration of domestic servants were inextricably linked because the source communities for both sets of migrants were generally the same ones. Though there were compelling similarities in these migrations, gender did matter; male and female migrants were not interchangeable. Daughters left home because their options were restricted within the local economy, and within their households of origin. The patriarchal productive relations of the family fishery, which generally favoured sons over daughters, their families' limited access to medical services, public relief, and formal education for children all restricted these women's choices and influenced the kind of work they did in their parents' households. In fact, paid and unpaid household work formed an integral part of their self-definition before they migrated to Grand Falls, because many of them had moved in and out of paid and unpaid domestic and fishery-related work from a young age. Most of the women interviewed did not mention the prospect of marriage perhaps because they knew that the general context of economic dislocation and poverty for many households in the interwar years prevented men and women from marrying young.¹⁶⁵ Despite these restrictions on their lives, they were dynamic complex and varied, and the co-existence of

¹⁶⁵In fact, Barbara Neis has shown that in 11 fishing districts there were 770.8 women per 1,000 men in 1935. From "Shipped Girls," 192. The testimony of loggers to the Bradley Commission on logging reveals that many of these men were not able to set up their own households because of their meagre earnings. The pulp and paper companies actually preferred single men because they were "generally prepared to come into the woods for their board because they have no other way of getting anything to eat." "Deposition of Patrick P., 20 April 1934, *Bradley Papers*. For a more detailed discussion of marriage patterns, see Chapter 7.

more formal domestic arrangements in places like Grand Falls and St. John's and more traditional patterns of women's work such as 'shipping out,' and working on the shore, contributed to that variety. The fact that they found work in Grand Falls was also shaped by employer demand, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Five

“They Were Needed:” Social Differentiation and Employers of Domestic Servants

There was a steady demand in Grand Falls for live-in domestic servants throughout the interwar years. Households from all social groups, including management, business owners, professionals, and skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers employed domestic servants. The town’s workingmen’s hotels and the company-run Staff House also depended on live-in domestic help to cook and clean for those who boarded. The nature of the demand and the wages domestics earned in different situations varied depending on the socio-economic status of employers, and on the extent to which employers were connected to female family members in the outlying regions. The fact that a substantial number of domestics found work in the homes of mill workers, who were of a similar social origin, also raises a number of questions about the gender dimension of class formation within a specific historical reality.

Historians of domestic service have paid little attention to the diversity of employers of domestics in the interwar years, as their analyses have focussed on middle-class and upper class employers, which was the most representative group.¹ This relative

¹One of the few studies on domestics in the interwar years in Britain, for example, indicated that most employers of domestics lived in middle-class suburbs, spa towns, or booming urban centres during the interwar years. Pam Taylor, “Daughters and mothers.” For Canada see, Marilyn Barber, “The Women Ontario Welcomed.” For the United States see, Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out*.

neglect can be attributed in part to the nature of available sources, as well as the aggregate decline in numbers of domestic servants, as other forms of wage labour became more readily available for working-class daughters. Furthermore, aggregate census figures provide information on domestics rather than employers, and North American middle-class women's organizations, which were perpetually concerned with the shortage of domestics throughout this period, were more likely to leave documentary evidence of their viewpoints than other groups of women, who may also have depended on hired household help at a certain point in the life-course of their families. Another factor is that North American sociologists and historians have generally looked at domestic service in the interwar years through the lens of immigration, as well as in terms of the migration of Black and Mexican women to the industrialized centres of the United States.² The ethnic/racial disparity between employers and domestics in these situations, has meant that scholars have tended to explore these relationships along the lines of ethnic/racial differences as opposed to class differences.³ There have, however, been some exceptions.

Drawing on United States household surveys for selected urban centres during the 1930s, Phyllis Palmer found that workers hired domestics in Lansing, Michigan, an industrial city populated by a large skilled artisanal population (including machinists,

²Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt*.

³Evelyn Nakano Glenn's study of Japanese-American women domestics explores servant-employer relations as primarily an ethnic issue as opposed to class. See Evelyn Glenn, *Issei, Nissei, Warbride*.

draftsmen, and electricians), and in Jackson, Mississippi, a railway town.⁴ Even though Palmer's study did not elaborate on these situations, she explained that workers' ability to pay in Michigan and the availability of black domestics in Mississippi were factors in their servant keeping.⁵ Furthermore, Tera Hunter discovered that in some Atlanta mill neighbourhoods, working-class households employed domestics because of the availability of black women in the late 19th century.⁶ While there are glaring differences between the cases brought forward by Palmer and Hunter and the situation in Newfoundland, it is important to keep in mind that the availability of a surplus of women on the island in the interwar years was indeed a factor, among others, in Grand Falls mill workers' employment of domestics.⁷

This chapter explores issues surrounding the variety of employer demand for domestic servants in Grand Falls during the interwar years, through an examination of the ways in which household circumstances of employers and demand intersected. Particular attention is paid to households as socially differentiated units, embracing wage labour,

⁴Palmer used the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics "Family Disbursements of Wage Earners and Salaried Workers, 1934-1936," in lieu of the census (which is inaccessible to researchers in the U.S) to document her findings of employers of domestics. See Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt*, 9-12.

⁵Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt*, 10-11.

⁶Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom'*, 108-110.

⁷See Shellee Colen and Roger Sanjek for an appeal to researchers of both Third World and Western societies to pay more attention to the lower income employers of household help. Colen and Sanjek eds., "Introduction," *At Work in Homes: Household Workers in World Perspective*, 9

market relations, and more informal relations of exchange and negotiation, and in which hierarchies of migration status and gender operated. In so doing, the chapter seeks to highlight the key differences and similarities that existed between elite and working-class employer demand within one small community. Issues such as women's responsibility for social reproduction and the ability to pay are highlighted. The aim is to provide a context for further discussion of the work and migration experiences of domestics from their own points of view.

Despite its limitations, the manuscript census is one of the few sources available for a systematic identification of employers of domestics in Grand Falls during the interwar years.⁸ To gain an understanding of the various groups which employed domestics during this period, it has been necessary to rely on the occupation of the household head as indicated in the 1921, 1935, and 1945 manuscript censuses as a guideline. In a hierarchical town like Grand Falls, the social status of husbands and wives depended largely on the occupational status of the husband, who derived his status from his role as breadwinner and through the possession of a company house. Wives in part derived their social status and authority from their husbands. Since wives had more direct

⁸Employers of domestics are captured in the nominal censuses for the community of Grand Falls in 1921, 1935, and 1945, which record information on all members of the household, such as age, marital status, relationship to household head, religion, literacy, present occupation, and wages. Census takers' data, however, is uneven across census years. Unfortunately total earnings and street addresses, for example, were recorded in the 1935 and 1945 census schedules but not for 1921. Thus, the occupational category of male breadwinner was used as the basis for categorizing employers according to social status.

involvement with domestics than did men, their power and authority over domestics, and their perceived need for domestics, needs to be viewed as complex and as intermeshed with their husband's position in the mill.⁹

5.1 Female domesticity and elite employers

Notions of female domesticity and bourgeois respectability were features of Grand Falls town life from its inception, even though all residents did not uphold these values to the same extent. While Lord Northcliffe and his wife only visited Grand Falls a few times, their British upper-class conception of female domesticity made a considerable impact on the community's gendered sense of social status. In particular, Lady Northcliffe's social position as wife of the mill owner, and as a woman who did not engage in domestic labour, was mythologised.¹⁰ Her father was involved in the West Indies sugar trade, and she grew up in a large house with servants, and was taught by German and French speaking governesses. As a married woman, she was well-known in England for "entertaining on a large scale" at her own 16th century mansion, Sutton Place. When she and her husband visited Grand Falls, they also attempted to maintain an approximation to their lavish lifestyle, which invariably depended on hired help. One local historian

⁹The issue of men and women employers of domestics is discussed in Julia Wrigley, "Feminists and Domestic Workers," and in Carole Turbin, "Domestic Service Revisited."

¹⁰Alfred Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe) married Mary Elizabeth Milner (Lady Northcliffe) in 1888. Paul Ferris, *The House of Northcliffe*, 127-132.

recounted that when Earl Grey made a visit to Grand Falls in 1906 ¹¹ he apparently “caused something of a domestic crisis for Lady Northcliffe,” because he arrived with a party of seven and Northcliffe’s staff only consisted of one servant at the time, “so she [Lady Northcliffe] herself had to do housework.”¹² By 1909, the Northcliffes had more than one domestic working in their house – a feature Northcliffe used as an enticement in extending an open invitation to Sir Robert Bond to stay at his house in Grand Falls, assuring him that “The house is provided with servants.”¹³ We know little about who these early domestics were, but the fact that the demand had been established during the construction phase of the mill suggests that the process of young women coming to Grand Falls had begun.

While the Northcliffes were of a class and status far outside the reaches of the most elite residents’ grasp, the type of community they established was influenced by their example. For example, activities such as riding in a car, which were outside of most women’s immediate experience during the period, and considered as a pastime of a more leisured class, were associated with Lady Northcliffe in common discourse: “[t]o get a ride in that car, you didn’t know that you were Lady Northcliffe herself,” one woman

¹¹For the political context of Grey’s visit see, S.J.R. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 41-62.

¹²“Anglo Newfoundland Development Company Ltd.,” Chapter 7, 3-4.

¹³“Lord Northcliffe to Sir Robert Bond,” 1 November 1909, *Bond Papers*, 4.03.003.

remarked in an interview.¹⁴ Another Newfoundland-born resident, remarked that Lord Northcliffe had given his father (Mr. B.) a gold watch before he died, and that “Lady Northcliffe used to go to Mrs. B.’s and have a cup of tea. They were real aristocrats.”¹⁵ The daughter of a senior mill worker who moved to Grand Falls in the early 1920s, noted: “People themselves created class distinctions. That wasn’t the company. People coming from outside Grand Falls noticed the class distinctions more than we did....There was Mrs this one and Mrs that one. Now you speak to anyone.”¹⁶ One way that elite wives were able to fit the roles that were relevant to their gender and social status was by hiring domestics servants.

Census data indicates that in Grand Falls during the interwar years, servant keeping had become an elaboration of the bourgeois lifestyle of the elite. Households headed by men with senior positions in the mill, and a few of the senior mill workers and their families were the most consistent employers of domestics. In 1935, 72 per cent of all households with yearly earnings between \$3,001 and over \$5,001 hired domestics compared with 14 per cent of households headed by workers earning between \$601 and \$2,000 per year (see Appendix H). While ability to pay provides one reason for this disparity, factors relating to concepts of respectability and women’s and men’s roles

¹⁴Interview with Jane T., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1997.

¹³Interview with Harold S.

¹⁶Interview with Iris B.

within the household and in the community would have defined these people's need for household help.

A greater percentage of domestics shared the experience of working in elite households in the 1920s and 1930s, than in the period before 1921. For example, in 1921, the upper elite, consisting primarily of mill managers, the town manager, the magistrate, and superintendents employed 4 per cent of domestics. The percentage of domestics working for employers from this group increased to 11 per cent in 1935, and 18 per cent in 1945 (Table 5.1). If we consider households headed by store owners, managerial assistants, and accountants (who were more likely to associate with the elite than other groups) then in 1921, 17 per cent of domestics were employed in elite households, increasing to 26 per cent in 1935, and 32 per cent in 1945. This increase can be explained by the general expansion of this social group. The company hired several accountants, control department personnel, experts, and managerial assistants during the mill reconstruction projects of the late 1920s and early 1930s.¹⁷ Factors such as the decline in supply and demand for domestics after the onset of World War II would also have

¹⁷These men's photos and names were listed under "Company Personnel." The article, written in 1959, featured 90 company employees who held senior ranks, including engineers, accountants, foremen, boss machine tenders, and superintendents. F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress*, 67-71. The process of modernization and the introduction of departments such as the employment department and the control department began in the mid 1930s.

accounted for the proportional increase of these households as employers of domestics after 1921.¹⁸

Table 5.1: Number of domestics employed: by occupation of household head, Grand Falls, 1921, 1935, and 1945. N= 358

1921	1921 %	1935	1935 %	1945	1945 %	category of household heads	types of occupations included
5	4.4	17	11.1	18	19.5	management/elite	mill managers, superintendents, professional
9	7.8	6	3.9	4	4.3	business	store owners
5	4.4	17	11.1	10	10.8	white collar	accountants, sales
47	41.2	67	43.7	37	40.2	skilled/semi-skilled workers	paper makers, grindermen, riggers, millwrights
4	3.5	13	8.4	2	2.1	unskilled workers	labourers
26	22.8	26	17	16	17.4	institutions	hotels, convents, hospital
6	5.3	3	1.9	5	5.4	widows	
0	-	4	2.6	-	-	retired	
12	10.5	0	-	-	-	other	
114	99.9	153	99.7	91	99.7	total	

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921, 1935, and 1945.*

These husbands and wives would have had class-specific ideas about appropriate gender roles within households and in society more generally, informed in part by their

¹⁸For a discussion of the relative decline of domestic service in the World War II period, see Chapter 6.

pre-migration experiences. Many of them were born outside of Newfoundland, in Britain, Canada, and the United States. Others had moved to Grand Falls from St. John's or smaller urban centres on the island, where middle-class notions of bourgeois respectability and female domesticity prevailed among the upper classes.¹⁹ The gender division of labour in middle-class households ideally defined wives as responsible for housekeeping duties, the care of children, and in some cases the management of servants, and duties associated with consumption. Outside the home, many of these women were active in community organizations, social reform efforts, and socializing. In general, the interwar years witnessed a period of change in the status of housewife. Middle-class married women's roles within the home were becoming more professionalized and specialized. In Grand Falls, as in other places outside of Newfoundland, household technologies such as washing machines, electric stoves and refrigerators were not readily available or used during this period.²⁰ This exacerbated the burden of household duties for women of all social groups, as did the fact that many of them had young children.

The roles of daughters were also changing. As opportunities for formal education for daughters of the middle-class expanded, and as it became more acceptable for unmarried women to gain access to the formal labour market, daughters were less likely to

¹⁹For a discussion of the activism of St. John's elite women in the late 19th and early 20th century, see Margot Duley, *Where Once Our Mothers Stood We Stand: Women's Suffrage in Newfoundland, 1890-1925* (Charlottown, PEI: Gynergy, 1993).

²⁰Pam Taylor, "Daughters and Mothers," 124-25.

be expected to pitch in and help with the household tasks. Many daughters of the Grand Falls elite were able to leave the island to attend college or to find work. The town manager's daughter, for example, was away working at the Ottawa Civic Hospital at the time the 1935 census was taken.²¹ By contrast, in most mill workers' households daughters' unpaid domestic labour would have been expected. In coastal communities too daughters' domestic labour remained integral to the operation of the household economy in the interwar years.

In Grand Falls, elite wives' voluntary and social activities outside of the household influenced their perceived need for household help. As one woman summarized succinctly: "I wasn't working but I was involved in everything else. Our golf, our bridge, the red cross. I didn't just sit and I didn't want to sit and do housework all the time. We needed help and we could afford it."²² Another woman remarked, "The lady of the house always had help. Left the lady of the home free to do what she wanted to do."²³ Elite women deemed servant keeping as a necessity – but their needs were shaped by their specific role within the community and in their own homes. To uphold their status as wives they engaged extensively in voluntary church-related and social reform work, and in socializing with women from similar backgrounds. One woman, whose mother had moved to Grand

²¹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

²²Interview with Carmel B.

²³Interview with Violet T.

Falls from St. John's, highlighted the exclusive nature of her social life in stating that "back then" her mother would only speak to the upper class.²⁴ Though voluntary and church-related activities were not confined to elite women, they were the women who had more time to engage extensively in these efforts.

These Grand Falls wives were connected to a broader network of women's social reform organizations, concentrated primarily in St. John's and other smaller urban centres on the island. Many of them participated in organizations such as the Girls' Friendly Society, the Girl Guides, parish church associations, the Red Cross, the Women's Patriotic Association (WPA), the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Great War Veteran's Association (GWVA), and the Grand Falls Charitable Fund.²⁵ Generally speaking, the wives of the AND Company's upper managers and pioneering workers played a leadership role in these organizations.²⁶ Gwendolyn Cooper, wife of the town manager and employer of two domestics, for example, was influential in establishing the Grand Falls branch of the Girl

²⁴Interview with Iris B.

²⁵Interview with Carmel B. On the Girl Guides, see Viola Arklie, "The Girl Guides," in Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 66-67. On the WPA and the GWVA, see "A Review of the Six Years' Work of the Grand Falls Branch of the Women's Patriotic Association, 1939-1945," (Blackmore Printing Co, December 1945); "Grand Falls Home Front Association: First Patriotic Association in Newfoundland to be Formed," *The Veteran: Official Organ of the G.W.V.A. of Newfoundland* 13,2 (December 1940).

²⁶Executives of the W.P.A. and the Ladies' Auxiliary of the G.W.V.A. included familiar elite names, such as Mrs. W. Morrow, Mrs. K. Goodyear, Mrs. J. Manuel, Mrs. L.R. Cooper, Mrs. R. Southcott. Two of these women, Mrs. Morrow and Mrs. Cooper were also involved with the Girl Guides, at the executive level.

Guides, which her sister, Nora Bright of England, set up in 1923. As an extension of their WPA activities, Cooper and other women also joined the St. John's-based women's suffrage campaigns of the early 1920s, canvassing Grand Falls to get signatures on a petition.²⁷ For these women "suffrage was the centrepiece of a more generalized movement of women into civic prominence."²⁸ In other words, according to suffrage historian Margot Duley, these women were concerned with the devaluation of the housewife in society. By the 1930s, married middle-class women turned their attention away from questions of women's status in society and politics toward the island's more immediate social welfare matters.

The gender-specific function they fulfilled in these organizations was indeed encouraged and promoted by their husbands. During the 1930s, for example, the male leadership of the Grand Falls Charitable Fund delegated the task of investigating social conditions in the households of the destitute of Grand Falls Station to their wives: "we have a male investigator but there are cases in which we have to ask some ladies of Grand

²⁷See Margot Duley, "The Radius of Her Influence for Good: The Rise and Triumph of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Newfoundland, 1909-1925," in Linda Kealey ed., *Pursuing Equality*, 50. According to Duley, Cooper was born in England in 1865 and moved to Grand Falls with her husband. She was central to the growth of civic and cultural groups in Grand Falls, including amateur theatricals, folk singing, sports, and help for the blind.

²⁸Margot Duley, "The Radius of Her Influence for Good," 36.

Falls to pay a visit and tell us how we can best help out.”²⁹ As part of this effort, these women lobbied the Commission of Government for a public health nurse for Grand Falls Station because they considered the company-run hospital and the town’s skeletal medical staff were insufficient.³⁰ Since the Fund’s efforts at securing a nurse ultimately met with little success, these women hired domestics to enter the homes of the destitute and infirm by day, to clean, wash, and look after children. In so doing they not only proved their ability to do useful work outside the home, they also sought to improve the housekeeping skills of their working-class sisters in an effort to build a healthier community, even though this strategy did not always prove the best solution.³¹

The Grand Falls elite wives went outside of the normal channels of chain migration to find suitable candidates to work in their own homes. These women were more likely to recruit domestics through the local newspaper than any other group of women in Grand Falls.³² For example, in 1937 the wife of a mill engineer with one child, advertised for a

²⁹“Magistrate Walsh to Department of Public Health and Welfare,” 31 March 1936, Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S4-3-3, File 1, PANL.

³⁰“Magistrate Walsh to Department of Public Health and Welfare,” 31 March 1936.

³¹In 1936, for example, one recipient of domestic help died because she did not have adequate medical attention after giving birth to her third child – a woman was, however, assigned to clean her house and do her laundry while she was ill. The woman who died was 42 and married to a labourer who earned \$200 per year. They lived in a house they rented for \$5 per month. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935*.

³²Out of 17 advertisements placed in the *Grand Falls Advertiser* for domestics to work in private households between 1936 and 1939, all were placed by elite women. Four of these advertisements, however, were placed by the wives of the Blackmore brothers,

“girl for general housework;”³³ Mrs. A.G. Ogilvie, the wife of the manager of the Royal Stores, also advertised for a young woman to do general housework in her household.³⁴ Mrs. Jack Manuel, the wife of future general manager of the mill, and executive member of the WPA and the Ladies’ Auxiliary of the GWVA, expressed a need for a “girl” who could “sew, knit and who was fond of children” in a household where “another kept.”³⁵ Similarly, the wife of a pioneering paper maker from England, and also an executive member of the WPA and the Ladies’ Auxiliary of the GWVA, advertised a position for a domestic servant in her household “where another maid is kept.”³⁶ Another elite woman used the newspaper to recruit a domestic to go to Corner Brook – possibly to work in the house of a friend or an acquaintance, indicating as well that the networks of the elite between both newspaper towns were connecting to a certain extent by this period.³⁷ The qualities and criteria these women specified in their recruitment of domestics were typical

owners of the *Grand Falls Advertiser*. Recruiting agencies for domestics operated in Corner Brook, under the auspices of the Public Services Bureau, and in St. John’s, as the Domestic Help Bureau during the 1930s. No evidence suggests that such agencies operated in Grand Falls, indicating that potential employers may have found it easier to recruit young women willing to take situations here than they did in these other towns. *Evening Telegram*, 30 November 1937, and 28 February 1938.

³³*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 18 September 1937.

³⁴*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 18 December 1937.

³⁵*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 14 January 1939.

³⁶*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 27 November 1937.

³⁷*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 27 February 1937.

of women of the same social status outside of Newfoundland and in St. John's. As one woman noted: "You always had references. You just didn't take anyone off the street."³⁸

Historian Magda Farhni has convincingly suggested that the respectability of middle-class women in pre-World War I Canada often depended on ensuring the respectability of the working-class girls they hired.³⁹ Elements of this notion were also evident in the recruitment strategies of some Grand Falls wives, though in a slightly later period. One superintendent's wife, who was 32 and had seven children, asked prospective candidates "for references."⁴⁰ Other women were looking for "smart girls," and some suggested "good wages paid to suitable person." The appearance of an advertisement in the St. John's *Evening Telegram*, by a woman living at an upper-class address, for "a girl with knowledge of cooking, must have good references, to proceed to Grand Falls," indicated the extent to which these women went to find the right young woman.⁴¹ While not specified in these women's advertisements, it is highly probable they expected to hire a young woman from a coastal community as opposed to an urban-born domestic. The upper- and middle-class women of St. John's often found women from rural communities

³⁸Interview with Carmel B.

³⁹For a discussion of the "respectable" criteria Canadian middle-class mistresses sought when looking for servants, see Magda Farhni, "'Ruffled' Mistresses and 'Discontented' Maids: Respectability and the Case of Domestic Service, 1880-1914," *Labour/Le Travail*, 39 (Spring, 1997) 75.

⁴⁰*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 21 August 1939. Also, *Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1935.

⁴¹*Evening Telegram*, 9 January 1939.

more reliable and worked harder than their urban counterparts during this period.⁴² The St. John's newspapers, for example, were full of postings which explicitly stated "outport girl preferred."⁴³

Though elite wives were outwardly discerning in their recruitment strategies, the criteria they expected from prospective candidates were not always reflected in the wages they paid. One former domestic who had more than seven years experience when she accepted a position as a cook for an AND Company manager in Botwood complained: "I used to do the baking and everything. And that's what she wanted. But see the pay was awful low -- only 10 dollars a month -- and what's that for working...nothing. There's a lot of work attached to it, that housework."⁴⁴

In Grand Falls, as elsewhere during this period, wages were unregulated by the state.⁴⁵ The going rate was, therefore, determined by a combination of subjective and

⁴²See Nancy Forestell, "Times Were Hard," particularly Chapter 4. Carole Turbin discusses the literature on employer preference for domestics from different ethnic, regional or racial backgrounds in "Domestic Service Revisited," 91; Edward Higgs has also linked the hiring of rural girls by the urban middle class to rural depopulation in general in Britain. Higgs stressed that there was a strong moral element in employers' choice to hire rural women. British employers perceived young women from the countryside as morally pure and less likely to quit than their urban counterparts. Edward Higgs, "Domestic Servants in Households in Victorian England."

⁴³Young women looking for situations also identified themselves as "outport girls." *Evening Telegram*, 30 October 1934; 19 November 1936; 17 December 1936.

⁴⁴Interview with Sarah C.

⁴⁵In Newfoundland, domestic servants were excluded from provincial minimum wage regulations until 1991. In 1977, provisions for a special minimum wage for domestics were made in provincial labour standards legislation, but this was equivalent only to half

market factors, such as the balance of supply and demand and the employers' income. Wages would also have been discussed at an individual level between employer and employee. In general the employer would make an offer and the domestic would decide to accept or decline. The going rate would also have been influenced by domestics' collective sense of a fair wage, which some young women would have learned through previous experience or in talking to other domestics. Ideally, according to middle-class advocates, domestics' wages should be set at a rate so that they would remain dependent on their employers. As Dr. Cluny MacPherson elaborated in 1913:

For the Mistress, the pay offered for domestic work should correspond as nearly as possible to that which the girl could probably get in some business occupation....She should not be paid more than the worth of the grade of work which she actually does. The board and lodging which she gets at her place of service should be reckoned as part of her pay....For the Maid – she should not expect higher pay than she knows she can get in some business occupation....If the food which she receives is of a better quality than she would otherwise get, she should count that as just so much added to her wages in pleasure and health and less that much from her doctor's bill...⁴⁶

the minimum wage of workers in other sectors. The women's movement of the late 1970s and 1980s was instrumental in pushing for the full inclusion of domestic servants in the minimum wage regulations. See Elizabeth Batten et al., *Working Women in Newfoundland* (Robinson-Blackmore Printing, 1974). See also Newfoundland Status of Women's Council, "A Brief Presented by the Newfoundland Status of Women Council to the Labour Standards Board Regarding the Minimum Wage Regulation for Domestics," (January, 1980); Linda Cullum and Maeve Baird, "A Woman's Lot," in Linda Kealey ed. *Pursuing Equality*, 102.

⁴⁶Dr. Cluny MacPherson, "Mistress and Maid," c.1913., reprinted in *The Newfoundland Ancestor*, 7,2 (1991) 51-54.

Room and board were also factored into the wage rates, and other intangibles such as food “of a better quality” and sometimes gifts. By the 1930s in St. John’s some employers enticed women by advertising “the highest wages,” while others noted in the advertisement that “the wages were not very large but good chance for suitable party needing a home.”⁴⁷

In general, however, wages (considered in more detail in the sections below) in Grand Falls varied considerably and were unofficially contingent on such factors as the income level of the employer, the age and experience of the domestic, and the relationship between the domestic and her employer. In the 1930s, domestics were generally paid between \$6 and \$15 per month. Census data enables us to estimate that domestics working in elite households, headed by men earning between \$3,000 and \$5,000 a year, could expect to earn between \$10 and \$15 a month – corresponding to the higher end of the range of wage rates.

Unfortunately monthly wage rates were not available in the 1935 census schedules, but total years earnings were. An examination of total yearly earnings of domestics and elite employers reveals a general correlation between income of household head and domestics’ wage rates. It is possible to speculate on the monthly rate since oral history and other sources indicates that there was a ceiling of around \$15 a month for monthly wages in Grand Falls in the 1930s. Two young women employed in a household by a

⁴⁷*Evening Telegram*, 22 April 1936. This advertisement also specified that the young woman must have a reliable reference.

surgeon (who reported earning \$5,880 in the previous year) and a bank manager (who reported earnings of \$3,400) respectively, both reported earnings of \$144 the previous year.⁴⁸ If we speculate that these domestics had been employed for the entire year, then the rate would have been \$12 per month. Five young women reported annual earnings of \$180 in households headed by company managers and superintendents (earning between \$3,750 and \$7,388 the previous year), which if based on year-long employment, would have meant a rate of \$15 per month. Two other domestics reported earnings of \$156 the previous year (or \$13 per month). In 1935, one of these women worked in the household of a superintendent (who reported annual earnings of \$5,000) and the other worked for the manager of the Royal Stores (who earned \$2,800 the previous year).⁴⁹

Oral history reveals much about the ways in which residents' perceived the issue of the affordability of domestic servants in Grand Falls. One woman, whose father was a boss machine tender (one of the most elite positions) said that when her family moved to Montreal in the late 1930s, they did not have household help because "it was too costly to do so."⁵⁰ Another woman noted that when her father died in 1934 her family made many adjustments, including a move from a larger house to a smaller home her mother could afford. In addition, her brother took over the role of breadwinner in the household, and

⁴⁸*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

⁴⁹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

⁵⁰Interview with Carmel B.

the family was no longer able to afford a domestic servant.⁵¹ Overall this range of wage rates in Grand Falls compared poorly with other places during the same time period. For example, the mainland rate of approximately \$40 a month -- half the average monthly wage of a labourer in the Grand Falls mill -- was higher than in Grand Falls.⁵² In California during World War I, domestics earned between \$20 and \$45 per month, which increased 50 cents an hour in the 1930s.⁵³ It also appears that domestics were generally better paid in St. John's in the 1930s. For example, the Domestic Help Bureau was advertising wages between \$10 and \$18 a month in the early 1930s.⁵⁴ These relatively high wages suggest that it may have been easier for some married women in Grand Falls to fulfill their roles as housewives in both a private and a public sense, than it would have been if they were living elsewhere.

In 1934, when Lady Hope Simpson (wife of British Commissioner of Natural Resources, John Hope Simpson) arrived in Grand Falls after visiting several other

⁵¹Interview with Violet T.. There is conflicting evidence regarding the presence of widows in the company town. Elke Dettmer states that widows were expelled from Grand Falls, but census evidence and oral history suggest that this was not entirely the case. Elke Dettmer, "What is Women's Work? Gender and Work in Grand Falls," Carmelita McGrath et al, *Their Lives and Times*, 270.

⁵²On regional variation in Canada, see Magda Fahrni, "'Ruffled' Mistresses and 'Discontented,' 71. According to Fahrni's census research "servants in cities earned more than those in rural areas, and those in western Canada more than those in central Canada, where women seeking employment as domestics were more numerous."

⁵³Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, Warbride*, 149.

⁵⁴*Evening Telegram*, 24 July 1930. In newspaper advertisements wage rates in St. John's ranged from around \$5 to \$20 a month.

communities, including Corner Brook, she remarked: “[Grand Falls] is the nicest town of the lot – a very jolly place – a very English community – rather like an Indian station with its club and all its life complete in itself.”⁵⁵ The town’s completeness, in her view at least, was perhaps attributable to the fact that the men and women she met could meet her standards of upper middle-class domesticity: “we were entertained at the staff house, and we had delightful little suites – bedroom, bathroom & sitting-room. We sat down about 40 to dinner & played games after.”⁵⁶ She was also particularly pleased because, “One of the ladies had a tea-party for us, & we liked the people we met – all so friendly & happy.”⁵⁷ Underlying her relative pleasure with Grand Falls -- as she was unimpressed with other towns on the island -- was the dynamic and ever-changing context of the paid and unpaid domestic labour that made her stay comparable to the standards to which she was accustomed. In her account, unsurprisingly, the female workers employed in the Staff House and those who certainly helped to put on the “lady’s” tea were largely invisible. The sense of English gentility she identified was a common thread throughout the community’s pre-World War II history, linked in part to its historical connection to the

⁵⁵Peter Neary ed., *White Tie and Decorations: Sir John and Lady Hope Simpson in Newfoundland, 1934-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 51.

⁵⁶Peter Neary ed., *White Tie and Decorations*, 51.

⁵⁷Peter Neary ed., *White Tie and Decorations*, 51.

Daily Mail publishing empire, and to the making of the elite within historically specific circumstances.⁵⁸ The employment of domestics was part of that process.

5.2 Hotels as employers

In 1921, around 23 per cent of all domestics worked in the less familial situation of workingmen's hotels or in the company-run Staff House (Table 5.1).⁵⁹ As more workers established themselves in company houses over the interwar period, the proportion of domestics working in such situations decreased slightly to 17 per cent in 1935, and to 18 per cent in 1945.⁶⁰ Domestics working in these more formal situations were often distinguished from their counterparts who toiled in private households. According to one former mill worker, "maids" worked in Grand Falls House and the Staff House,

⁵⁸The ways in which government officials and policy makers contrasted gender roles in Newfoundland during this period with their own hegemonic conception of middle-class female domesticity is a fascinating area of study, which has begun to receive some scholarly attention. See for example, Linda Cullum, "Under Construction: Women, the Jubilee Guilds and Commission of Government in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1935-1941." unpublished MA thesis (University of Toronto, 1992); and Miriam Wright, "Newfoundland and Canada."

⁵⁹Hotels and boarding houses were common employers of domestic servants throughout this period in the industrializing towns of the Atlantic region. D.A. Muise, "The Industrial Context of Inequality;" for Ontario, see Varpu Lindström Best, *Defiant Sisters*.

⁶⁰The Roman Catholic convent, which opened up in the early 1930s, also hired a number of domestics, which would have added to the percentage increase between 1921 and 1935.

“uniformed maids... They were the elite of the servant girls.”⁶¹ Young women working in private households “were never called maids or domestics they were always called servant girls.”⁶²

The AND Company’s only direct involvement with hiring domestic servants was through their operation of the Staff House, otherwise known as the Grand Falls House: “That was all they had to do with maids. The big shots in the company used to come and stay there. The agent that came would sell to the company.... High tech stuff.... Consequently the Staff House was a posh place.”⁶³ Census evidence indicates that the Staff House housed senior managers, such as the Company Director, Secretary Treasurer, Assistant General Manager, and their wives, as well as managerial assistants, such as control department personnel, and agents. Eighty-four per cent of these men and their wives were born outside of Newfoundland, in Canada, the United States, India, Mexico, Scotland, and England, and they were predominantly Protestant in denomination.⁶⁴ They earned well above average salaries, ranging between \$2,000 and \$8,000 a year in 1935.⁶⁵ Distinguished visitors to the town such as John Hope Simpson and his wife also stayed at the Staff House, where they were entertained and fed in an elaborate manner. When union

⁶¹Interview with Richard S.

⁶²Interview with Richard S.

⁶³Interview with Richard S.

⁶⁴There were two Roman Catholics living in the Staff House in 1935.

⁶⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

organizer H.Landon Ladd came to Grand Falls during the loggers strike of 1959, he said that he initially stayed at the Staff House, but when he learned of its significance to the AND Company he moved to a hotel, "because I just didn't feel comfortable... in one of these fancy places."⁶⁶

The company ensured a high standard of living for those boarding at the Staff House. There was one domestic servant hired for every two residents in the 1930s. The superintendents, a married couple of Scottish origin, were placed in charge of hiring and training the domestics. The AND Company paid the staff indirectly by forwarding money to the superintendent's wife, who then paid the domestics.⁶⁷ Martina L. worked in two private households in Grand Falls before she went to work at the Staff House. She said she was the highest paid domestic in Grand Falls in the early 1930s when she earned \$15 per month at the Staff House: "That was good. That was top wages. I was getting the top wages of the girls that was paid in Grand Falls. Down in the Erin House I think they used to get paid 12 down there."⁶⁸ Census data on total annual earnings of domestics working at the Staff House in 1935 indicates that of the seven domestics working at the Staff

⁶⁶H.Landon Ladd, "The Newfoundland Loggers' Strike of 1959," in W.J.C. Cherwinski and Gregory S. Kealey eds. *Lectures in Canadian Working-Class History* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1985) 150.

⁶⁷Interview with Martina L.

⁶⁸Interview with Martina L.

House two reported earning \$175 the previous year, and the other five reported annual earnings of between \$140 and \$150.⁶⁹

Erin House, Cabot House, the Exploits Hotel, and the Workmen's Hotel were the names of other hotels built by the company to house workers who did not have company housing. These establishments were generally run by husbands and wives – the wife being responsible for the recruitment of live-in staff as well as supervision. For example, in 1935 the Cabot House was managed by Lorenzo Moore, born in Change Islands on the northeast coast, and his wife Olivia Moore, born in Carbonear. According to the manuscript census, it was home to 20 mill workers, including a blacksmith, paper maker, book keeper, butcher, grinderman, grocery clerk and a cost clerk. These were men who earned average wages of between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per year. Cabot House also housed five women teachers who would have been ineligible for a company house.⁷⁰ According to a description of Cabot House by a 20 year old British nurse, who stayed there for a few days in the early 1930s, families with children lived there in the period before the 1935 census was taken:

This is a wooden hotel, steam-heated, seldom spring-cleaned, full of people and especially a lot of little boys, all of whom are whooping away as hard as they can. Some doors were open on landings and corridors, and the families camped in the embrasures; the hot air throbbed with jazz from radio and gramophone; high heels clicked in the corridors; shrieks and giggles and noises of all kinds floated up and down from different levels.

⁶⁹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

⁷⁰Interview with Gloria B., *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

All the girls were handsome, flashing, well-vetted, waved, made-up and curled. The young men were equally dashing in smart shirt-sleeves; there was a background sound of constant whooping, but no-one seemed discouraged.⁷¹

Olivia Moore, who also associated with the town's elite, baked pastry and bread in an iron oven in the hotel and sold her products for profit to local retail outlets.⁷² She was also in charge of recruiting the staff, which she did through formal means. She required candidates to write to her stating their age and experience. Moore also placed an advertisement in the St. John's newspaper for an "experienced female Cook," who would "apply giving references and wages expected," suggesting that she was interested in hiring more experienced young women.⁷³ One of her appointments was announced publicly in the local newspaper, signifying that a hierarchy for positions existed in the town. The announcement also linked the successful candidate to the mill town through her community of origin:

The many people in Town from Placentia will be glad to learn that another young lady from their fair town is in our town working as head girl at the Cabot House. She is [Miss Marion G.] and she recently returned from New York.⁷⁴

⁷¹"R.D. to M.K.," 24 November, 1930. Rhoda Dawson Bickerdyke Collection, Coll 198, Box 2, 4.03.003 Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

⁷²The Moores eventually started up a bakery business in Grand Falls, underlining Olivia's direct involvement in accumulating capital for the couple to establish their own business. Exploits Valley Senior Citizens Club, *The Forest Beckoned*, 44.

⁷³*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 5 March 1938.

⁷⁴*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 29 October 1938.

While Marion G. may not have had any kinship connection to the hotel managers, census evidence shows that community links were established between managers and employees in some of the town's other hotels. For example, in 1921 the managers of the Exploits Hotel, born in Greenspond, housed one boarder from Greenspond, and hired a domestic servant from Greenspond.⁷⁵ The community connection between the hotel manager, the domestic, and one of the boarders suggests that informal negotiations influenced recruitment strategies in some cases.⁷⁶

For the most part, young women working in hotels earned comparable wages to those working in the households of the elite.⁷⁷ While age and experience may have been a factor in these higher rates of pay, as most of the young women working in hotels were in their 20s when the census was taken, domestics earned around \$12 or \$15 dollars a month in hotels. Margaret C., for example, who had previously worked in a doctor's household in St. John's and in a mill worker's household in Grand Falls, secured \$15 a month at the Erin House: "That's what I was getting [\$15 a month] then, that was big pay girl. That's what I got when I was in St. John's with the Janes'."⁷⁸ Her association of the relatively high wages she earned in a Grand Falls hotel with those she made working for a doctor in

⁷⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

⁷⁶Interview with Harold S.

⁷⁷Interview with Gertrude L., Grand Falls, 1997; and interview with Martina L.. See Chapter 7 for more on relationships between female hotel proprietors and domestics.

⁷⁸Interview with Margaret C.

St. John's may illustrate a connection between income, age, experience, and wages. In addition, of the six young women employed in Cabot House in 1935, four reported annual earnings of \$144 and two reported \$180 in the census schedule.⁷⁹ Assuming that these women had been employed for the full year, then these earnings would translate into monthly rates of \$12 and \$15 per month.⁸⁰

5.3 Mill workers as employers

In 1935, 14 per cent of households headed by mill workers employed domestic servants.⁸¹ It is highly probable that this percentage is an under-representation. Census data, to be sure, is particularly problematic in providing an accurate count of domestics who worked for mill workers and their families, because as we shall see below, their demand for household help ebbed and flowed over the life-cycle of the family, which influenced the composition of households at any given time. Despite these limitations the snapshot provided by the 1921, 1935 and 1945 manuscript census reveals that mill workers' wives hired proportionally the highest number of domestics than any other social group in the town did.

⁷⁹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

⁸⁰It is difficult to compare the Erin House wage rates with those of domestics working in other hotels. The annual earnings they reported in the 1935, for example, included figures such as \$8, \$80, and \$120. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

⁸¹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

In 1921 for example, households headed by skilled and semi-skilled workers, including paper makers, riggers, oilers, grindermen, millwrights and machine tenders, employed 41 per cent of domestics, increasing to 44 per cent in 1935, and decreasing slightly to 40 per cent in 1945 (See Table 5.1). The wives of unskilled workers represented a small portion of employers, representing 4 per cent of employers in 1921, increasing to 8 per cent in 1935, and decreasing to 2 per cent in 1945.⁸² Less than one per cent of households earning under \$600 annually employed domestics, indicating a rough correlation between wages earned by household heads and the employment of domestics.

According to Grand Falls union officials, in 1933 highly skilled workers earned between 55 and 60 cents an hour for a 48 hour work week (\$1,500 per year), semi-skilled earned between 30 and 45 cents an hour (\$1,100 per year), and unskilled, 28 cents an hour (\$700 per year).⁸³ These rates of pay were comparable with tradesmen, semi-skilled workers, and labourers in St. John's and Corner Brook during the same time period.⁸⁴

⁸²*Census (nominal) of Newfoundland, 1921, 1935, and 1945.*

⁸³"Evidence of Mr. Scott and Mr. Cater," Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

⁸⁴In St. John's, in 1933, a carpenter earned between 30 and 50 cents an hour, an electrician between 60 and 75, a labourer between 25 and 35, and a painter between 40 and 50. "Rates of Pay - General," March 1933, Department of Public Works and Services, G/39, PANL. In Corner Brook in 1934, an acid maker made 70 cents hour, a carpenter between 35 and 40 cents, and a labourer 32 cents. "A. Vatcher (Stipendary Magistrate) Corner Brook to Department of Public Works and Services, re: rates of pay," n.d., Department of Public Works and Services, G/39, PANL. It should be noted that throughout the early 1930s the newsprint companies reduced wages and cut back hours on a regular basis. Wages would therefore have been contingent on a number of other factors, which makes comparison difficult.

The total annual earnings that heads of households reported in the 1935 census schedule generally fell within these categories, but significantly, many of them appear to have earned much more. For example, in 1935 40 per cent of household heads from this social group reported earning more the previous year than the wage rates noted by the union representatives. Many of these were senior paper makers, who reported earning between \$2,500 and \$4,000 the previous year.⁶⁵ The other 60 per cent of mill worker employees earned average or below-average annual earnings.

Grand Falls union representatives argued that wages in Grand Falls were inadequate during the 1930s because of the high cost of living: "A man in Canada or in the U.S. working on the same job is getting his living 30 percent, possibly 50 percent, in some instances, cheaper than we are."⁶⁶ They also argued that the cost of living was higher in Grand Falls than in other regions of the island because of the freight rates connected with inland towns. In the seaports of Corner Brook and Botwood, they argued, flour could be purchased 20 cents a barrel cheaper than in Grand Falls.⁶⁷ Workers also protested the fact that there was little opportunity to supplement their household income by growing surplus produce for purchase:

These people that have a piece of ground around are all right, they are trying to increase their incomes along these lines. Probably they will get

⁶⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

⁶⁶"Evidence of Mr. Cater," Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

⁶⁷"Evidence of Mr. Wall," Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

enough potatoes to last them the winter...the majority of people here have gardens of some description. A lot of these people grow enough for their own summer use, such as small vegetables. Very few can raise enough potatoes to sell any.⁸⁸

The local newspaper was also monitoring the situation during the 1930s. For instance, when wage rates increased by five per cent in 1937,⁸⁹ the *Advertiser's* editor remarked that the cost of living had also increased:

Some little time ago the town was joyous over a 5 % increase in wages throughout the Mill. Now comes this Higher Cost of living, and the 5 % increase is swallowed up until we are no better off than we were before. Of course, without this increase in wages, the rising prices must have struck us much harder.⁹⁰

By the onset of World War II, the cost of living had increased even more sharply.

Between 1939 and 1941, for example, the cost of most food had increased by 40 per cent, and coal by 50 per cent, according to the town's Head Constable.⁹¹ Given that government did not conduct regular reviews of the cost of living until it became a pressing

⁸⁸"Evidence of Mr. Scott," Newfoundland 1933 Royal Commission.

⁸⁹On increase in wages, see *Grand Falls Advertiser*, 20 February 1937.

⁹⁰*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 17 April 1937.

⁹¹See A. Humber, Head Constable, to Hon. Commissioner for Public Health and Welfare, "High cost of living including food stuffs and other commodities within this territory," 18 September 1941, Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-6-4, File 3, PANL. Government countered A. Humber's figures with an assessment of prices at the Royal Stores, and based on that information argued that on average the cost of living in Grand Falls had increased by only 18 per cent from August 1939 to August 1941. "Commissioner for Public Health and Welfare to Hon. Commissioner for Justice and Defence," 10 October 1941, Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-6-4, File 3.

problem within the context of labour unrest in the early 1940s, it is difficult to determine what the cost of living was in Grand Falls during the interwar years.⁹² In addition, since social and working-class historians have begun to question assessments of employment and the standard of living of families that do not take into account the occupations and incomes of sons and daughters, as well as the unpaid domestic labour of wives and children, an exact approximation would be beyond the scope of this study.⁹³ Though a complex matter, the fact that mill workers and their families continued to hire domestic servants throughout the 1920s and 1930s despite the issue of the high cost of living indicates that they may have viewed domestic help as a necessity, and allocated a portion of their earnings to pay for domestic help.

The status of the household head was important in determining if and when a family employed household help, as well as how much they could pay. For example, the son of a semi-skilled worker whose family hired domestics throughout the 1930s linked his father's occupational status with the wages he was able to pay: "Somebody in my father's wage group with a large family could pay out 8 dollars a month" for domestic help.⁹⁴ In

⁹²In 1941 there were ten major strikes in Newfoundland, involving 4,400 workers. See Gregory S. Kealey, *The History and Structure of the Newfoundland Labour Movement* (St. John's: Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, 1986) 112. On government's response to labour unrest in the early 1940s, see Peter Neary *Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World*, 169-70; Bill Gillespie, *A Class Act*, 82-83.

⁹³For a brief historiographical discussion of this issue, see Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager, *Unwilling Idlers*, 112-114.

⁹⁴Interview with Richard S.

1935, James H., an oiler, who reported \$1,724 as his annual earnings for 1934, employed a domestic, who reported annual earnings of \$96 the previous year.⁹⁵ If she had been working for the full year, these earnings would have meant that she made \$8 a month. In 1935, seventeen other domestics reported annual earnings of \$96. The occupations of the household heads for whom they worked when the census was taken included, clerk (\$1,260/year), salesman (\$1,000/year), carpenter (\$1,600/year), plasterer (\$2,400/year), railway agent (\$2,000/year), five paper makers (\$1,500 to \$2,400/year),⁹⁶ and pipe fitter (\$2760/year).⁹⁷

Former domestics also made the connection between the wages they earned and the occupation of the household head – even though they did not always remember the actual job the husband held. Martina L.'s explanation of why she left a situation in a household headed by a carpenter, where she was paid \$8 per month for another household where she was paid \$10 is insightful in that regard:

⁹⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

⁹⁶In 1934, paper makers were more likely to employ domestics, according to census data, than in any other year. In 1920 only two households headed by paper makers hired domestics, but by 1934, 27 paper makers hired domestics, representing the highest number of domestics out of any single occupational group for any census year. In 1944, for example, only seven households headed by paper makers hired domestics. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

⁹⁷It is possible that these young women were not employed in these households the year the census was taken. But the close association of yearly earnings, average wage rates for domestics, and oral history provides evidence that a correlation existed.

Because I got two dollars more. I got two dollars more from Mrs. L. They lived on Mill Road. Right almost down to the mill. Mr. L., he used to work in the mill but it was an office job or something he used to do. Accounting or something.⁹⁸

When asked if the second family was better off than the first, Martina L. responded: "I suppose, they could pay better wages. I don't think they had any children of their own but they raised this girl. They had a nice house too."⁹⁹ Her perception of the status of the family based on the husband's job was telling of the hierarchical nature of the town.

Although workplace relationships between domestics and employers usually took place between women, payment was linked to the husband's position, with considerable variety and overlap between social groups. In 1935, for example, twenty-two domestics reported earning \$120 the previous year. If these women had been employed for twelve months, then their rate of pay would have been \$10 per month. The occupations of the household heads in these instances varied greatly. They included mill managers, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers. In 1935, for example, the domestic working for a mill manager, who reported previous earnings of \$7,132, told the enumerator she earned \$120.¹⁰⁰ The domestic working in the household of the chief accountant (\$5,000/ year) reported an annual income of \$120, as did the domestics working for an engineer

⁹⁸Interview with Martina L.

⁹⁹Interview with Martina L.

¹⁰⁰The mill manager employed two domestics. One of them reported annual earnings of \$168 and the other \$120.

(\$2,616/ year), an iron worker (\$1,000/year), a grinderman (\$1,080/year), and three paper makers (\$2,400/year – \$3,000/year).¹⁰¹ A number of other young women reported annual earnings of \$72, some only \$55 dollars, and others reported no annual earnings. These smaller yearly amounts could have been a marker of a woman's temporary employment. They could also have been an indication of low wages. Certainly, as well, some domestics would have under-represented their yearly earnings in cases where they were sharing their wages with parents or other relatives.

The general correlation between occupation of household head, the employment of domestics, and the wages paid provides only a partial view of the employment of domestics in mill workers' households. Throughout the interwar years, the composition of mill workers' households was a product of negotiations -- historically conditioned, depending on factors such as income, marriage prospects and employment opportunities for sons and daughters. These families also lived within a framework imposed by the company, which made houses available only to the core permanent workforce. In a town where women's work in the household was essential for social reproduction, the presence of older relatives, other kin, and grown children would have increased the unpaid caregiving and domestic work of daughters and wives. While ability to pay was certainly a factor in mill workers' employment of domestic help, factors such as moment in the life-cycle of the household also influenced their decisions. If for whatever reason, families did

¹⁰¹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

not employ domestics, daughters and other female relatives would fulfill the function. While there was some overlap in the activities between elite and non-elite wives, particularly among those married to higher paid, skilled workers, working-class wives would not have had the time to pursue voluntary activities to the extent that other women did. Gender ideology of female domesticity and the elevation of the role of housewife did not appear to be a primary concern of non-elite wives in their employment of domestics. Their relationships to female kin in the outlying areas as well as their increasing workloads within the household determined their need.

5.4 Family life-cycle and kinship

In considering that kin assistance has been historically crucial in working-class households for handling personal family crises such as childbearing, illness, and death, and in coping generally with the stresses of the vagaries imposed by the industrial system, it is not surprising that kinship connections to female relatives played more of a role in the decisions of wives of mill workers to hire domestic help than for their elite counterparts.¹⁰² Mill workers wives were more likely to recruit young women from their communities of origin to help in the household. For example, census data on households employing domestics in 1921 shows that at least thirteen domestics shared the birthplace of the

¹⁰²Tamara Hareven, "A Complex Relationship: Family Strategies and the Processes of Economic and Social Change," in Roger Friedland and A.F. Robertson eds. *Beyond the Marketplace: Rethinking Economy and Society* (New York, 1990) 215-44.

household head or his wife.¹⁰³ These shared communities of origin included, Holyrood and Salmonier (Conception Bay); Pilley's Island (Notre Dame Bay); Open Hall and Britannia (Trinity Bay); Woods Island (west coast); and Bonavista and Tickle Cove (Bonavista Bay) – communities which represented regions that were spread over the catchment area.¹⁰⁴ In 1921, for example, Minnie M., 13, of Open Hall was employed in the household of John W., a rigger, born in St. Brendan's, near Open Hall. John W.'s wife Mary was also born in Open Hall, as was the family's only boarder, also a rigger. The composition of this household was representative of others which had obvious connections to the young women they employed. For example, the household of Joseph M., a screen man, born in Tickle Cove, Bonavista Bay, hired Mary W., at 16, also born in Tickle Cove, as a domestic. The family's only boarder, a repair man, was also born in Tickle Cove. There were four grown children in the house. All of the other households, where domestic and employer shared birthplace, were headed by semi-skilled workers, such as firemen, electricians, acid makers, riggers, beatermen, and drivers. Community connections also meant denominational connections.

The recruitment of domestics through word-of-mouth or through community-based networks of women was also reflected in census evidence of denominational correlations between employers and domestics working in private households. In 1921,

¹⁰³Community connections are impossible to determine between employer and employee for 1935.

¹⁰⁴*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

59 per cent of domestics and employers shared the same denomination, indicating in part that the early migrants maintained links with their communities of origin, hiring the daughters of friends and relatives directly. By 1935, the percentage of employers and domestics sharing the same denomination dropped to 50 per cent,¹⁰⁵ a decrease that perhaps reflected the expansion of hiring networks between young women – they had begun to inform their friends and female relatives of openings. For example, when Stella B., a member of the Salvation Army, was asked to discuss her first situation in Grand Falls, she defined the family by their denomination rather than by their social status: “The first time I went in [to Grand Falls] I stayed with a Catholic family.”¹⁰⁶ She would have typified the experience of a young woman who made connections with employers more formally than directly through kinship connections. In fact, in 1921, only 14 per cent of employers and employees were Roman Catholic – Protestant matches, a percentage which increased to 23 per cent in 1935.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵These percentages are based on manuscript census data on denomination of employers and domestics in the same household (domestics working in hotels are excluded). Situations in which the head of the household and his wife’s denomination differed, but one or the other shared the same denomination were counted as “same denomination.” 1921 data was available for 82 domestics, and 48 shared the same denomination. 1935 127 domestics, and 64 shared the same denomination.

¹⁰⁶Albert James was a paper maker in the mill with a 1935 total reported income of \$1,836. Interview with Stella B.

¹⁰⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921, 1935.*

While servants' denomination was important to most employers, as it was in other places, such as St. John's, where employers often placed advertisements in the local newspaper specifying such qualities as "Protestant preferred,"¹⁰⁸ the heterogenous population of Grand Falls and the wide catchment area for in-migrants meant that among mill workers and their families and domestics, religion and social status were not inextricably linked.¹⁰⁹ Typically, the majority of the town's elite husbands and wives were Protestant. In terms of highly skilled paper makers, however, there appeared to be a reversal of the majority to Roman Catholic by the 1930s.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, that church-related activities played an important role in the lives of most mill workers' wives suggests that they may have learned of young women looking for situations through such networks.¹¹¹

Mill workers' wives did not appear to be as discerning in their recruitment of young women as did wives of the elite. A cross referencing of individuals placing job advertisements in the *Western Star* (the newspaper read by Grand Falls residents before

¹⁰⁸*Evening Telegram*, 17 December 1936, 19 October 1936, and 14 May 1937.

¹⁰⁹In Ireland, for example, "Roman Catholicism was considered the religion of the servant class." Mona Hearn, *Below Stairs: Domestic Service Remembered in Dublin and Beyond, 1880-1922* (Dublin: the Lilliput Press, 1993) 12-13.

¹¹⁰In 1921, 30 paper makers were Roman Catholic and 41 were Protestant. In 1935, 58 were Roman Catholic and 45 were Protestant. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921 and 1935*.

¹¹¹Interview with Patricia O., Iris B., and Eva N., Grand Falls Heritage Society, Grand Falls, 1996.

the *Advertiser* began publication in 1936) and ads that appeared in the *Advertiser* (after 1936) with the manuscript census schedules revealed that mill workers' wives never advertised for help. While this only provides partial evidence that word-of-mouth hiring was more pervasive among mill workers' wives, oral history confirms the prevalence of a pattern of recruitment, in which employers drew on female kin at certain points in the life-cycle of their family. For example, when asked if her mother ever had anyone helping in the house, Daphne L., whose family moved to Grand Falls in the 1930s from the logging community of Badger, replied: "Yes, a distant relation of ours, she always helped my mother. I think she came from Norris Arm."¹¹² In responding to a question about whether the distant female relation was paid, she responded, "Oh yes, she didn't work for nothing." Underlining the complexity of these arrangement, she then said that her mother stopped employing live-in domestics when most of her siblings moved out of the household: "And then we moved [to another house] and mother didn't have so many around her then."¹¹³ While kinship connections between employer and employee sometimes complicated the nature of the arrangement, female kin were not always paid for their domestic labour; as one woman who moved to Grand Falls in the mid 1930s to work

¹¹²Interview with Daphne L.

¹¹³Interview with Daphne L.

for her sister said: "I did housework, I cooked and baked and made bread, at my sister's. She couldn't afford to pay me. They had fourteen children."¹¹⁴

The presence of young children in many mill workers' households during the interwar years meant that wives drew on paid domestic labour and help from daughters of friends and relatives more frequently.¹¹⁵ One mill worker stated:

They [domestics] were needed. Mom, my God, every time she turned around she had a job to do and I can't remember Mom without carrying a baby around. We used to have a three burner kerosene stove. It seems like she was always washing clothes. When a woman had a baby she had to stay in bed for two or three weeks. That was around 1930...We also had relatives who lived up the road on Beaumont Avenue and they would come down. (They had a lot of daughters) There was always somebody to come in and help. Norris Arm, Gambo that's where they all derived from.¹¹⁶

His mother, Helen, was born in Gooseberry Island, Bonavista Bay. At the age of 17 she married Paul S. of Gambo who worked as a logger for the AND Company. Around 1920 she and her husband moved to Grand Falls and shared accommodations with another couple until Paul had secured full-time employment as a rigger in the mill and a company house.¹¹⁷ By 1935 Helen had seven children, ranging in age from 1 to 13 years; also living

¹¹⁴Interview with Nellie M.. Research on British women who were applying for positions as domestic servants in Australia during the interwar years has shown that women defined their experience working for kin as formal domestic work experience. Robin Haines et al, "Migration and Opportunity," 259.

¹¹⁵On working conditions and number of children in the household, see Chapter 6.

¹¹⁶Interview with Richard S.

¹¹⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

in the household was Helen's sister (a tailoress) and a domestic servant.¹¹⁸ In 1945, her husband was still employed as a rigger, and the couple now had nine children living at home. The three eldest sons earned wages as a mason, labourer, and mechanic. Helen's niece also lived in the household, earning \$315 a year as a sales woman. In 1945 no domestic servant was recorded in the census for this household, though, according to her sons she almost always had hired domestic help throughout the period.

In Grand Falls there were approximately 180 to 190 births a year in the early 1930s, according to the AND Company.¹¹⁹ Lady Hope Simpson predicted even higher numbers, reporting that 364 babies were born in Grand Falls in 1933.¹²⁰ Whatever the exact birthrate, the presence of young families in the town had an influence on the demand for paid and unpaid domestic help. Martina L., for example, was acutely aware that some of her situations were contingent on the wife's childbearing. The first family for whom Martina L. worked was headed by a relatively low paid carpenter.¹²¹ She was hired for \$8 a month, as she recalled, because, "Mrs. Mooney was sickly while carrying her baby."¹²² Martina L. worked in that household for eight months, "just long enough until she [Mrs.

¹¹⁸*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

¹¹⁹W.A. Lawrence, *Business Drama Unfolded*, 36.

¹²⁰Peter Neary ed. *White Tie and Decorations*, 49.

¹²¹Interview with Martina L.; *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.* Her employer's total annual earnings were \$400 per year in 1935.

¹²²Interview with Martina L.

Mooney] got on her feet again,” at which point she left for another family, where she earned \$10 per month.¹²³ Her awareness of the temporary nature of her employment in the first household enabled her to bridge into better circumstances.

While mill workers depended on their kinship connections in the hiring process, other life-cycle factors influenced their decisions to hire household help. Typically, upon the death of a wife, for example, a widower often hired a domestic to replace the role she played within the household.¹²⁴ In an interview, one woman recalled she was eighteen when her mother died and she had a younger brother. While she continued to play an increasing role in caregiving and domestic work within the household, her father, a brass moulder in the mill, hired young women to live-in: “We had girls in to take care of us. Then I took care of my father. I used to have a girl come in and help me look after him.”¹²⁵ Another example, found in the census, of a family who coped with the burden of losing its wife and mother by employing a domestic servant was the Murphy family. Harry Murphy was born in St. John’s in 1876. Before moving to Grand Falls in 1911, he and his wife, born in Harbour Grace, stayed in St. John’s, raising five children into their teen age years. Murphy worked in the by-products department of the AND Company in 1921; his

¹²³Interview with Martina L.

¹²⁴Bettina Bradbury discusses the propensity of widowers to rely on women after the death of a wife in Montreal in the 1890s. See Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families*, 195-97.

¹²⁵Interview with Iris B.

15 year old daughter, Kathleen, was a stenographer and his 17 year old son was employed as an oiler. Fifteen years later Harry Murphy, now widowed, was a druggist, earning \$1,633 per annum; Kathleen, still single, reported "housework" as her present occupation, and his son Gary, still living at home, was now a paper maker, earning \$1,200 a year. The family hired a domestic servant who earned \$10 a month at the age of 21.¹²⁶ Census evidence does not indicate a family connection between this employer and the domestic.

In the event that a widower earned a lower income, he would often rely solely on an older daughter or other relatives. For example, census evidence indicates that in at least three households headed by widowers, two sisters and a step-daughter were enumerated as "housekeeper" in 1921.¹²⁷ The use of the term "housekeeper" was uncommon in the 1921 census schedule, in which either the household or the enumerator generally identified young women as "domestic servant" or simply "servant." In 1945, when the supply and demand for domestic help had waned, unattached men, whether single or widowed, continued to have female kin living in their households, such as in the household of one 53 year old bachelor whose niece was listed in the census as "housekeeper," for no wage.¹²⁸ Widows and single men often placed advertisements for "working housekeepers" in the *Evening Telegram*, specifying criteria such as "middle

¹²⁶*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921 and 1935.*

¹²⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

¹²⁸*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

aged or elderly girl required;" or "widow or elderly girl required" by "family of two men in nearby outport."¹²⁹

It was common for extended family, older relatives, or boarders to be living in the households of mill workers during the interwar years. In 1921, 49 per cent of households in Grand Falls had extended family or boarders living in the household, which decreased to 33 per cent in 1935.¹³⁰ Of all private households in 1921, 27 per cent had boarders and 22 per cent had extended family residing in the household.¹³¹ In 1935, 9 per cent of households had boarders and 23 per cent had extended family living in the household.¹³² Many of the domestics working in Grand Falls during the interwar years worked in such situations. For example in 1921 and 1935, ten per cent of domestics working in private households worked in households with extended family members, and in 1921, 23 per cent of domestics worked in households with boarders, decreasing slightly to 18 per cent in 1935.¹³³ Overall these figures are probably an under-representation of the number of domestics employed in households with boarders (who were often kin) and extended

¹²⁹The seemingly contradictory term "elderly girl" meant older domestic, as domestics were often referred to as "girls" in Newfoundland during this period. *Evening Telegram* 27 June 1935, and 17 April 1937.

¹³⁰*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921 and 1935.*

¹³¹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

¹³²*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

¹³³This figure was based on 81 domestics working in private households, of which 19 had boarders living in them. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland 1921.*

family, because of the static nature of the census as a source and the particular labour market conditions at the time the census was taken. Certainly, in such situations, the unpaid caregiving responsibilities of wives and daughters would have been enhanced.

In fact, some of the lowest income earners in Grand Falls paid a young woman to perform domestic tasks in their households, while others appear to have employed young women in exchange for their room and board.¹³⁴ In 1921, for example, out of five households headed by unskilled workers who hired domestics, three had boarders living in the house, and in at least one household there was a direct community link between the domestic and her employer. For example, Marianne L., 15 years, born in Britannia Cove (Trinity Bay) secured work in the household of Tom M. (a labourer) and his wife, both of whom were from Britannia Cove. Three children and four boarders also lived in the household, one of them was also from Britannia.¹³⁵ While it is impossible to determine whether there was a kinship connection between the domestic and her employer in this case, it is relevant that the household's boarder and domestic came from the same community as the employer. Furthermore, in 1935, Adam T., a labourer earning \$840 in the previous year, headed a household with five children and one boarder, also a labourer.

¹³⁴Little documentation exists on the practice of employers' hiring domestics for room and board alone. Interviews and census data revealed that domestics working for room and board alone were the exception rather than the rule in Grand Falls. The possibility that this was done is important to keep in mind when trying to understand how lower income earners afforded domestics. More research, however, needs to be done on domestics working for room and board alone.

¹³⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

The domestic servant, 15 years, was Adam T.'s niece and she reported no wage for her labour, at least according to the census schedule.¹³⁶ We know the least about employers who did not pay their domestics wages. In such cases domestics would have been working for their room and board and perhaps to relieve their families at home of a mouth to feed.

In 1935, thirteen year old Gloria C. was employed by the household of Harold O., a cleaner who earned \$720 in the previous year.¹³⁷ Gloria C. was most likely a relative of Harold O.'s wife Patricia (whose maiden name was the same as Gloria C.'s). Her annual earnings totalled \$10 in the previous year, perhaps for working in a household that included five children and the head's brother, also a labourer.¹³⁸ This young woman's relatively low annual earnings may have meant that she had only been employed in the household for a brief period. More than likely, however, her low wages were indicative of a situation in which her labour was needed and the family was only able to afford to pay her a minimal amount of cash. Taking in boarders was a common way in which lower income working-class households could make ends meet. In the cases noted above the income generated by boarders, who were the primary responsibility of the mill workers' wives, would perhaps have enabled these families to afford domestic help and necessitated

¹³⁶In general the enumerator distinguished between domestics (who earned wages) and those who did not by inscribing "housekeeper" beside their name.

¹³⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

¹³⁸Interview with Patricia O.

the help of a younger relative or another young woman to help the wife.¹³⁹ These cases also demonstrate the ways in which the line between boarders and extended family were blurred.

While court records generally provide important insight into the lives of women living in more precarious situations, they are unavailable for Grand Falls during this period.¹⁴⁰ In the late 1930s, the magistrate's column in the newspaper reported on two instances of conflict between employers and domestics in the town of Grand Falls Station. The employers' testimonies provide insight into how some lower income earners were able to afford household help. In 1935 in Grand Falls Station only 5.3 per cent of households employed domestics.¹⁴¹ Though the percentages were low the circumstances of the household heads varied; their occupations included, a single male labourer, a business owner, a boarding house keeper, and skilled mill workers.¹⁴² In both court cases the young women were suing their employers for wages owing. In one case, the household head explained that "the girl was hired at seven dollars a month, on the condition her

¹³⁹For a discussion of taking in boarders as a working-class married woman's enterprise see, Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families*, 175-181.

¹⁴⁰See Magda Fahrni, "'Ruffled' Mistresses and 'Discontented' Maids," for an example of a study of domestics based in part on court records.

¹⁴¹In 1935 there were 280 households in Grand Falls Station, and 15 employed domestics. Nominal census data for Grand Falls Station indicates that 27 women worked as domestics in that community. However, 12 of these women stated their relationship to the household head as "daughter." More than likely, these 12 women were working in households in other communities. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935*.

¹⁴²*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935*.

wages would be reduced when he was laid off, and accordingly the girl's salary was reduced."¹⁴³ According to the newspaper report, "she was satisfied to continue her work at reduced wages until the man found work, when she would receive full salary again."¹⁴⁴ In another case, the employers testified that they did not pay the young woman because "they befriended the girl in many ways, and as the man was not working permanently, no set contract of payment or wages was made. The girl was in the street and could not find work, so having sympathy they took the girl in...."¹⁴⁵ On the one hand the employers' rationale in both cases exemplified how the AND Company's reliance on surplus labour to upgrade the mill and provide temporary construction work had a direct impact on the treatment of domestics in the late 1930s. On the other hand, these cases demonstrate that though transient men and women were viewed with a certain degree of contempt by local residents, it was easier to appear sympathetic by taking in a young woman for low wages than it was to help a destitute man.¹⁴⁶ Many young women and men, desperate for work and destitute, passed through Grand Falls during the 1930s. These transient young

¹⁴³*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 29 April 1939.

¹⁴⁴*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 29 April 1939.

¹⁴⁵*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 21 January 1939.

¹⁴⁶A story in the *Advertiser* featuring the story of a man who was picked up by the police for begging door to door and stated, "I am from Northern Arm and I've had a day begging for another man, who can't beg for himself," *Grand Falls Advertiser* 1 April 1939.

women and men were vulnerable, however, to exploitation by employers, and the specific forms of exploitation varied along gender lines.

During the period, most of the public outcry centred on male migrants to such an extent that the local police department and the town's elite took action against men from "towns and villages" who knocked on doors for assistance in the night time, pointing out to women residents that they should contact the police department immediately if a man should come knocking on their door after dark. This public announcement justified its harsh stance on gender-specific grounds. "In a town such as Grand Falls, where the men are so often at work in the mill at night time, to have these mendicants come knocking up the household, is a disgraceful state of affairs. Women and children are thus caused many a fright."¹⁴⁷ Underlining the differences in treatment of transient women and men, in January 1939 the local newspaper reported that an 18 year old woman from Notre Dame Bay quit her job as a domestic somewhere near Millertown to come to Grand Falls, stating "A few days ago she became stranded, appealed for help, was offered many jobs and refused, saying 'I'd rather go home for the winter on the dole. I'll take work in the spring.'"¹⁴⁸ In 1939, a domestic was caught passing a forged note in a Windsor dry goods

¹⁴⁷*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 10 June 1939.

¹⁴⁸*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 7 January 1939. A similar story appeared in the *Evening Telegram*, which told of a young woman who was offered a situation on Bell Island for \$5.00/month. She stated that she would rather go on the dole, according to the newspaper report. The employer found an orphan to take the job. *Evening Telegram*, 6 April 1933.

store to purchase a coat on the account of her previous employer. The newspaper reported that this young woman's previous employer did not wish to prosecute her, instead "the girl was advised by the police to go to her home in Trinity Bay."¹⁴⁹ While it is impossible to determine the extent to which mill workers earning low wages took in transient young women as domestics, the pattern signifies an important gender dimension to the ways in which young men and women were viewed in the town. It has also been understood in the historical literature that domestics were far more likely to be charged with vagrancy than other wage earning women.¹⁵⁰

It is important to recognize that during the interwar years Newfoundland's rural economy was largely cashless. Cash was essential to the household economies of the young women migrants. Many of these women worked in the mill town as an extension of their role in their parents' household economy and they earned wages to supplement their parents' household income. More than likely, most young women contributed a large portion of their earnings to their families back home, especially in the interwar years.¹⁵¹ Some women were diligent about sending money to their families: "You weren't getting much in them days I was getting \$10.00 a month...and send Mom dresses and Dad shirts and indeed I never did forget my Mom and Dad."¹⁵² The fact that this woman purchased

¹⁴⁹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 3 June 1939.

¹⁵⁰Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect*, 132.

¹⁵¹On sending earnings to parents, see O'Dwyer interviews, 3, 12, 8, 21, and 29.

¹⁵²Interview with Sarah C.

clothes for her parents, or was given clothes by her employers, indicates a way in which the two economies were linked. Another woman remembered doing the same:

I tell you what I used to do with it [my pay]. I would put it in an envelope and send it home to my Mom. And what I kept had to do me for the whole month. I'd always put the cash in the envelope and a letter. If I only made five dollars, my dear, half would go back to Mom.¹⁵³

In interviews, some former domestics stated they bought clothes with their earnings: "I never saved no money. I didn't care, I enjoyed it."¹⁵⁴ Another woman said that she kept her money, "Yes, you had to buy your clothes, you know."¹⁵⁵ On the one hand these women's recollections suggest that a materialist explanation for doing paid housework is inadequate. Even though many of these women helped their parents financially, they were also influenced by the proliferating culture of consumption, and buying clothes and other goods were integral to their feminine identities. Though clothing, food and other goods were made in their households of origin, their needs were being shaped by the expansion of ready-made clothes and fashion in Canada, the United States and Britain, which Grand Falls made available to them. Sometimes their employers gave them used clothes for themselves and for their families back home.¹⁵⁶ In cases where the domestic was working

¹⁵³Interview with Martina L.

¹⁵⁴Interview with Stella B.

¹⁵⁵Interview with Margaret C.

¹⁵⁶Interview with Carmel B.

for distant relations or family, her room and board might have been viewed by her parents as a form of payment in kind.

The availability of young women and the mill workers' ability or willingness to pay for that labour may have represented a case in which the labour market for domestic service in the household operated parallel to the labour market for wage work in the mill. In effect, it was an elaboration of what historian Diana Gittins has called the overlapping of two labour markets and two economies. In her discussion of the relationship between women's paid and unpaid work, Diana Gittins suggested that, "the formal economy and labour market are of obvious importance and are well examined. But there have also been an informal economy and labour market where work and services have been exchanged and negotiated."¹⁵⁷ Whether they were kin or not domestics shared in the cash earnings of mill workers, the shelter they provided, food, and other dry goods. These young women were also linked to their households in their communities of origin. When family members joined the Grand Falls household, either as boarders or as domestic servants, "production, reproduction, consumption and exchange intermeshed, and there were not clear lines of demarcation between formal and informal economies."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷Diana Gittins, "Marital Status, Work and Kinship, 1850-1940," Jane Lewis ed. *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940* (London: Basil and Blackwell, 1986) 251.

¹⁵⁸Cynthia Comacchio, "Beneath the 'Sentimental Veil': Families and Family History in Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 33 (Spring 1994) 298.

This overlapping was also significant to the local context because in Newfoundland during this period the cashless informal economy, based on exchange of goods and services, was productive but unprotected by the law. It depended on and helped to sustain the formal economy, which was based on capitalistic principles, wage labour, and was protected by law.¹⁵⁹ The urban-rural links between these two economies, through the employment of domestics encompassed an important aspect of the rural and urban economy, and occupational pluralism, which has not been adequately recognized in social historical assessments of the period. Arguably by focussing on working-class employers of domestics, the links between the rural household economy and the households within the company town were maintained and manifested in the labour market for domestic servants, which diverged from the labour market for domestics employed in the households of the elite. This labour market was primarily, though not exclusively negotiated through kin. In short, a labour market for domestic servants intersected with the formal labour market for men's jobs in the mill during the fisheries crisis of the 1920s and 1930s.

During the interwar years, wives of the elite hired domestics as an elaboration of a bourgeois lifestyle that they attempted to create and uphold while living in the company town. Elite wives and daughters believed that they needed to be freed up to pursue activities other than housekeeping, which they left up to those young women who fit their

¹⁵⁹Rosemary Ommer, "The Informal Economy in Newfoundland."

criteria of respectability. Managing servants was central to their ability to maintain the standards of female domesticity in a town where social status was embedded in the workplace, in households, and in the community. The need for domestic help among mill workers' wives was shaped primarily by the demands on them at certain points of the family's life-cycle. More specifically domestics were needed to help women with the onerous task of social reproduction at a point in the history of the company town when families were relatively young. Deteriorating social and economic conditions in the communities surrounding Grand Falls also meant that relatives and friends had come to rely on living with their family and friends in Grand Falls. At times, daughters of friends and relatives earned wages for performing domestic service in their households. All married women in Grand Falls, regardless of social status, carried the onerous burden of maintaining the house and minding children. The surplus of female labour on the island enabled them to hire help for relatively low wages.

In general, statistics on employers of domestics suggest a range of situations for paid domestic help in Grand Falls in the interwar years -- from general "servant girl" in a mill worker's house to uniformed maid for upper management, and the less familial situation of working in a hotel or convent. Female in-migrants were thus presented with some degree of choice (albeit a restricted one) in finding work in the mill town in contrast to the situations that would have been available to them in smaller centres near their

households of origin. Domestics' work experiences, and social relationships within the town varied as well according to who was doing the hiring, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Six

The Rhythms of Housework:

Continuity and Change in Paid Domestic Work

With industrialization domestic service no longer involved work associated with production, but in the words of one scholar it “referred to care and maintenance activities: cleaning, laundry, preparing and serving meals, childcare, and the overseeing of these.”¹ Both forms of household work co-existed in Newfoundland during the interwar years, and by virtue of their migration, all of the domestics would have had experience working in both settings. In fact, some young women experienced the merging of house and workplace for the first time in Grand Falls, because in their households of origin, the private sphere extended far from the house itself, into the gardens, the flakes, wells, stages, and the woods, in turn, shaping the rhythm and nature of their domestic labour as daughters. Other young women shifted in and out of doing unpaid domestic and fishery-related work in coastal communities to working in urbanized and industrialized settings throughout their teens and into their early adult years. When they arrived in Grand Falls they negotiated their work experiences in light of their previous experience and in light of the new ones that the town offered.

When one former Grand Falls employer marvelled: “They were girls who knew all about everything in a house,” she pointed to a process of social differentiation that was

¹Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, Warbride*, 144.

beginning to develop in Grand Falls throughout the interwar years.² The association of young women migrants with their strong ability to do housework proved to be a defining feature of social divisions between women, as well an integral aspect of former domestics' self definition. By relying on oral history, census records, and newspapers, this chapter explores the content and definition of domestic service as a historical process that developed out of human relationships, within the household and within the wider community. The discussion is organized around aspects of domestic service that came to the fore in interviews. It is therefore not intended as an exhaustive study of the work process.

6.1 First impressions upon arrival

Many young women migrants from Notre Dame Bay communities would have arrived by train at Grand Falls Station after a long and arduous journey by passenger boat to Lewisporte. Others coming from areas such as Trinity or Placentia Bay would have come to Grand Falls Station by train. Most of them would never have been to the mill town before. Many of them would have known of their employers before they arrived, but others would have arrived only in anticipation of finding a situation. In interviews, former domestics generally remembered arriving in Grand Falls without trepidation. At the age of 22, Martina L. reached the company town by freight train in the winter of 1929; she had

²Interview with Carmel B.

made previous arrangements for a situation through her uncle:

I knew no one in there [Grand Falls] only my uncles. But that didn't bother me much. I knew where I was going to work. Mrs. Mooney's. And my work was there for me...and I knew what I had to do...I did the work before and I knew what I had to do...when I did it I did it right.³

The confidence she expressed typified the experience of a young woman who had already left home to work as a domestic in a community near her parents' household or in an urban centre, such as St. John's. Martina L. had already worked in three rural households other than her own home. Significantly, she viewed her migration experience through the lens of her past and future work experiences of doing housework for others for pay, rather than noting the differences in community.⁴ Similarly, when Margaret C. (born in Winterton) arrived in Grand Falls she also had previous domestic work experience, but in St. John's:

I didn't know anything about it [Grand Falls] but I come, must have been me nerve I guess. The friend who invited me down, I knew her that's all. But Grand Falls was only a small place then, Beaumont Avenue was only rocks. I had it [the job] when I come. I came in from the Station on horse and sleigh the 6th of January [1929] and I've been here ever since.⁵

³Interview with Martina L.

⁴According to Margaret Conrad domesticity was central to the lives of Atlantic Canadian women and thus shaped their sense of time and place in a gender specific manner. Margaret Conrad, "Sundays Always Make Me Think of Home': Time and Place in Canadian Women's History," in Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, eds. *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia* (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984).

⁵Interview with Margaret C.

In St. John's she had worked for a doctor's family on Rennie's Mill Rd, an upper middle-class street, where she made her first adjustment to urban life: "Like day and night," she said. "That's how different that was [St. John's] from what I had.... I took to it like a dog to water."⁶ Nellie M., who moved to Grand Falls from Trinity Bay at the relatively young age of 15 to work in her sister's house stated: "I thought I was in another world. Going to Grand Falls then was a big hit. I came down here in 1922 and there was nothing there."⁷

Not all women were at ease with their move to Grand Falls. One former domestic, born in a small Conception Bay community, recalled her move at the age of 14 as a frightening experience. Her brother was a Bishop's Falls mill worker and he found her a situation for four dollars a month in Grand Falls. She thus left a more familiar job on Bell Island, where her father worked temporarily as a miner, for central Newfoundland. While it is impossible to determine the exact circumstances of this woman's employment in Grand Falls, she recalled leaving as soon as she could because she had heard stories about men picking up young women on the street.⁸ Undoubtedly, more young women who moved to the mill town at a young age shared her fear of the unknown. Their abrupt

⁶Interview with Margaret C.

⁷Interview with Nellie M.

⁸O'Dwyer interviews, 12. This woman was born in 1914 in Avondale.

departures, however, may have buried the experience in their memories, making it difficult to discuss in an interview.

Mill workers' wives and single female teachers noticed different aspects of the town when they first arrived there. For instance, one woman, who arrived from St. John's in the early 1920s, remembered that when her mother first entered the family's company house she cried to her husband: "What'd you do, bring me into a hen coop?"⁹ The company house did not measure up to the "lovely house on Le Marchant Rd." in St. John's.¹⁰ Another woman, a former teacher, stressed the benefits of Grand Falls for single women in the 1930s: "It was a wonderful time to live in Grand Falls for teachers because there were lots and lots of men and lots and lots of dances... The Fireman's Ball, the Paper Makers' Ball..."¹¹ Notably, none of the former domestics mentioned the preponderance of eligible young men when they discussed moving there to work. This silence was most certainly connected to their migration status, which meant that their access to the town depended on their ability to do domestic work in households. Their isolation in the home and the long hours they worked, however, prevented them from having leisure time.

⁹Interview with Iris B.

¹⁰Interview with Iris B.. For a discussion of how miners' wives perceived their move from the more developed southern cities to the northern town of Flin Flon Manitoba in the 1920s, see Meg Luxton, *More Than a Labour of Love*, 29-32.

¹¹Interview with Gloria B.

Historian Margareta Matovic's argument that migration was neither unusual nor dramatic for women who left certain regions of Sweden for the United States, because migration had been a common strategy for survival in times of crop failures and crisis, has a particular relevance to understanding the migration experiences of the Grand Falls domestics.¹² Matovic illustrates the complexity of women's experiences of migration by exploring their pre-migration circumstances, rather than viewing them simply as a modernizing influence. The first impressions of Martina L., Nellie M., and Margaret C. were shaped by such factors as age at the time of migration, their breadth of domestic work experience (at home or in the households of others), and their connections to friends or family in the town. These women's words also implied that Grand Falls represented a middle ground between the larger centre of St. John's and their smaller home communities. In retrospect, at least, they felt at ease with their work roles, but, as we will see below, they were not always contented as migrants in the mill town or as domestics in a company house.

6.2 General Girl

In Grand Falls in the interwar years, the majority of domestics were hired as "general girls" to do the tasks that married women disliked, or to do those they needed help completing. In this period it was not unusual to hire young women to do laundry,

¹²Margareta Matovic, "Maids in Motion: Swedish Women in Dalsland," in Christiane Harzig ed., *Peasant Maids - City Women*, 136.

housekeeping and childcare, because “Before World War II, laundry and housekeeping were two equally time-consuming household chores.”¹³ One former domestic stated unexceptionally, “[I did] everything, my dear, with housework: cooking, cleaning. I used to have to press some of them skirts. I used to make bread but I didn’t used to do any baking.”¹⁴ This was representative of the division of household labour in Grand Falls, for the task of making cookies and cakes was generally reserved for the wife. Another woman made similar comments: “Make bread and cook and wash and scrub and clean. Everything had to be done. It was an awful lot of work we had to do then we don’t have to do now. But then everything had to be done with your hands.”¹⁵ Further underlining the physical demands of domestic work, another woman noted: “Back in the 30s in Grand Falls I remember the linoleum on the floors, like a little canvas we used to get from the mill...it had to be scrubbed practically every day and painted.”¹⁶ Typically, former domestics described their workday as long and arduous, beginning early in the morning, at around 6:00 a.m. and lasting until 8:00 or 9:00 at night when everything was finished. While there was some continuity in the nature of the domestic work they did in their own homes and in the houses of mill workers, the transition to doing housework in an industrial town demanded certain adjustments.

¹³Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nissei, Warbride*, 146.

¹⁴Interview with Stella B.

¹⁵Interview with Martina L.

¹⁶Interview with Carmel B.

Former domestics often remembered whether a house had running water, laundry facilities, or electricity, and the availability of such amenities served as a basis upon which they compared situations. Some young women, for instance, worked in electrified households for the first time in their lives in Grand Falls. Unlike most communities on the island, households in Grand Falls, Windsor, Botwood and Bishop's Falls were serviced by the AND Company's power supply.¹⁷ In the interwar years, electricity was usually reserved for lighting, thus heating and cooking generally depended on coal, wood or oil. Not all households had light, and whether an employer had labour-saving devices depended largely on social status. During the 1930s, for example, most employers did not have electric washing machines. But when the wife of a managerial assistant, who had no children, purchased one of the first automatic washers in Grand Falls in the 1930s, she no longer employed household help.¹⁸

When we got married there was a woman who would come in do the washing. She was a single woman [from Windsor] I didn't need anybody. Then we got a washing machine like they have now. We had one of the

¹⁷In 1949 approximately half of the households on the island had domestic electric service. Industrial towns, which depended on large power supplies to fuel industry such as Grand Falls, and later Corner Brook, had some of the highest power generating capacity on the island. Other small urban centers, such as Harbour Grace, Carbonear, and Port Union were electrified after the World War I, but many other communities did not have access to power until the 1950s and 1960s. Melvin Baker, "The Interplay of Private and Public Enterprise in the Production of Electricity on the Island of Newfoundland, 1883-1966," in James Hiller and Peter Neary eds., *Twentieth-Century Newfoundland: Explorations*, 273-277.

¹⁸Interview with Vera A., Grand Falls, 1997.

first ones in Grand Falls. And then when I got the washing machine that was it... It was an automatic washing machine.¹⁹

It has been argued elsewhere that the readily available surplus of women in some regions slowed the adoption of household technologies in middle-class households.²⁰ Typically, laundry was a task that most former domestics remembered as onerous.²¹

The AND Company's failure to provide water and sewage in some neighbourhoods also made an impact on the work experiences of domestics. The workload for women in well-serviced neighbourhoods may have decreased, compared with the tasks young women performed in the poorer neighbourhoods. Thus, some of them considered running water an asset, because it eased the otherwise highly demanding task of carrying water into the house for laundry. Stella B.'s comments illustrate this common preference:

I lived with Mrs. James two years and I didn't go back. They lived on Botwood Rd. While I was there -- before I left -- they moved to Polygon Rd. When we lived up on Botwood there was no water in the homes. Very scarce person had water. If you want to put on your wash you had to bring home buckets. **The first water I ever seen was Polygon.** She used

¹⁹Interview with Vera A.

²⁰Ruth Schwarz Cowan, "The Industrial Revolution in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the Twentieth Century," *Technological Culture* 17 (1976) 1-23.

²¹Most historians of women's household labour have identified laundry as the worst aspect of housework. Meg Luxton's interviews with housewives who lived in the mining town of Flin Flon, Manitoba during the 1930s revealed that laundry "is the worst work a woman's got," see, *More Than a Labour of Love*, 152-158.

to call me Martha.... "Never mind Martha maid the next time you comes back you'll have water."²² [my emphasis]

Stella B.'s comments underline the familial aspects of her relationship with her employer. Mrs. James, the wife of a Newfoundland-born paper maker, tried to entice her to come back there to work when she returned to Grand Falls from her parents' house, where she spent the summers, because her new house would be equipped with running water. In addition, the fact that Mrs. James assumed that laundry was Stella B.'s responsibility demonstrates the inherent inequalities in the mistress/servant relationship, as historian Phyllis Palmer has noted: "Organizing the work so the domestic did the heaviest jobs helped the employer to see herself as the 'mind' of the job distinct from the employee, who represented the 'body'."²³ Likewise, Martina L. was in part relieved when she left her situation in a company house to work in the more formalized setting of Grand Falls House because the laundry was sent out:

And I never had any washing to do except for my own clothes and the laundry from the House used to go to the laundromat. We used to have to wash on wash boards then...hang it outdoors.²⁴

Young women compared situations not simply in terms of wages, but also in relation to the content of domestic work.

²²Interview with Stella B.

²³Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt*, 74.

²⁴Interview with Martina L.

In Grand Falls, wives and domestics shared intimate space without defined obligations on either part, so the nature of the tasks young women were paid to do varied. While idiosyncratic factors often played a role in shaping the diversity of situations, the social status of wives, the life course of employers' family and household, number of children, role of daughters shaped the content of their work in specific ways. The social status of the employer also influenced the amount of control a domestic had over the work process, whether she worked alone, alongside the wife, or with another domestic. While conditions varied from situation to situation, generally speaking in mill workers' households, "Maids never had to do any cooking, they made the beds and scrubbed the floors. They looked after youngsters. They didn't do any cooking. They might have cooked for some people."²⁵ Mill workers' wives were more likely than elite wives to work alongside the domestic even if they did not necessarily help with all tasks.

This pattern changed at points in the family's life course when the wife was unable to cook or help out. As Richard S. stated, "If the lady of the house was pregnant at the time they would do everything that she would have done."²⁶ Former domestics were also aware of this change:

²⁵Interview with Richard S.

²⁶Interview with Richard S.

Mostly where I was, the wife used to do the cooking mostly unless somebody took sick. I hardly did any cooking at all. When I was up to Mrs. Mooney's I used to do the cooking up there.²⁷

Martina L. cooked for Mrs. Mooney, wife of a carpenter, because she was experiencing a difficult pregnancy. In fact, she had been hired specifically to take over the household duties that would normally have been the preserve of the wife during this period of crisis. Another former domestic recalled that her workload increased to include cooking when her mistress was in the hospital:

She [Mrs. James] went in the Grace Hospital while I was there and had her first baby. I cooked for them. Do you think I was a cook? I think I was everything at that time.²⁸

In interviews, former domestics often unwittingly compared the nature of their domestic work in the mill town with their previous experience working in their parents' households. Stella B., for instance, made the distinction between baking bread with store bought yeast in Grand Falls and using home grown yeast in her parents' home: "We used to grow our own yeast. I didn't know you could buy yeast then. But now after I went to Mrs. James and Mrs. Mitchell's I used to use yeast."²⁹ The distinction she made was directly related to the transition from household production to purchasing goods for consumption, even though her skill for baking, which she had acquired in her parents'

²⁷Interview with Martina L.

²⁸Interview with Margaret C.

²⁹Interview with Stella B.

household, carried over into the new industrial context. Martina L. also made the distinction:

Oh indeed it [Grand Falls] did [seem different]. At home they had no stores. Only little grocery stores and if anybody was lucky enough they'd have a few garments of clothes but they never had no big stock of anything. When I went to Grand Falls they had big stores in there. I would get lost until I got used to it. It didn't take me long to get used to going around by myself. It wasn't like St. John's. It wasn't so crowded...and the streets weren't so mixed up. There was only the main street.³⁰

The differences she noted were gender specific, as they were linked to an aspect of domestic work -- shopping. Her migration status also increased her awareness of the changes in the rhythms of women's work roles, which revolved around purchasing goods for consumption in the mill town, as opposed to household production of foodstuffs and clothes, which were central to daily work in her home community of Fleur de Lys, as well as to her previous experience working in Grey Islands, Coachman's Cove, and Little Bay Islands.

Martina L. and Stella B. had both previously worked alongside their fathers and brothers doing fishery-related work, but they now had limited involvement with the production of staples. Their work was now confined to the reproduction of labour power. As one resident stated: "Everything in the town was governed by the whistle at the mill. It blew at 7:00 am, it would be heard everywhere. Then it blew at 8:00, at 12:00, at 1:00

³⁰Interview with Martina L.

and at 5:00. This mill whistle was part of our lives."³¹ Ironically, providing a service to a mill worker was the only access these women had to the mill, which was the very reason for the existence of the company town. For instance, it was often the domestic's job to bring lunch to the husband in the middle of his work day. Sadie B., who did not know the type of job her first employer had at the mill, recalled bringing lunch to him as a task she enjoyed because it took her outside the household and into the streets of the town:

No my dear I don't know what kind of job he had. I went down there more than once carrying down his basket. I used to love that because you'd walk down a lovely walk. Big baskets you'd have to pack up. He was a big man.³²

Martina L. related a similar experience while working in the household of a mill worker:

I have been down in the mill. I used to go down with Hazel because she used to bring her lunch down to her father. Never had anything to do in regards to working at the mill or anything.³³

In that particular household the daughter's role blurred with the domestic's in social reproduction.

Though most employers almost never hired domestics specifically to take care of children, child care encompassed an important part of their job throughout the interwar years. In 1921, 91 per cent of domestics worked in households where sons and daughters

³¹Interview with Harold S.

³²Interview with Stella B., and O'Dwyer interview, 12.

³³Interview with Martina L.

were present (Table 6.1).³⁴ Of those who had children, 81 per cent were young children of school age, and 19 per cent were households with at least one wage earning son or daughter. The Power family, headed by a fireman, with six children and the oldest son working as a machinist however, was representative of the latter situation.³⁵ By 1935, the percentage of domestics working in households with sons and daughters present had increased slightly to 93 per cent (Table 6.1). Of those 76 per cent had school age children, and 24 per cent had at least one wage earning son or daughter, but these households generally contained children of school age as well.³⁶ The Murray family, headed by a rigger, for example, had 10 children and the oldest two sons worked as a paper maker and an electrician respectively in 1935.

A breakdown of the number of children in households that employed domestics reveals a variety of situations. In 1921, for example, 27 per cent of domestics worked in households with one or two children, and 30 per cent in 1935. The percentage was slightly higher for domestics working in households with five children or more, with 40 per cent in 1921, and 34 per cent in 1935. A small percentage of domestics worked in households with no children in 1921 and 1935 -- nine per cent and seven per cent

³⁴This percentage excludes those domestics who worked in hotels.

³⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

³⁶This percentage is based on 89 households with children of school age, and 28 households with at least one wage earning son or daughter in 1935. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

respectively. These were mostly those of the community's elite.³⁷ The 1935 manuscript census, for example, indicates only two instances of domestics working in non-elite households with no children. One of these was headed by a millwright, whose domestic indicated her relationship to him as "niece." The other was headed by a widow who lived alone.³⁸

Table 6.1: Number of domestics in relation to number of children in employers' households, Grand Falls 1921-1935

No. Children in employers households	No. of domestics employed, 1921	No. of domestics employed, 1935	1921 % of total	1935 % of total
0	7	9	9	7
1-2	33	43	40	34
3-4	19	36	23	28
5+	22	38	27	30
total	81	126	99	99

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921 and 1935*

Child care was an aspect of the job that required adjustments for many young women, for the presence of children influenced the way in which domestics organized their work day and children inhibited their privacy. For example, Saturday night was a busy time in most Grand Falls homes, and the domestics' task of getting ready for Sunday

³⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

³⁸*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

prevented them from getting Saturday night off. Instead of going out with friends, they worked hard, getting children “scrubbed up” for church, shining shoes, and ironing.³⁹ Children also restricted their privacy within the household. For instance in three-bedroom households with numerous children the domestic would sleep in the “girls’ room,” sometimes alongside her employers’ five or six daughters.⁴⁰ Most of the mill workers’ homes were standard issue -- the bulk of houses, located on working-class streets such as Junction Road, Monchy Road, Beaumont Avenue and Second Avenue contained between 4 and 6 rooms.⁴¹ The homes of the highest income earners had between 8 and 9 rooms.

In households where wives allocated the labour of daily child-rearing activities to the domestic, she often became a surrogate parent to her employers’ children. The daughter of a purchasing agent, who associated with the town’s elite, for example, remembered the domestic tending to her needs more than her mother did:

As a very young child we had a lovely girl living with us. I can remember her combing my hair. I don’t remember my mother doing that as such. They entertained a fair bit and they went out a fair bit.⁴²

³⁹Interview with Richard S.

⁴⁰Interview with Richard S.

⁴¹Information on the number of rooms per house is based on the nominal census of 1945, which recorded number of rooms per house and total rooms occupied. The number of rooms data was then correlated with street name and address. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945*.

⁴²Interview with Violet T.

The viewpoint of Stella B., this family's former domestic, was slightly different. One day, the husband interrupted her dish-washing to go and get his six-year-old son from his friend's house. She recalled saying, "I don't suppose he'll come for me." She was right. The six-year-old resisted her appeal despite the fact that she had told him that "coming in" was a message from his father. In fact, the six-year-old tore the string off her apron and kicked her in the leg. When she returned to the house, she told her male employer, "I'm not going after Frank another time."⁴³ The line between housework and child rearing was blurred for many young women who worked in mill workers' households, and they viewed that experience as sometimes interfering with their job performance.⁴⁴

The recollections of another woman, whose father was a non-elite worker, speaks volumes about the double burden some of the domestics faced:

My mother used to like to sleep in and she wouldn't get up to 10 or 11 in the day. She [the domestic] did everything. When she used to make bread my sister she would stay on the stool [and watch].⁴⁵

According to oral history, her mother employed distant relations.⁴⁶ It is interesting, therefore, in this case that kinship connections and family ties did not always eradicate relationships of domination and subordination between women within the household.

⁴³Interview with Stella B.

⁴⁴Phyllis Palmer found that "[i]n chronic arguments between housewives and maids about hours worked, childcare seems to have produced the most tension." See Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt*, 58.

⁴⁵Interview with Daphne L.

⁴⁶Interview with Daphne L.

The daughter of a highly skilled mill worker, whose family recruited domestics through more formal means, also remembered the extent to which her mother had allocated child-rearing responsibilities to the family's domestic:

It's something I took for granted in my life. My mother and father could go away on holidays that was part and parcel of it. We always had a housekeeper and that girl was responsible for us. And the [domestics'] grandmother would come to give her a hand.⁴⁷

While clearly not all of the core permanent Grand Falls workforce and their families would have been able to take vacations, it was common for many of them to travel abroad for \$75 return in the well-appointed cabins of the company's steamer, the *Geraldine Mary*,⁴⁸ which shipped newsprint from Botwood to London, England on a regular basis.⁴⁹ The inequalities of migration status were apparent in the case noted above, insofar as the domestic's grandmother was also involved in ensuring that the couple was freed up to take a vacation. The grandmother's assistance was also necessary because the workload was undoubtedly too great for one young woman to handle.

Not surprisingly, former domestics expressed a general dislike for situations in which childcare was tacked onto their other responsibilities in the household, sometimes

⁴⁷Interview with Carmel B.

⁴⁸The *Geraldine Margaret* was most likely named after Harmsworths' mother Geraldine Margaret Maffett, who was born in 1838 to a Dublin land agent. Pound and Harmsworth, *Northcliffe*, 11.

⁴⁹Walter Blackmore, *Me, Mike, and the Bold Adventure*, 23.

explicitly and other times inadvertently.⁵⁰ When Sarah C. discussed the criteria she used in choosing situations, she conveyed a strong preference for working in households with no children present:

When you're out working like that you don't know who you're going with. **I tried to keep clear of places with children although I was a child myself.** I went to one place in St. John's and they had a young fellow 4 or 5 years old and he always wanted me to carry him upstairs on my back and that was too much. **Anyway I got rid of that.** If you get a job like that you know somebody who knows somebody else and that's how you get your job. Miss. Rollins had one little boy and he always wanted me to carry him on my back.⁵¹ [my emphasis]

When she got a job in Botwood as a cook, she rejoiced in the composition of the household, which contained "only him, her and one [adult] son."⁵² The fact that she stated "although I was only a child myself," suggests her awareness of the divergences between her options and those of her employers' children. Statements such as these are telling of the ways in which the content and definition of domestic service became embedded in women's self-perceptions, and that relationships of inequality between women were ever present.

Many of these women were expected to rear the children of mill workers in ways to which they were unaccustomed. The elite-run school boards, the AND Company and

⁵⁰In 1938, the *Evening Telegram* reported on a list of servant complaints, which included "too many children and dogs." *Evening Telegram*, 8 April 1938. For another overt complaint about working in households with children, see O'Dwyer interview, 6.

⁵¹Interview with Sarah C.

⁵²Interview with Sarah C.

parents attempted to ensure that Grand Falls children experienced a childhood. As one woman noted: "Everyone was pushing their children for education."⁵³ The AND Company's role in socializing children was extensive; it built playgrounds, a movie theatre, outdoor skating rinks; sponsored excursions to places like Botwood and Badger; offered scholarships; and on occasion, the company sponsored trips to England for sons of mill workers. One woman, whose father was an electrician in the mill said that as a child she took music lessons and went to matinees on Saturday.⁵⁴ At Christmas children were reminded of the presence of the company in shaping their lives. Each school class gathered at the Town Hall where they received gifts appropriate to their gender, such as dolls and sets of dishes for girls, and engines and little books for boys.⁵⁵ The company also offered each school class a trimmed tree, displayed at the Town Hall, where the students were treated to movies at the company's expense. Divisions between children of different socio-economic status were not eradicated by the company's efforts. As one woman who grew up in the household of an elite mill worker stated: "Our mother wouldn't let us mix with anybody. We had to know who they were, if they were clean children or dirty children. They had to be as good as we were to play with."⁵⁶

⁵³Interview with Eva N.

⁵⁴Interview with Molly M.

⁵⁵Interview with Molly M; Joan P.; and interview with Donald G.

⁵⁶Interview with Iris B.

The young woman migrants, who were sometimes around the same age as Grand Falls daughters, had not shared in these childhood experiences. The presence of children would have most likely influenced these women's consciousness of themselves as distinct from their relatives and employers in Grand Falls. Moreover, evidence exists to suggest that daughters who grew up in households that employed domestics were less likely to help out, and they did not learn the skills that were necessary to being a good housewife. As one woman recalled, "When I got married I didn't know how to boil water."⁵⁷

6.3 Skill and Perception

In North America in the late 1920s, and increasingly during the 1930s, there was a general movement towards formalized education in domestic science for young women. Proponents of domestic science targeted working-class girls to ensure better-run working-class households and to provide a supply of trained servants.⁵⁸ Departments of education across Canada began to step up their domestic science training programmes for girls in school, and women's organizations across North America joined the fray by supporting government-sponsored initiatives and by integrating homemaking exercises into their own

⁵⁷Interview with Gertrude L.

⁵⁸Faye Dudden, "Experts and Servants: The National Council on Household Employment and the Decline of Domestic Service in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Social History* (Winter, 1986) 269-281; Rebecca Coulter, "Young Women and Unemployment in the 1930s: The Home Service Solution," *Canadian Women Studies*, 7,4 (1986) 77-80.

voluntary efforts.⁹⁹ These domestic science training initiatives were shaped in part by a middle-class response to unmarried women's increasing participation in wage labour. They feared that young women were not being trained by their mothers to the same extent as the previous generation. The initiatives were also conceived as a response to the changing ethnic and racial composition of the female labour force. Young women immigrants needed to be properly trained to replace their white working-class sisters – whose access to jobs in other sectors of the economy were expanding -- at work in households. Newfoundland was no exception to these broader trends, though the rationale for domestic science training was regionally specific to the island's social, economic and demographic situation.

In the 1930s the AND Company, with the support of the Grand Falls school boards, formalized domestic instruction for young married women and mill workers' daughters. In fact they sponsored Miss Dickey, a home economist from Nova Scotia, who had been touring the island with support from the Commission of Government, to instruct female residents in modern housekeeping skills. Grand Falls welcomed Miss Dickey with assurances that her prospective students were different from the women she had taught in the outlying districts:

Miss Dickey has held classes and lectures in several places in Newfoundland....In many places she had to cope with poverty, and the

⁹⁹Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History*, 279-283. For the United States see, Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt*, especially Chapter Five, "Education for the Vocation of Housework."

lassitude that inevitably follows in its wake. Here she will find a very different state of affairs....⁶⁰

One of the courses she taught focussed on balanced diet, cooking and food values for “all girls and women in Grand Falls and not to school girls.”⁶¹ To ensure that as many women as possible had access to the three-week course, the company held evening classes at the end, for “office staff and working girls.”⁶² The recipes and advice were printed in the local newspaper for the benefit of the “very many ladies in town who, through stress of circumstances, are unable to attend” the afternoon sessions.⁶³ That the company did this in the 1930s, exemplified its role in shaping a gender ideology that limited women to the household while simultaneously increasing the status of housework. The recollections of one mill worker’s daughter underscored the complexities of these processes:

First when I was married there was a woman who came around and gave classes in cooking. **And do you remember I got the certificate for passing this course in cooking.** That would be the late 1930s. *Family Herald* had it by correspondence. *The Family Herald* and *The Weekly Star*, everybody in Newfoundland had that. That used to come every week [Montreal] They had the news, they had cooking, they had sewing and all that. I didn’t do a lot of cooking before I was married. My mother did all that. I thought that I could learn something. **Oh yes I got a certificate.**⁶⁴ [my emphasis]

⁶⁰*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 20 February 1937.

⁶¹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 20 February 1937.

⁶²*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 6 March 1937.

⁶³*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 6 March 1937.

⁶⁴Interview with Vera A.

Significantly, in Grand Falls domestic servants were not targeted as potential candidates for these training courses. Perhaps the female labour surplus on the island meant that the Grand Falls leadership did not worry about a supply to the same extent as those living in larger urban centres.

The Newfoundland domestic science movement did aim to train young women living in rural communities. Indeed Miss Dickey was loosely linked to one of these efforts through her association with the Jubilee Guilds. From the mid 1930s, the Commission of Government, along with influential members of the St. John's elite, and members of the elite from the rural communities started up the Jubilee Guilds, which aimed to "develop women's skills and knowledge in homemaking and handicraft production for the 'betterment' of families and the beautification of home."⁶⁵ In short, the underlying objective was to engender self-help and the work ethic among poorer women residing in outports. With the support from the leadership of all churches, as well as the state, the Guilds attempted to "articulate the domestic work of rural women to an urban middle-class ideal."⁶⁶ There is little evidence to suggest that the Jubilee Guilds were involved in training domestic servants to work in Grand Falls. As we have seen, in Grand Falls the recruitment of domestics took place largely through word-of-mouth. Experienced and

⁶⁵Linda Cullum, "Under Construction," 4.

⁶⁶Linda Cullum has argued that the Jubilee Guilds did not recognize the type of domestic labour in which rural women were engaged in this period, such as making fish, and other areas of subsistence production. It was thus more about "the construction of class and gender relations and state formation," See "Under Construction," 17.

highly skilled domestics were also found in steady supply by elite wives. There may have been a general belief among wives that domestics would pick up the appropriate skills and middle-class manners while at work in their households.

Domestics generally learned new skills while on the job in Grand Falls, not through formalized training. Martina L., for instance, was expected to change the way she served when she moved from a situation in a private household to Grand Falls House, where senior company officials lived. Though she had worked in a variety of situations before landing a job at the Staff House for top wages, it was there she had to wear a black uniform trimmed with white for the first time.⁶⁷ When she spoke of the way in which she made the transition to a more formal situation, she took pride in the fact that her immediate supervisors -- Mr. and Mrs. Allen -- only had to show her how to set the table once:

I used to have to set the table in the dining room then. Mr. and Mrs. Laycock stayed there then, and Mr. Jones, I can't remember if his wife was there, and Mr. Harris and you used to have to set the dining room table and Mrs. Allen, she showed me how to set it. They used to have five or six different settings. We used to have fish and soup and main course dinner and sweets after that and we had a setting for every dish. And they had three or four glasses there was water and wine and any other drink that they wanted. Mrs. Allen showed me how to set the table first and that was all. She never had to tell me again.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Uniforms were required in the households of the town's elite and in some hotels and boarding houses. Otherwise young women domestics wore "common clothes." Interview with Martina L.; interview with Carmel B.

⁶⁸Interview with Martina L.

By the time Martina L. learned these new skills, she had ten years' experience of paid work in households. Her attitude reflected her confidence and the centrality of housework to her identity:

When you worked for a while at work like that it's an everyday chore. Monday one thing to do, Tuesday would be something different. When you get used to this, everyday would come as a routine. Just the same as when I gets up first I will wash myself and then I will get my breakfast and then I will make my beds. You knows what every day brings. You gets right used to it...just the same as playing a game of cards....There was 42 rooms there and sometimes all of them were being used. And I didn't mind it no more if there was only two rooms....It was just like playing a game when you're used to doing it.⁶⁹

Another former domestic expressed a similar familiarity with the work role: "It [housework] comes to you, my dear, just the same as a meal."⁷⁰ Another woman's comments revealed the ways in which the rhythms of housework in the company town shaped her sense of time and place: "When I was in town too I worked in different places...you'd know it was Sunday...everything was cut out for you...on Saturdays the bedrooms had to be cleaned, Thursdays was silverware day."⁷¹ Before household technologies were readily used, it was common for women to organize their week around certain domestic tasks.⁷²

⁶⁹Interview with Martina L.

⁷⁰Interview with Sarah C.

⁷¹Interview with Hattie K.

⁷²On schedules see; Meg Luxton, *More Than a Labour of Love*, 119.

Domestics' particular sense of time and place, however, was influenced by their close association to their employers' households and to the demands of the work schedule. Many of them internalized these rhythms, which formed an integral aspect of their self-definition as highly skilled domestic workers.⁷³ Their relationships to their female employers while at work, as well as their social relationships in the wider community, however, also influenced their self-perceptions as migrants in the company town. The nature of employer-employee relationships, which defined the lives of so many women (from both sides of the social equation) throughout this period, was arguably a critical aspect of social differentiation in the town during the interwar years.

6.4 Migration status, class and gender

Domestic servants occupied an ambiguous status in the social hierarchy of the mill town, because most of these young women shared much in common with the relatives, friends, and distant relations who hired them. The fact that by the late 1920s and the 1930s many domestics came from similar communities as did their employers, sharing common backgrounds, religion, and ethnic origin. They were, therefore, not as anonymous as domestics who worked in larger urban centers where class, ethnic and racial distinctions were more clear cut. Similar, however, to situations elsewhere, it was within the household that domestics and wives negotiated a division of labour -- a negotiation that

⁷³On skill as an ideological construct, see Anne Phillips and Barbara Taylor, "Sex and Skill: Notes Towards a Feminist Economics," *Feminist Review* 6 (1980) 55-79.

generally took place between women. The relationships that unfolded between domestics and wives in Grand Falls were influenced in part by married women's historically specific status in the town, which was shaped by broader structural factors and by gender relations within households. By exploring these themes through oral history and newspaper sources it becomes apparent that throughout this period, migration status, domestic service, and class became intermeshed. These processes also led to the development of a stigma attached to doing housework for pay.

The structural context within which most married women lived was reinforced by company policy that prohibited them from working for a wage until as late as the early 1970s.⁷⁴ While the marriage bar was typical of workplace policies outside of Newfoundland before World War II, the closed nature of the company town meant that it was easier to enforce.⁷⁵ Young women working in company offices were forced to quit their jobs upon marriage, as were those working in other sectors of the economy. Also, in principle at least, husbands were paid a family wage. Pressure was therefore placed on wives to maintain their status and authority through their unpaid domestic work. In the late 1930s the local newspaper reminded Grand Falls wives that their unpaid work was

⁷⁴In a recent study, sociologist Marilyn Porter stated that women were fired from their jobs after they got married until the 1970s in Grand Falls. See, *Place and Persistence in the Lives of Newfoundland Women* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1993) 131. On having to quit after marriage as unfair, see interview with Maria S., Grand Falls 1997. For an exception to the rule, see interview with Jane T.. She worked in retail after marriage.

⁷⁵On the marriage bar in pre-World War II Britain see, Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) 57.

important to social reproduction, and that as wives of the core permanent workforce, their status was markedly different from the status of the female migrants many of them paid:

[T]here are thousands of husbands who regard their wives as more than domestic workers...But we husbands work and worry too. We don't draw our paychecks for nothing. It's a fifty-fifty proposition -- just what an ideal married life should be...the average housewife does get a salary -- the husband's salary.⁷⁶

In most Grand Falls households, wives were given authority over servants, and they were the ones who invariably paid domestics through their husbands' earnings. As one woman remembered: "my father used to get pay in envelopes and he would give Mom the money...big money at that point...if you had \$100 you were rich."⁷⁷

Husbands and fathers sometimes exerted their influence as breadwinner by restricting their wives and daughters from seeking paid employment. The daughter of a tinsmith, who had moved to Grand Falls in 1917 from Carbonear, stated: "My father wouldn't let me go to work. I wanted to but he said that it wasn't necessary. I just stayed home and helped around the house. I was in the Girl Guides and other organizations."⁷⁸ Another woman, who typically noted that she quit her job at the post office when she got married, said that her husband would not let her return to work even when the post office

⁷⁶*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 23 June 1938.

⁷⁷Interview with Iris B.

⁷⁸Interview with Vera A., *Census (nominal) Newfoundland* 1935. He rented a house for \$14.50 a month in 1935.

asked her to return for a couple of weeks.⁷⁹ The gender division of labour, hiring servants, and the maintenance of social status in the town meshed for some married women. For example, one woman explained that her mother's decision to open a beauty parlour in the 1930s was "most unusual for married women." She further explained: "Not that she had to work, though....Because this was a prosperous little town and the men made good wages...she needed help in her housework."⁸⁰ Hiring a domestic safeguarded this woman's pursuit of an independent business, as well as maintaining social status. Her daughter's assertion that she went to work by choice rather than by necessity illuminates one aspect of social differentiation in the town.

Other families had trouble surviving on the husband's income, and as noted earlier, they relied on taking in boarders or on the wages of their unmarried sons and daughters. For example, one woman, whose father went to work "inside the mill at the bottom," left school to work for the Royal Stores because: "There were so many of us someone had to work...I worked in the Royal Stores two or three years I worked there, and from there I got married, and I was twenty-two when I got married."⁸¹ When asked if she contributed her wages to the household income, she replied, "Oh my dear, she [her mother]] took my

⁷⁹Interview with Iris B. Her husband was a second-generation Grand Falls resident who received a university degree in engineering from Mount Allison University.

⁸⁰This woman's husband "reached the status of master mechanic with the machine shop" -- one of the most elite jobs in the mill -- before his premature death at the age of 45. Interview with Carmel B..

⁸¹Interview with Daphne L.

money.”⁴² Her mother, however, was able to afford a domestic servant. This response reveals the power imbalances within a household -- in this case between mother and daughter -- and the tension created in households with large families trying to survive in a town where being a man meant being “productive, active, and heroic” and being a woman was associated with domesticity, “a fixed state of endless reproduction.”⁴³ Within this restricted framework, and out of necessity, many wives derived their authority by employing domestics.

Pressure on wives was compounded by the fact that a certain level of social status, based on “respectability, conformity and social success” was vital to achieve for families in Grand Falls during this period.⁴⁴ Proper behaviour and protocol were key features of social life: “The life here then [1930s] was all settled. The company ran the town and there was a little bit of snobbishness. If you were invited out you better look out.”⁴⁵ Such standards undoubtedly influenced working relationships between elite wives and

⁴²Interview with Daphne L.

⁴³Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect*, 75.

⁴⁴Marilyn Porter’s research on Grand Falls in the contemporary period reveals a continuity between past and present in that married women in Grand Falls are responsible for most of the tasks associated with “social life.” See Marilyn Porter, *Place and Persistence in the Lives of Newfoundland Women*, 133.

⁴⁵Interview with Gloria B.

domestics, whose labour they required to improve their own roles as successful wives and the social status of their families.⁸⁶

Throughout the late 1930s, the *Grand Falls Advertiser* published a weekly column entitled, "Grand Falls at Home: Social Activities of the Week." It drew the town's attention to the leisure pursuits of its more well-to-do residents, by featuring reports on the social activities of elite wives and their daughters.⁸⁷ The husband of one woman who hosted a bridge game in her home adversely reacted to the publicity the occasion commanded:

I am writing to formally protest against the publication in your paper of events which may from time to time take place in my home and which I consider to be of a purely personal and private nature....you are unaware that this was published without even the courtesy of asking either my permission or approval and I strongly resent it.⁸⁸

This certainly was a case of a husband's attempt to control public perceptions of his wife's social status. The column, however, simply aimed to identify and describe the host of the tea parties and bridge teas, the names of invited guests, and the role each woman played.

⁸⁶Carolyn Steedman has convincingly argued that British social historians should look more closely at servant-employer relationships to understand the ways in which "class did in fact happen, in human relationships." Carolyn Steedman, "The Price of Experience: Women and the Making of the English Working Class," *Radical History Review*, 59 (1994) 117.

⁸⁷The names that appeared in this column were cross-referenced with the manuscript census data on birthplace and occupation of household head. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1921 and 1935. *Grand Falls Advertiser*, 22 January 1938.

⁸⁸This letter was reproduced in the memoirs of Walter Blackmore, founder of the *Grand Falls Advertiser*. *Me and Mike and the Bold Adventure*,

On one occasion, the column informed readers that the wife of the AND company's chief engineer had hosted a large party, at which the wife of the company's Assistant Treasurer poured the tea, and another elite wife served ices.⁸⁹ Most of these social events took place in company houses and most of those who attended were the same women. Not surprisingly, the manuscript census confirms that all of the women who attended these functions employed domestics, and some of them had staffs of two.⁹⁰ The true division of labour between women within their households was not surprisingly masked in these newspaper reports. Domestics' labour occurred in isolation. By this period, migration status was indeed embedded in gender and class relationships within the town.

In Grand Falls social distinctions between wives and domestics were complicated in cases where they shared similar social origins. While some employers believed that: "Whoever we had living in the house was always part of the family and quite comfortable with us," this view was not always shared by domestics.⁹¹ For example, in describing her employers Sarah C. pointed out that:

He was a Scotchman. She belonged to Twillingate...she was a Greenham from Twillingate come up and got in contact with Mr. Anderson and married him so she made a good job for herself. Come up from Twillingate you know...he [the wife's father] was a fisherman but she wouldn't admit to that. Lots of girls you know wouldn't admit to things...they thought

⁸⁹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 22 January 1938.

⁹⁰*Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1935.

⁹¹Interview with Violet T.

that was too low a job to do. I wouldn't care, what, as long as I got a job.⁹²

Sarah C.'s words underscored the ways in which married women's social status was derived from their husband's positions. Tensions over social status played themselves out in the Anderson household, where Sarah C. was hired to cook.⁹³ When asked whether Mrs. Anderson helped her, Sarah C. replied emphatically:

Nah...God. She'd come out and she'd say, Sarah C. what are we having for dinner, and I'd tell her, and all right. See her no more 'til dinner was on the table. She didn't help much did she? [laughter]⁹⁴

In addition, her comments reveal that it was difficult for a woman like Sarah C. to show deference to another woman who came from a similar background -- both were daughters of fishermen. Such cases also demonstrate the complex ways in which uneven development shaped women's conceptions of femininity and respectability.

Other cases of women who gained social status through marriage to a mill worker emerged in interviews. For instance, when Patricia O. described why she moved to Grand Falls from a small community on the northeast coast, she underlined the juxtaposition between her own life and the life of her aunt's sister-in-law, the wife of a Grand Falls mill

⁹²Interview with Sarah C.

⁹³Phyllis Palmer found that in the U.S. in the interwar years, "little specialization characterized the occupation. The titles of 'maid,' 'general housekeeper,' 'cook,' and even 'laundress' were used for workers who did approximately the same range of tasks." Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt*, 79.

⁹⁴Interview with Sarah C.

worker.⁹⁵ Patricia O. performed a variety of domestic tasks and fishery-related work for her aunt and uncle in a small community near Lewisporte at the age of fourteen. One day, she said, "I heard a knock to the door and this lady, she had a nice hat on, a veil, a nice suit on, a walking cane...." The lady to whom she referred was her aunt's sister-in-law from Grand Falls. After Patricia O. set the table for tea in the most elaborate way she could, the woman from Grand Falls commented: "'Oh my,' she said, 'sure that table's set good enough for the queen' and then she asked, 'You could do things like that?'" Patricia O. replied "'Yes we were taught to do that'... we could do housework you see."⁹⁶ At the end of the encounter Patricia O. asked the woman if she was afraid of the water, to which she responded: "I grew up along side of the water, I went to Grand Falls after I got married." This exchange provides insight into the self-definition of women who grew up in coastal communities. Housework was central to their identities as young women; they juxtaposed their own lives with those of the women who had gained access to Grand Falls and married the core permanent workforce. Outward displays of consumption, such as through clothing styles and other mannerisms, created a perceived distance between women of similar backgrounds. Significantly as well, the woman from Grand Falls told Patricia O. that she would find her "a job of work in Grand Falls," which she eventually accepted.

⁹⁵Interview with Patricia O.

⁹⁶Interview with Patricia O.

Patricia O. may have done housework for Mrs O. for a brief period before she secured wage work at the Grand Falls Candy Store. Patricia stayed in Grand Falls for the rest of her life marrying Mrs. O's son who was employed in the mill in a variety of jobs including cleaner, electrician, and blow-pit worker. He had moved to Grand Falls with his parents from Glenwood, a nearby logging community. When Patricia was 33 she had five children and she hired a domestic servant, which raises a series of questions about the complexities of these gender and class relationships.⁹⁷

One former domestic illustrated how social differentiation filtered down into common behaviours, symbolizing perhaps the distinction between an older established fishing community and a hierarchical community where everybody knew their place:

I often used to think about the difference in the comings and goings. Because in Grand Falls if you went to anyone's house you had to take your shoes off in the porch. You had to be right polite. **A child going in or anybody like me, a servant girl, would have to sit in the kitchen and other people would go in the living room.** And at home there was none of that, you could run back and forth with your boots on all day long and wherever one sat the other sat. [my emphasis]⁹⁸

While Martina L. did not overtly discuss her position within these homes in terms of stigma, her remarks suggest that she was aware of her migration status, which in turn influenced her movements within households and the level of interaction she could expect

⁹⁷Interview with Patricia O., and *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921, 1935, and 1945*. For a more detailed discussion of former domestics hiring domestics see Chapter 7.

⁹⁸Interview with Martina L.

to have with residents. Moreover, her comparison of her status as “servant girl” and a child illustrates how she internalized the inequalities inherent in the position of paid domestic worker.⁹⁹ These comments appear to contradict Martina L.’s earlier comments about her confidence in doing domestic work. But when former domestics addressed their work experiences as distinct from their experiences in the community and in human relationships more generally, they viewed themselves as highly skilled workers. When they described their lives outside of the workplace, the power imbalances embedded in the social relationship became more pronounced.

The familial aspect of many employer-employee relationships did not necessarily mean they were equal. As one woman stated: “They wouldn’t sit and eat with us but they wouldn’t want to.”¹⁰⁰ Other former employers spoke about the women they hired in a way that suggested they scrutinized the domestics’ behaviours and abilities, while distancing themselves: “Some of them were as good as men, they could drive horses, they could dig up a garden, saw wood, do it all. Others were no good for anything.”¹⁰¹ Another woman

⁹⁹Judith Rollins, “Ideology and Servitude,” in Roger Sanjek and Shellee Colen eds. *At Work in Homes: Household Workers in World Perspective*,” 81. Writing of the maternalism of employers of domestic workers, Judith Rollins has argued that women were often treated as children by their employers. Rollins argues that these ideational aspects of the employer-employee relationship should not distract us from understanding that relationship as a class relationship.

¹⁰⁰Interview with Carmel B.

¹⁰¹Interview with Richard S.

noted: "I can remember she always wanted to be a movie star.... I have no idea where she came from."¹⁰²

In 1921, domestic servants made up the largest category of any group of wage earners in Grand Falls. In 1935, they made up the second largest.¹⁰³ Despite their strength in numbers, however, their relative isolation in the household prevented many of them from participating in the town's social activities. The presence of domestics in Grand Falls lurks under the surface of gender and class relations. Their isolation in the household meant the majority of them had little time off, and if they worked in company houses their freedom was limited more than if they worked in hotels. For example, while Martina L. had encouraged her female relatives and friends to move to Grand Falls to do housework, she did not recall socializing with them:

I had two or three uncles in there [Grand Falls]...and that time uncle Mark L. was in there and there was more people in there from Fleur de Lys. And there was Miss Ann L. she was in there working and I knew her. **I didn't mind that because I had so much work to do and when night time would come I would go to bed. Yes when I went in there now there was another one of my step sisters. And after I went in I got this place for her and she came in and another one of my cousins went in there and there's lots of girls came in there. I didn't get much chance to be with them after they came to Grand Falls.**¹⁰⁴ [my emphasis]

¹⁰²Interview with Violet T.

¹⁰³ In 1935, there were 168 paper makers and 153 domestics in Grand Falls. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland 1921, 1935.*

¹⁰⁴Interview with Martina L.

Ironically, the very conditions that brought them close to relatives (through chain migration and in the demand for their labour) excluded them from participating, to any great extent, in town life. Mill workers remembered that “young servant girls” congregated on street corners on their evenings off,¹⁰⁵ but former domestics rarely mentioned going out. When they did go out they were expected to tell their employers where they were going and they usually had a curfew. In oral history, domestics were remembered for the value of the work they did around the house, if they were remembered at all.¹⁰⁶

The issue of domestics participating in the town’s social activities was brought to the community’s attention through the editorial pages of the local newspaper. Writing under the pseudonym “A Servant Girl,” one woman protested the fact that “a few young ladies around town feel disgusted when they go to a party and find that girls who are doing housework are attending the same party.” She then continued, “But if the same young ladies were to get married they would have to hire on one of these servant girls, as they say themselves, to cook a bite for the poor unfortunate man who would marry them.”¹⁰⁷ Another domestic responded to this woman by stating: “Cheers to servant girl of a recent issue! Jeers to high nose ladies.”¹⁰⁸ These young women’s words insinuate that

¹⁰⁵Interviews with Richard S.

¹⁰⁶Interview with Carmel B., Violet T., and Gertrude L.

¹⁰⁷*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 4 March 1939.

¹⁰⁸*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 1 April 1939.

a collective identity had begun to form among domestics when they viewed themselves in contrast to other women of the town, an indication of class, or migration status cutting across gender lines.

In public discourse domestics were often portrayed as marginal members of the community. In fact they were viewed as occupying a liminal position outside the town's organized social life. In most of the anecdotal stories that referred to domestics they were not portrayed as victims, but as having control -- being somewhat stronger than most young women of their age -- hardy and free thinking. This was evident in a story about a young woman from Bonavista Bay who arrived at Grand Falls on the westbound train. Upon arrival she was approached by a taxi driver, who asked her "[Want a] taxi, miss?" The domestic replied, "No, I don't, I heard about you fellows before I left home."¹⁰⁹ In the late 1930s, the newspaper reported on a recent visit by the Sydney, Nova Scotia hockey team, stating that: "One of the team, however, feels that our girls are inclined to exaggerate their influence a little, and you can't blame him for that."¹¹⁰ According to the story, when the young hockey player escorted a "girl" home from a dance "she said her Dad was a big business man in St. John's and she was here on a holiday just to see the town." The report continued by describing the outcome of this encounter: "The next day the hockey lad found out the girl belonged to a nearby town and was a domestic servant in

¹⁰⁹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 11 February 1939.

¹¹⁰*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 25 February 1939.

a home on Junction Rd.”¹¹¹ Apparently, the young woman had made up a fictional identity in order to escape the stigma of her position in Grand Falls -- she had duped the young man. She felt that she had to mask her true identity for a reason.¹¹² The undiversified economy of Grand Falls, however, meant that social origin was their escape from a perceived stigma. Domestics were also typically the butt of cruel jokes. Another report in the local newspaper described a 4th Avenue man who sweetened his tea with Rinso instead of sugar. The incident was blamed on his domestic: “The servant girl had a very dull intellect, and in passing the sugar to the man made a mistake and gave him Rinso in his drinking glass.”¹¹³

6.5 Length of stay and quitting

Despite the fact that domestics inhabited a marginal position in the community, they continued to confront their household chores on a daily basis and many of them exercised a certain amount of control over their tenure. How long a domestic stayed and worked in one household depended on a number of factors, including her own obligations to the household of her parents, working conditions, wages, her marital status, and the stage in the life-cycle of the family for whom she worked. In general, however, as one

¹¹¹*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 25 February 1939.

¹¹²Interestingly, former domestics who worked in Ireland often said they pretended to boyfriends that they worked in factories. Mona Hearn, *Below Stairs*, 15.

¹¹³*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 11 February 1939.

historian has noted, there were two types of servants: “those who were continually moving from one situation to another, and the loyal family retainers.”¹¹⁴

Leaving an employer’s household was not always an act of resistance. Seasonal variation meant that some women stayed home and worked in their parents’ households during the fishing season, while others came to Grand Falls when school got out in the summer.¹¹⁵ For example, in explaining her work patterns during the last years of her employment in Grand Falls, Stella B. stated: “I used to come out the fall of the year.” By this she meant that she would return home when the fishing season was over, most likely to visit her boyfriend who was away during the summers.¹¹⁶ In her view this arrangement worked well because there was a demand for domestics in Grand Falls to look after children during the summer months:

I had no reason to leave but last time, the fall, I left.... And Mrs. Mitchell wrote me a letter home and asked if I’d come with her. I stayed there the summer and Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell went on their holidays.¹¹⁷

Mrs. Mitchell sent her two oldest sons to Labrador, and Stella B. was put in charge of looking after their two youngest children while they travelled. Another woman from Norris Arm spent her summers in Grand Falls helping her aunt and uncle who had built a

¹¹⁴Mona Hearn, *Below Stairs*, 84.

¹¹⁵On working in domestic service on a seasonal basis, see O’Dwyer interviews, 8 and 11.

¹¹⁶Interview with Stella B.

¹¹⁷Interview with Stella B

house on the outskirts of town (Station Rd) before moving to the town proper permanently in 1936.

You had to get wood and water. There was animals and you have to feed the horses on time. Uncle Ron did all the cleaning in the barn. We had hens, and geese and ducks...The excitement was going to the movies on Saturday. You worked like a Trojan to get your dime to go to the movies.¹¹⁸

While situations such as the one described above were not necessarily as formal as the majority, it is highly probable that they were quite common. In cases where employers could not afford to hire young women on a consistent basis, they drew upon female labour to help them on a seasonal basis. Other young women left situations because of the vagaries in employer demand: "Theresa L., she didn't stay in Grand Falls very long. She was working with a woman in there, and I think she wanted a girl only for so long, you know."¹¹⁹

Insofar as there were a variety of situations available in this small community, some young women, usually those with considerable experience, took advantage to find situations that gave them more autonomy, leisure time, and better pay. One man remembered the circumstances that led his family's domestic to leave:

She left us and she went in service with the general manager of the mill. They only had three children. She was some nice. She was nice mannered.

¹¹⁸Interview with Jane T.

¹¹⁹Interview with Martina L.

She got a bit of polish when she went up with the Manuels. They were elite. Anyone who lived on Hill Rd was upper class.¹²⁰

This young woman's departure from a household headed by a paper maker with nine children (where she stayed in the "girls' room") to a mill manager's household with only three children shows that a hierarchy of situations existed. Her "respectability" as well as her previous experience meant that she was able to secure a better job. Sarah C., from Musgrave Harbour, also quit for a better opportunity. Though she had been working for a family in St. John's for seven and a half years she decided to leave when a friend from Musgrave Harbour informed her of a situation cooking for one of the AND Company managerial assistants. She accepted the position without hesitation, because in her mind working as a cook was a more specialized task and the absence of children presented her with a less restrictive situation.¹²¹

Some young women, tired of the personal connection to employers in private households, sought work in hotels. When Martina L. left a mill worker's household for the less familial situation in Grand Falls House, she recalled the benefits of that move:

The only time I had any leisure time was when I was working for Mrs. Allan at Grand Falls House. Cause she used to do half the work. She used to do all the cooking and Mr. Allan used to do all the baking. And every morning Mrs. Allan would help me do my beds so the work was lightened for me.¹²²

¹²⁰Interview with Richard S.

¹²¹Interview with Sarah C.

¹²²Interview with Martina L.

Indeed the division of labour between women in the workplace (as household or hotel) influenced domestics' perceptions of the work. Margaret C. also left her employment in a private household, headed by a paper maker with three children, for a position at Erin House, where she earned \$15 a month. She left because of conflict with her female employer: "Mrs. Frecker wasn't an easy woman to live with, she had a hot temper...she didn't want me to leave..nobody stopped me from anything I wanted to do."¹²³ In interviews former domestics never expressed a concern about staying in a situation to get good references. Perhaps this was because in Grand Falls references were not exclusively letters from previous employers but they included the information that a prospective employer may have learned from their friends or relatives.¹²⁴ Working in the household of kin did not always prevent young women from looking for a better situation. As one woman affirmed in explaining the reason for her distant relation's departure: "And then she wanted to go somewhere else, and then she moved out."¹²⁵

It is highly probable that few women who began working as domestics in Grand Falls gained access to the formal labour market. The hiring practices in the retail sector targeted women with more formal education. For example, one woman who eventually secured work in retail stated that: "You had to have a resumé, what grades you had,"

¹²³Interview with Margaret C.

¹²⁴Interview with Carmel B., Violet T., and Richard S. On staying in a situation to get a reference, see O'Dwyer interviews, 11.

¹²⁵Interview with Daphne L.

suggesting formal education was important to those employers.¹²⁶ Another woman who got a job at the money orders department with the post office, which paid \$29 a month, said that she wrote a test along with three other young women, and she got the job because she got the highest marks.¹²⁷

In the interwar years the majority of domestics were working temporarily before marriage. In the words of one former domestic: "By going to Grand Falls there was better advantages than at home. When you went away you could work for years if you didn't want to get married. You didn't have to depend on anyone else."¹²⁸ In a period during which mill workers and other middle-class employers could accommodate some of the island's female surplus labour in their households, these women understood that they could remain employed for a number of years. Notably, most of the Grand Falls domestics of the interwar years were single and relatively young, and they readily exercised their ability to move from job to job within the restricted framework within which they operated. The unregulated nature of domestic service, domestics' propensity to quit to find better situations or to get married, among other factors, means that it impossible to determine their average length of stay in one household.¹²⁹

¹²⁶Interview with Nellie M.

¹²⁷Interview with Iris B.

¹²⁸Interview with Martina L.

¹²⁹The manuscript census of 1935 recorded total annual earnings of domestics. If we consider that there was a ceiling of around \$15 per month for domestics' wages, then it is possible to speculate on the number of women who worked in Grand Falls for at least

6.6 Long-term employment

After the 1940s they [domestic servants] had different ideas, they would also take courses and went on to jobs and moved away. They met Americans and they went down to the States and some of the girls who worked for me are still here [Grand Falls] and married with families.¹³⁰

The words of Carmel B. illuminate aspects of continuity and change in the experiences of domestics in Grand Falls after World War II. The key transformations to which she referred encompassed expanded educational opportunities, increased employment possibilities outside of household labour, and improvements in the marriage market for the generation of young women who entered domestic service after the interwar years. For the first time, a compulsory school attendance law came into effect in Newfoundland in 1942, which stipulated that all children under the age of fourteen had to be enrolled in school.¹³¹ Access to the formal labour market for single women migrants was not as restricted as it had been in the interwar years, and barriers to outmigration, which limited men and women to finding work on the island in the 1930s, were removed. Further, the arrival of American and Canadian servicemen at the nearby towns of

a year. The static nature of the census prevents us from determining the length of stay beyond a year, and whether an individual young woman had stayed in a particular household for a year.

¹³⁰Interview with Carmel B.

¹³¹See *Acts of the Honourable Commission of Government of Newfoundland, 1942* (St. John's: 1942). According to Hilda Chauk Murray in areas such as Maberly-Neck, Trinity Bay, no one completed high school during the 1930s, but by the 1940s conditions had improved and children completed high school, see *More than Fifty Percent*, 56.

Botwood and Gander meant that some of them were billeted in Grand Falls.¹³² The influx of these men would have increased young women's chances for marriage. As Carmel B.'s words also suggest, and as oral history and census evidence support, circumstances in the period after World War II remained similar for many women. The local economy of Grand Falls remained largely undiversified throughout the 1940s, but the demand for domestic service continued – though at a reduced rate. Young women also continued to migrate from fishing and logging communities, and increasingly from the town of Windsor to work in Grand Falls households. Marriage remained most of these women's only option and many of them -- like those of a slightly earlier generation -- married and stayed in Grand Falls. Manuscript census evidence also reveals that a number of young women who migrated to Grand Falls during the 1930s stayed in service until at least the end of World War II.

Cecilia Benoit's research on the impact of the construction of the American airforce base on the west-coast Newfoundland community of Stephenville in 1941 revealed that even though women were given wage earning opportunities on the base, "the complex status of female wage earners cannot be analysed by merely counting how many single and married women found employment."¹³³ Stephenville women who, on the eve of base construction, had experience working in domestic service in the west-coast mill town

¹³²Interview with Jane T.

¹³³Cecilia Benoit, "Urbanizing Women Military Fashion," 116.

of Corner Brook, for example, were not necessarily able to find better working conditions on the base. In addition, Benoit argues the expanded wartime labour market for women's work remained segregated along gender and class lines. Women found it difficult to find better paid work and they were largely excluded from unionization. The words of one woman interviewed by Benoit highlight the interconnection between gender and class in restricting her access to paid work in the expanded labour market of the early 1940s, as well as the centrality of domestic work to her identity:

The real truth of the matter was that most of the Newfoundland girls from around here, not being able to afford fancy clothes and make-up and that stuff...were never able to get a hell of a lot more than work at domestic chores. When all you ever did in your everyday life was have kids and look out to them and do your garden and housework, then its not surprising that everybody figured that's all you were made of.¹³⁴

Census evidence shows that, at least for some women, a similar pattern existed in Grand Falls. In 1945, for instance, 39 women stated that their previous 1935 occupation was domestic servant. Of those 39 women, 15 (or 38 per cent) stated that their present 1945 occupation was domestic servant, indicating that these women had remained working as domestics for at least ten years.¹³⁵ Indeed some of them may have left domestic service briefly between census periods, but a number of them would have certainly stayed in service for that ten year period. Lavina H., for example, worked in the

¹³⁴Cecilia Benoit, "Urbanizing Women Military Fashion," 117.

¹³⁵*Census (nominal) Newfoundland and Labrador, 1945*. Both these figures are an underrepresentation because the census only captured those women who worked as domestics in 1935 and in no other year between 1935 and 1945.

same household in both census years (Table 6.2).¹³⁶ Her experience of working in a household for that length of time is representative of those of other Newfoundland women during that period.¹³⁷

1945 census data on 1935 occupations and 1935 residence allows a dynamic analysis (albeit a limited one) of some of these women's work histories. In general these women were older than the average domestic -- four were between 44 and 66 years and the others were in their late 20s and 30s. Age also coincided with the number of years of formal education in reverse proportion, which is not surprising given the fact access to formal education was severely limited for women who reached school age in the late 19th century. Marital status also influenced the working circumstances of these women. For example, at 66 years of age and widowed, Mona T. of Bonavista Bay was employed in Grand Falls by Stephen M., a 62 year old widower who was also born in Bonavista Bay.¹³⁸ Stephen M. lived alone, working as a grinder in the mill. He paid Mona T., who had worked as a domestic in Bonavista Bay in 1935, \$15 a month. The proximity in age between Mona T. and her Grand Falls employer and their mutual connection to Bonavista Bay suggests that she may have been employed for her role as a mill worker's wife. Selina

¹³⁶This information was found by cross-referencing name, age, and religion of this woman in the 1935 and 1945 manuscript censuses. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935 and 1945.*

¹³⁷On staying with one employer for over a decade, see O'Dwyer interviews, 5, 7, 10, and 14.

¹³⁸*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

V., a 63 year old woman working in the household of William P., a 59 year old widower who worked as a carpenter, found herself in a situation similar to that of Mona T. after at least 10 years in domestic service.¹³⁹ The fact that these women were paid a wage does not necessarily mean that their relationship to the household head was purely functional. Social and cultural pressure to be married instead of cohabitation may have led these men to use the term domestic servant to simplify a much more complex relationship. The stigma of cohabitation may also have prevented these couples from telling the enumerator the truth. Without hard evidence as to the motives for this pattern of behaviour, one can only speculate as to the circumstances under which it occurred.¹⁴⁰

In 1945, about half of the domestics with ten years or more experience worked in households headed by members of the community's elite. Some of these elite households were the highest paying in Grand Falls, while others did not allocate as much of their total earnings to pay their household help. This social group generally demanded considerable experience from the women they hired. For example, 25 year old Elsie B. had left school at the age of 11, at which time she most likely began working in households near her home community of Gander Bay.¹⁴¹ In 1945 she was the highest paid domestic in Grand Falls,

¹³⁹William P.'s two adult sons also lived in the household.

¹⁴⁰Di Cooper and Moira Donald, who have reconstructed families which employed servants in England, have argued that such research necessitates a certain amount of extrapolation when analysing the findings. See Di Cooper and Moira Donald, "Households and 'hidden' kin."

¹⁴¹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

Table 6.2: Women with at least 10 years employment in domestic service, Grand Falls, 1945

name	age of domestic	age of employer	marital status of head	occupation of employer	monthly wage of domestic	no. years in school of domestic
Mona T.	66	62	widower	Grinder	\$15	4
Selina V.	63	59	widower	Carpenter	\$20	4
Lavina H.	48	67	married	Railway Agent		2
Maria N.	44	66	married	Department Super.	\$14	14
Anne P.	38	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	11
Mrs. F.	37	53	married	General Manager	\$20	6
Joanne P.	35	52	married	Foreman-Grinder	n/a	10
Minne K.	35	57	married	U.C. Minister	\$15	6
Mary D.	34	55	widower	Oiler	\$15	5
Bridget F.	32	66	single	R.C. Priest	\$20	
Ida P.	28	49	married	Millwright	\$7	5
Marina E.	27	66	widower	Welder	\$20	7
Sophia B.	25	45	married	Contractor	\$15	7
Elsie B.	25	71	married	Managing Director	\$34.50	4
Mabel G.	25	58	married	G M Royal Stores	n/a	5

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland and Labrador, 1945*

earning \$34.50 a month at Grand Falls House, the residence of Vincent Jones, Managing Director of the AND Company.¹⁴² Alexander Ogilvie, general manager of the Royal Stores

¹⁴²*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

employed Mabel G., a 25 year old woman who had more than ten years experience as a domestic. Rev. Finn, Grand Falls parish priest; Philip Gruchy, General Manager of the AND Company; Peter Dackers, Department Superintendent; and Sidney Hillier, the town's United Church Minister all hired experienced women to work in their households. These women earned between \$15 and \$34.50 a month in 1945.¹⁴³

Experience did not necessarily mean higher wages for all women. While Bridget F. more than doubled her wages between 1935 and 1945 (from \$8 per month working in the household of a chemist at the age of 21 to \$20 working in the household of the parish priest in 1945), Ida P. earned \$7 a month as an equally experienced (in years at least) domestic.¹⁴⁴ In 1935, Maria N. worked in a household headed by a semi-skilled worker, which included his wife and two daughters, earning \$10 a month. While her age and experience paid off in 1938 when she won a \$3 prize in a bread-making contest sponsored by Robin Hood Mills, her skill was not reflected in the wages she earned at the age of 44.¹⁴⁵ In 1945 she was employed in the household of an elderly couple for \$14 a month, a pay increase of only \$4 a month in ten years. The cost of living increases of the World

¹⁴³*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

¹⁴⁴*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935 and 1945.*

¹⁴⁵*Grand Falls Advertiser, 24 September 1938.* Most of the prize winners were married women and it is difficult to trace them back through the census because they would have changed their names. Maria N. was one of the few single women who one a prize in the contest.

War II period may have put downward pressure on the wages lower income employers were able to pay.

An inability to earn better wages was not the only indicator of the difficulties that some of the less fortunate women domestics encountered. Mary D. also did live-in domestic work for at least ten years in Grand Falls. In 1935 she was employed as a domestic servant in the household of a paper maker who had seven children, earning roughly \$8 a month.¹⁴⁶ In 1945, at 34 years old, Mary was employed in a household headed by a widower who earned his livelihood as an oiler in the mill. In addition to paying her \$15 a month, George H. provided room and board for Mary D.'s six year old son. Having a child out of wedlock may have reduced Mary D.'s chances of marriage and confined her to seeking live-in domestic work, because it was impossible to live independently on the wages offered to single women in the Grand Falls labour market. Incidents of pregnancy among domestic servants were most likely high, but in the absence of court records and the reluctance of former domestics to discuss such matters openly, it is difficult to understand the emotional and social issues involved in the event of an unwedded pregnancy.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

¹⁴⁷This is an under-researched area of study. For a general discussion of domestics' unwanted pregnancies in Newfoundland in the early 20th century, see Linda Cullum and Maeve Baird, "A Woman's Lot," in Linda Kealey ed., *Pursuing Equality*, 108-117.

Not all women who migrated to Grand Falls during the 1930s were able to leave their situations, as census evidence reveals. While the expanded labour market for wage work may have discriminated against some of these women based on the stigma of having worked in households, they may also have been women who did not have a marriage partner, and domestic service was a way of securing room and board for themselves, and in at least one case for their children. The profile of these women, albeit limited by the nature of sources, raises important questions about the ghettoization of certain groups of women in domestic service over several periods of their life course. Independent women from poorer backgrounds in this period had few other choices. Their labour also continued to be in demand.

The wide-spread presence of domestic servants in Grand Falls made an impact on class and gender relations. Wives derived their power and authority from their husband's status in the mill, which in turn, influenced the way they interacted with the young women they employed, and the way in which they allocated tasks. Domestic servants derived some of their power through their skill and expertise in performing household tasks, and in their ability to move from one situation to another because of the incessant demand. Distinctions between women of similar and different backgrounds sharpened, however, when they negotiated the division of labour in the household. When the content and definition of domestic service are considered within the context of these social relationships, it becomes apparent that migration status had become a marker of inequality

in the town. It is by understanding the work and migration experiences as connected and within the wider context of social relationships in the company town, that we can begin to unravel the complex nature of subordination and domination between women.

Chapter Seven

After Service: Blurring the line Between

Paid and Unpaid Domestic Work

Emily M. from Norris Arm.... We had another one called Mavis M., she was from Gambo. I'd say mother and father knew her mother and father. I can remember her. The first man she married he used to come around courting her. He lost his leg in the mill.... Lucy K. [Campbellton] was the next girl. She married a serviceman.... Most of them had boyfriends. They knew people who came from their home towns. They probably would go home.... Elizabeth A.: She was the best looking one we ever had. She was from Brigus. She had relatives living here in Grand Falls. Elizabeth A. quit and went to the mainland. She married a guy from Grand Falls she met in Halifax. Isobel H. She was the quietest person. She hardly spoke ten words. She used to stand up in the doorway. I don't think she stayed very long. Seven boys you know. She might have been from a really small town. We had a big turn over of maids some months. That was the norm... Edith C.... Murial J....¹

The way in which two brothers described the fates of the succession of domestics who worked in their household in the 1930s and 1940s reveals much about the variety of experiences these women had. The experiences of these domestics were representative. Many of the young women who moved to Grand Falls to work as domestics remained employed in a household until they married. Who did these women marry? How did they meet their husbands? And what did they do within their married lives?

Studies on the changing status of married women throughout the period of industrialization have rarely explored the defining moments in women's lives before

¹Interview with Richard S.

marriage, such as the factors that shaped their decision to get married, whom they married, when they married as well as the continuities and changes in their lives after they made the transition into conjugality.² These questions are particularly important to address in studies of domestic service. Generally speaking, the literature on domestic service dealing with the question of marriage, has considered domestic service as a bridging occupation -- a transitional phase between living in the household of their parents and getting married. Earlier studies of this aspect, in particular, have examined the domestic servants' experiences in terms of upward mobility.³ Domestic service, in short, processed and acculturated young women from traditional societies into middle-class urban life. While the vast majority of the domestics working in Grand Falls in the interwar years were young, single, and from traditional backgrounds, such a framework does not do justice to the complexity of their migration and work experiences.

²Most often, social historical studies of married women document the role wives and mothers played within the household economy, in and out of wage work, and in the wider community of social reform and charity organizations. These types of studies generally deal with daughters and mothers separately. See Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families*, and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development*. Other historians deal exclusively with single women's wage earning experiences without tracing them into marriage. See, for example, Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem*. Joan Sangster's case study of Peterborough, Ontario makes inroads into considering the full life cycle of wage earning women in one town; see *Earning Respect*.

³For a classic example of the argument that domestic service "processed" rural women migrants in Europe, see Theresa McBride, *The Domestic Revolution: the Modernization of Household Service in Britain and France, 1820-1920* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1976). For further discussion of domestic service and the question of mobility, see, Evelyn Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, Warbride*, 102-04.

Another more recent literature, which challenges the mobility approach, has discussed domestic service as a ghettoising occupation, especially when done by women of colour and other minority groups in the United States. Historians writing of non-white domestics, have generally found that these women married men who occupied low paying posts in a segregated labour market, which meant that their wives (some of whom were former domestics) continued to work as domestic servants into their married lives.⁴ Historically, the contradiction for these women has been that they had to balance marriage with living-in and caring for another family. In live-out arrangements, which became increasingly common in Canada and the United States after World War I, and in Newfoundland in the 1940s and 50s, domestics juggled their paid and unpaid domestic and caregiving roles on a daily basis.⁵ While most of the Grand Falls domestics did not continue working as domestics after they married, the nature of their domestic labour -- now unpaid -- varied according to who they married and where they lived.

In order to complete the analysis of the migration experience, this chapter focuses on the circumstances of the lives of the Grand Falls domestics after they married. A consideration of these women's lives after service has revealed two dominant patterns of

⁴Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, Warbride*, and Mary Romero, *Maid in the U.S.A.*.

⁵For a discussion of the transition to live-out work for African-American domestics, see Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out*, especially Chapters 5 and 6, where she shows that many of these women welcomed the shift because their workday finally had an end.

experience: many domestics left Grand Falls for good to marry, and a substantial number stayed and married mill workers. Equally important, where these spent their married lives depended largely on who they married. They generally followed their husbands. By taking into consideration that class, migration status, and gender influenced women's expectations for marriage and their lives within marriage, the following discussion deals separately with those women who left Grand Falls, and those who stayed. Centring on the historically specific circumstances of their marriage, and to a lesser extent their lives within marriage, the discussion addresses issues regarding continuity and change in their lives.

7.1 Expectations: gender, migration status, and the transition into adulthood

In the interwar years in Newfoundland, as elsewhere, most women were expected to marry. When they reached a certain age, social pressures ensured they did.⁶ These general cultural expectations were, however, beginning to change during this period, especially for more privileged young women. Middle-class daughters and working-class daughters growing up in towns like Grand Falls were beginning to consider their options, in terms of formal education, wage work, or marriage. Daughters from rural backgrounds were less likely to consider a life outside of performing domestic tasks, whether paid or unpaid. The transition into adulthood was thus a more marked one for female migrants

⁶Peter Sinclair, "Household Labour is Doing Gender: The Sexual Division of Labour on the Bonavista Peninsula, Newfoundland," unpublished paper (The MacNutt Lecture at the University of New Brunswick, 1999) 15; and Hilda Chaulk Murray, *More Than Fifty Percent*, 73.

from coastal communities than it was for mill workers' daughters. Indeed class and migration status influenced the different stages in women's lives. As two historians of Newfoundland women have stated: "It appears that in Newfoundland most young women left childhood behind by their mid-teen years."⁷ Mill workers' daughters generally perceived wage work as a transitional period in their lives before marriage.

Oral history provides insight into how women of the same cohort, but of different social origins (or migration status), perceived their options when they were young and single. For example, Violet T., a mill worker's daughter, responded to a question about what her expectations were when she was growing up by stating that young women only had three choices: "stenographer, nurse, or teacher" – jobs which required a certain level of education.⁸ Though ultimately she explained: "finding a man was every girl's ambition...even University girls."⁹ Similarly, another woman noted: "I had no idea, I suppose I thought that I would get married. I thought I'd stay here [in Grand Falls]."¹⁰ Vera A., the daughter of a mill worker, had a similarly deterministic view: "In those days when you were a nurse, or you worked in the mill, or you worked in a store when you got

⁷Linda Cullum and Maeve Baird, "A Woman's Lot," Linda Kealey ed., *Pursuing Equality*, 87.

⁸Interview with Violet T.

⁹Interview with Violet T.

¹⁰Interview with Vera A.

married that was it. You resigned your job and you became a housekeeper.”¹¹ Marriage to an AND Company employee was idealized by one woman, a post office clerk, who walked past the Erin House every day on her way to make the daily deposit: “I’d smell bacon and eggs and I said, boy, I’ll tell you. If I ever gets married I’ll live on bacon and eggs.”¹² These women’s options were restricted by their gender-role obligations. These were reinforced by the town’s rigid social organization, where domesticity and married life were inextricably linked to achieving the status of “woman,” or citizenship in the town. Leaving paid work for marriage was something they accepted. As Joan Sangster has argued in the context of Peterborough, Ontario, “Women embraced the ideal of female domesticity and male breadwinner not because they lacked ambition, but because their ambition was to leave the workforce and participate in another kind of work -- domestic labour.”¹³ Embracing the ideal of female domesticity was not however an integral part of the former domestics’ views of leaving paid work to get married.

The options of all women, irrespective of class or migration status, were restricted by their gender, but that did not necessarily mean that they had the same chances. Rather than discussing expectations for an adult life as such, former domestics recalled leaving home to take a situation in a household other than their parents’ as the most important

¹¹Interview with Gertrude L.

¹²Interview with Iris B.

¹³Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect*, 80.

transition in their lives. In response to a question about leaving work to marry, former domestics simply remembered negotiating their departure from domestic service with their employers.¹⁴ These negotiations took place within the household rather than between friends. Furthermore, these women did not discuss leaving their positions in domestic service in the same way as other wage-earning women. None of them said they had to quit their jobs when they married, nor did they voice regret when they talked about leaving a situation to get married. In fact, many of them typically viewed leaving domestic service as a way out of a situation, and as a chance for a certain degree of independence within their own households.¹⁵

In Grand Falls, the transition from wage work to marriage was a public matter for many young women (and men) who grew up there. Writing of marriage in Halifax, Suzanne Morton described the wedding as “the rite of passage marking the end of public adolescent production and the beginning of private adult consumption” in the interwar years.¹⁶ In linking romantic love to a female workplace culture that was largely a culture of consumption, Morton shows how working-class women bonded together at work to

¹⁴Interview with Martina L.; interview with Stella B.; and interview with Sarah C.

¹⁵Hilda Chaulk Murray refers to “servant girls” in Elliston, Trinity Bay wanting to marry young so that they could feel they were working for themselves. *More Than Fifty Percent*, 79.

¹⁶Suzanne Morton, “The June Bride as the Working-Class Bride: Getting Married in a Halifax Working-Class Neighbourhood in the 1920s,” Bettina Bradbury ed., *Canadian Family History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 375.

send their co-workers off to marry.¹⁷ As in Halifax, the ritual of marriage formed a significant aspect of the feminine work culture of mill workers' daughters who worked for wages in Grand Falls during the 1930s.¹⁸

In Grand Falls, this work culture was largely separate from the mill, and it was buttressed by the paternalism of employers in other sectors of the economy, such as in retail. For example, the Grand Falls Royal Stores, a large employer of young women, had annual reunions complete with a dinner and dance, which in one instance began with a Grand March, led by Mr and Mrs Ogilvie, the store manager and his wife.¹⁹ In addition, going to movies at the Nickel Theatre, and after 1931 "talkies in the Town Hall," shopping in Windsor after 5:00, and socializing encompassed some of the activities of young female wage earners in Grand Falls.²⁰

Whether these young women were leaving town to get married or staying, they celebrated each other's departure from wage work. For instance, one woman's departure from the mill town was marked by a send-off at the Royal Stores and a public farewell:

¹⁷Suzanne Morton, "The June Bride as the Working-Class Bride," 375.

¹⁸On marriage and feminine work culture, see Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 30-2, and Pamela Sugiman, *Labour's Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937-1979* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994)78-81.

¹⁹*Western Star*, 4 May 1927.

²⁰Interview with Jane T.

"Many friends join her in wishing her "Bon Voyage" over the Matrimonial sea."²¹

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s wedding announcements appeared in the local newspapers, providing descriptions of the bride's dress, flower arrangements, guests, menus, and honeymoon plans.²² Grand Falls was no exception to the emerging pattern described by Morton. For example, in 1936 when Anne W., the daughter of an electrician left her position at the Co-operative store to marry, the newspaper reported that she wore "a beautiful gown of white embossed lace over satin finished with a train and her long veil flowed gracefully from a lace cap."²³ The reception was held at the Knights of Columbus Hall, with a sit-down dinner for one hundred guests, with "customary toasts," and speeches. The couple went to Stephenville for their honeymoon, later taking up permanent residence in Grand Falls, where Anne's husband worked as a butcher.²⁴

No newspaper articles celebrated the marriage of "servant girls." The domestics did not share in the marriage ritual -- as feminine workplace culture -- to the same extent as other young women in the town. Nellie M.'s experience is an example of how the location of employment influenced young women's potential for socializing. In the early 1920s, she moved from Dildo, Trinity Bay to Grand Falls, where she worked as domestic

²¹*Western Star*, 12 August 1931.

²²*Western Star*, 16 June 1920; 13 April 1927; 12 August 1931; 19 August 1931; 13 September 1933; 12 September 1934.

²³*Evening Telegram*, 25 August 1936.

²⁴*Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1935 and 1945.

for her sister. Soon after she arrived, she found work downtown at the bakery and candy store, where she earned \$10 a month working the 8:00 to 4:00 shift or the 4:00 to 12:00 shift. She handed her meagre earnings over to her sister, so that she could buy clothes for her fourteen young children. Working at the candy store increased Nellie M.'s chances of making friends and meeting boyfriends. She was no longer isolated in the household, as she herself stated:

I had a lot of friends. I made friends when I went to the store, see. I met fellows. One would wait for me 12 o'clock to take me home. Every day there was someone coming in new: 'Can I see you home tonight?' I had lots of fun I'm telling you, a lot of fun.²⁵

At the age of sixteen, she met her future husband, who was only fourteen at the time. It appears, however, that the couple married shortly after their initial encounter. In the interview Nellie M. did not perceive a need to elaborate on the wedding – it was probably a modest occasion.

The weddings of domestics who returned to their homes to marry would most likely have been more private affairs. Hilda Chaulk Murray's study of women's lives in early 20th century Trinity Bay, reveals that in a fishing community such as Elliston, weddings were public insofar as the entire community participated, but they were more "informal," and "the bride didn't worry about a 'going away outfit,' for there was no honeymoon."²⁶ Similarly in a small community on Fogo Island, where there was no priest,

²⁵Interview with Nellie M.

²⁶Hilda Chaulk Murray, *More Than Fifty Percent*, 75.

Roman Catholic couples who wanted to marry had to take a boat to Joe Batt's Arm and walk to Tilting to get married. One woman noted they had to go to the home of someone else "to change our clothes before going to the church...[we then] changed our clothes for the trip back home."²⁷ This is not to say that young women who grew up in coastal communities did not share the same culture of consumption as their female counterparts in Grand Falls, but getting married was not viewed as a major transition into the realm of housekeeping and domesticity, as it had been for the daughters of mill workers. Housework already formed a central aspect of their identities.

7.2 Women who married and left Grand Falls

As Suzanne Morton has argued, gender ideology, class, and locality all contributed to patterns of marriage; historical factors beyond the control of individuals shaped their decisions to marry.²⁸ Since domestics were generally young and single, they were likely open to the prospect of marriage when they moved to the company town. Many of them, however, had a boyfriend in their home community and they worked until it was time to marry, waiting for an improvement in the marriage market.

A precise figure on the number of women who left the mill town permanently to marry is impossible to obtain because no documentary evidence exists to capture those

²⁷Fogo Island Literacy Association, *Tales of Fogo Island* (Gander, NF: Economy Publishing, 1999) 67-8.

²⁸Suzanne Morton, "The June Bride as the Working-Class Bride."

women who left. For a number of reasons, however, it is possible to speculate that the vast majority of domestics who worked in Grand Falls during the interwar years left the mill town for good after marriage.²⁹ First, during this period it was unexceptional for young women to work temporarily in cities and then to leave to get married. One scholar has shown that the net gain of young girls, who were perhaps attracted by the city for entering service, “was usually counterbalanced by a net outflow of women in the 15-24/25-29 age group” in Atlantic Canada.³⁰ Second, oral history reveals that most of the women who left their homes to work in service on the Avalon Peninsula went back home and married their boyfriends from their childhood, sometimes even after working in service for ten or fifteen years.³¹ Many of these women had worked in Canada or the United States, indicating that their orientation towards home had not been altered by their experience in domestic service. This common experience highlights another aspect of the circularity of their migration. More specifically to Grand Falls, the unequal sex ratios showing a large surplus of women in the 19-24 age cohort, suggests, too, that most women would have had to leave the mill town to marry in the 1930s and 1940s (Appendices B and C). Circumstances in rural communities during this period were

²⁹The inherently static nature of the census as a source makes it unreliable for documenting the number of domestics who left Grand Falls. Moreover the 1935 nominal census did not ask residents where they were in 1921, nor did the enumerators ask residents about their previous 1921 occupation.

³⁰Patricia Thornton, “The Problem of Outmigration,” 27.

³¹O’Dwyer interviews, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 26, and 31.

generally unfavourable for young women to marry.

While cultural expectations for women to marry would have remained constant throughout the interwar years, economic depression increased the average age of marriage for both men and women, drastically reducing the rates of marriage. Low wages for men in logging, the fisheries crisis which meant restricted credit and low prices, a lack of other wage earning opportunities, and barriers to outmigration meant that many couples waited for better economic circumstances to marry in the interwar years. For example, while waiting to marry, Aubrey Tizzard left his northeast coast community for Millertown to work for the AND Company, and his fiancée found a situation near her parents' home. He recalled that they married when their economic situations improved.³²

Table 7.1 shows the ways in which marriage rates in Newfoundland in the first few decades of the 20th century fluctuated, and declined during periods of economic despair. For example, marriage rates of the pre World War I period were around 7.2 new marriages per 1,000 population, but in the post-war climate of recession and inflation the rate declined to 5.7. Marriage rates did not increase substantially until the late 1930s. In fact the Department of Public Health and Welfare made special note that the marriage rate of 7.1 in 1937 represented a breakthrough. Not since 1919, when the rate was 8.2, had so many couples married (See Table 7.1).³³

³²Aubrey M. Tizzard, *On Sloping Ground*, 115.

³³"Marriages," Table 13, Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1937, GN38, S6-3-1, File 3, PANL.

Table 7.1: Marriage Rates in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1909-1944
(calculated on the basis of new marriages per 1,000 of population).

year	rate	year	rate	year	rate	year	rate
1909	7.2	1923	5.2	1933	5.6	1940	7.7
1911	7.3	1925	6.3	1934	6.5	1941	8.7
1913	7.5	1927	5.6	1935	6.6	1942	10.6
1915	6.1	1929	6.0	1936	6.6	1943	8.7
1917	6.9	1930	5.9	1937	7.1	1944	9.5
1919	8.2	1931	5.6	1938	7.3		
1921	5.7	1932	5.5	1939	8.3		

Source: "Marriage Rates. Table 13" [1907 to 1937], Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-3-1, File 3; and "Table A-17," [1938 to 1944] *Historical Statistics of Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's: Creative Printers and Publishers, 1970).

The district-by-district breakdown of marriage rates contained in Table 7.2 reveals that above average marriage rates in some districts increased the 1937 totals. Significantly, the districts of Grand Falls and Humber, both the locations of newsprint mills, had the highest rates. For instance, the 1937 rate for the district of Grand Falls was 11.8, the highest on the island.³⁴ The second highest was 9.0 in the Humber district. These correlations seem to suggest that the relative economic prosperity of some districts encouraged marriage. Districts that continued to suffer severe economic dislocation throughout the late 1930s, such as Trinity North, Bonavista North and South, Placentia West and Placentia and

³⁴The district of Grand Falls included Millertown, Buchans, Bishop's Falls, Botwood, Glenwood, Norris Arm, Badger, and a number of small communities.

St. Mary's, had the lowest rates of marriage (Table 7.2). The low marriage rates in these districts may also have been a consequence of outmigration of young people. Most of these districts were suppliers of migrants to Grand Falls.

Table 7.2 Marriage Rates by District, 1937

District	Rate	District	Rate
St. John's East and West	8.2	Green Bay	6.3
Harbour Main	8.8	White Bay	6.5
Port de Grave	7.1	St. Barbe	6.5
Harbour Grace	7.0	Humber	9.0
Carbonear Bay de Verde	6.2	St. George's Port au Port	7.6
Trinity South	6.0	Burgeo and La Poile	6.8
Trinity North	4.3	Fortune Bay - Hermitage	6.3
Bonavista South	4.4	Burin	7.4
Bonavista North	5.6	Placentia West	4.7
Fogo	9.3	Placentia and St. Mary's	5.4
Twillingate	8.1	Ferryland	2.8
Grand Falls	11.8	Labrador	6.5

Source: "Marriage Rates by District," Table 14, Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1937, GN38, S6-3-1, File 3, PANL.

To be sure, economic and demographic conditions in the district of Grand Falls would have been crucial in determining whether and when a young woman married. It is also important to consider the relationship between economic transformations and the ways in which men and women adjusted their decisions to marry with the limited

knowledge they had about their prospects.³⁵ For those domestics who were waiting for improvements in the marriage market in their home communities, an economic upswing most certainly would have influenced the timing of their departures from Grand Falls. In 1938, the Medical Health Officer, reporting on conditions in Lewisporte, a community that supplied a number of men to the AND Company's secondary labour market, noted a substantial increase in marriages between July and December of 1937, "particularly among those who were waiting for more favourable circumstances to provide suitable homes for their families."³⁶ The temporary work offered by the Grand Falls mill after 1937, and a resurgence of the availability of work in the woods may have been factors in this increase. In November 1936, for example, the AND Company paid out \$221,040 in wages, which increased to \$405,105 in November 1937.³⁷ The number of employees expanded from 2,496 (November 1936) to 4,498 (November 1937).³⁸

³⁵Bettina Bradbury discusses the ways in which working-class men and women in Montreal adjusted their patterns of marriage according to economic transformations as a distinct strategy from their middle-class counterparts. See Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families*, 53-66.

³⁶"Medical Officer's Report to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 4 January 1938, Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-1-6, File 2, PANL.

³⁷"Manufacturing Companies Statement re: Amount of Payroll and Number of Employees Companies Outside St. John's," 1936-37, Department of Public Health and Welfare, GN38, S6-1-6, File 2.

³⁸"Medical Officer's Report to Department of Public Health and Welfare," 4 January 1938.

Economic determinants were not the only factors that influenced young women's marriage prospects. The gender division of labour within the household, family size, and the order of birth had an impact on if or when daughters left home to work in service, which later influenced who they married, when they married, and why. Typically, men living in coastal communities needed wives to assist them:

In a fishing community a fisherman had to have a woman to take part in the operation, if he were partners with someone and not just an ordinary shareman. If his mother or a sister could not perform the necessary work in the stage or on the flake, he had to look around for a suitable helpmate - one who could pull her weight.³⁹

In interviews with women on the Bonavista Peninsula, sociologist Peter Sinclair found they generally followed their husbands to their home communities after marriage, which may have been linked to the patriarchal nature of the fishery, which favoured male inheritance and access to traditional knowledge of fishing grounds.⁴⁰ Interviews with former domestics who moved to Grand Falls and who left the mill town to get married reveals a similar pattern. Clearly, they considered their own priorities within that restricted framework.

Stella B. left her last situation in Grand Falls to get married at the age of 24. She worked as a domestic intermittently throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, usually

³⁹Hilda Chaulk Murray, *More Than Fifty Percent*, 76-77.

⁴⁰See Peter Sinclair, "Household Labour is Doing Gender," 16.

returning to her northeast coast home community for four months every year.⁴¹ One fall in the early 1930s, she told the family for whom she worked that she was getting married to her boyfriend from home.⁴² In explaining why she returned home to marry her boyfriend she stated: "I knew my husband for years before I went in there [Grand Falls]. I couldn't have another boyfriend I liked him too well. I didn't want nobody after I got in with him."⁴³ Significantly, Stella B. remembered the timing of her marriage quite specifically: "After I left Mrs. Mitchell, I come out and got married that fall. [He] was fishing then, when I got married."⁴⁴

Stella B. had a dual purpose in mind when she timed her marriage. She simultaneously considered her employers' household needs and the seasonal demands of her fiancé's fishery work. She waited to leave the situation until her Grand Falls employers returned from their summer vacation, because she was put in charge of their two youngest children while they travelled. But, this also coincided with the end of the fishing season and her fiancé was engaged in the Labrador fishery. After they married, her husband switched to carpentry work because the fishery became less dependable, as she recalled: "My husband was a carpenter. They sold their schooner when the fish went

⁴¹It was common for women from fishing families to work as domestics in St. John's during the fall and winter and return to their homes in the summer. Nancy Forestell, "Women's Paid Work," 130.

⁴²Interview with Stella B.

⁴³Interview with Stella B.

⁴⁴Interview with Stella B.

down. We used to go into Grand Falls and wherever he worked we'd stay together, we'd board."⁴⁵ In the early 1940s, when her husband found construction work in Gander, she worked briefly as a waitress in a local restaurant. After the couple settled in a small northeast coast community, where they raised two children, she "never stopped working" even though she was not paid.

Martina L. was another woman who left Grand Falls to marry. In 1931 she met her husband Glenn L. in Grand Falls. He had moved there temporarily from Sweet Bay, Bonavista Bay, to take on temporary employment with the AND Company. The couple's first encounter was serendipitous:

My cousin Ann M. was getting married and that's where I met Greg, met him in a car too.... And he came in a picked me up and Greg and Peter W. was in the car with him and that's where I met Greg, my dear.⁴⁶

They married almost immediately after they met, and she left central Newfoundland for his home community. Similar to Stella B., the timing of Martina L.'s marriage was linked to her husband's seasonal employment. Rather than fishing, however, Glenn L. was part of the AND Company's secondary labour force, and he did not have access to a company house:

⁴⁵Interview with Stella B.

⁴⁶Interview with Martina L.

He was a carpenter and a bricklayer, whatever he could lay his hands on. The year we were getting married he was getting laid off. He was getting laid off that fall so we decided to get married.⁴⁷

Fluctuations in the company's demand for labour in this instance had a direct bearing on the timing of Martina L.'s marriage. These circumstances also influenced the fact that she and her husband returned to Sweet Bay. Equally important, when she met her husband, she had achieved the elite status of working in Grand Falls House, where she made the top wages of any domestic in the early 1930s. She did not, however, hesitate to leave her position to marry, even though there was no set end date for her paid work. Her immediate supervisors, Mr and Mrs Allen, were probably not surprised when she informed them she was getting married. They were used to young women leaving Grand Falls House to marry:

When I went there [Grand Falls House] I took over from Laurie S. She got married and that's the reason why they were looking for a girl. Then I got married and then Mildred C. took over. I don't think Mildred C. was there very long.⁴⁸

The superintendents made her wedding cake as a gesture of kindness and support for a woman with whom they worked closely for two years. Her departure from Grand Falls was bittersweet: "In one way I was sad to leave Grand Falls. I thought hard of leaving Mrs Allen because she was really good to me. It was just like leaving Mom all over

⁴⁷Interview with Martina L.

⁴⁸Interview with Martina L.

again.”⁴⁹ But similar to the experience of most domestics, marriage provided her with a way out. Leaving the situation provided her with an opportunity to return to her parents’ household before moving to Sweet Bay:

I went home the year I was married, went home before I was married. I worked in Grand Falls all that time and I never went home. I couldn’t afford to. I knew Mom needed the money more than I do.⁵⁰

Her words also illuminate her awareness that working in Grand Falls, to a certain extent, was necessary to her parents’ survival.

The transition into marriage and the move to a coastal community changed the nature of her domestic work and her caregiving responsibilities, which were now unpaid. Typically, she and her husband began their married life living in the household of his parents, where she took on the role of primary caregiver until they died.⁵¹ In addition, the nature of her domestic work within marriage resembled the kind of work that she had done before she left home: “In Grand Falls I only did housework, in Sweet Bay I had to do outdoors work and indoors work...I never made no money in Sweet Bay....I was helping him whatever he was doing.”⁵² More specifically, Martina L. recalled

⁴⁹Interview with Martina L.

⁵⁰Interview with Martina L.

⁵¹Hilda Chaulk Murray stated that it was rare for men and women to establish their own household immediately after they married in Elliston, Trinity Bay. Hilda Chaulk Murray, *More Than Fifty Percent*, 78.

⁵²Interview with Martina L.

accompanying her husband into the woods, gardening, and curing fish, in addition to raising five or six children.

The sons and daughters of women such as Martina L. and Stella B., representing the next generation of rural Newfoundlanders, grew up in different circumstances than their mothers. As historian Miriam Wright has demonstrated, after World War II the fishing economy was transformed from a predominantly inshore, household-based, salt-fish producing enterprise into an industrialized economy dominated by vertically-integrated frozen fish companies.⁵³ These transformations had major implications for the gender division of labour, the relationship between paid and unpaid work, and the meaning of work for both men and women. State policy supported the industrialization of the cod fishery, as a response to the perceived "backwardness" of the family fishery. While subject to regional variation on the island and uneven development, the restructuring of the fishery was shaped according to a male breadwinner model and women were expected to stay in the household and become housewives.⁵⁴ Daughters were encouraged to work in fish plants rather than working for families nearby. While little research has been done on the impact of these changes on patterns of women's work, it is less likely that the daughters of

⁵³For a recent study of this transition, see Miriam Wright, "Newfoundland and Canada: the Evolution of Fisheries Development Policies, 1940-1966" (unpublished PhD dissertation, 1997).

⁵⁴See Bonnie McCay, "Fish Guts, Hair Net, and Unemployment Stamps," for a case study of women's work in the Fogo Island fishery. McCay argues that women engaged in household production and fishery-related work until the 1950s.

former domestics did the same type of work as their mothers, for essentially with the next generation the importance of domestic service decreased.³⁵

7.3 From “servant girls” to wives

Though leaving Grand Falls upon marriage would have been the most prevalent experience in the interwar years, a significant number of domestics stayed in Grand Falls and married mill workers. “I got married and I’ve been here ever since,” stated Margaret C., who was representative of the kind of woman who stayed.³⁶ In describing the fates of the various domestics her family employed, another woman noted: “All the rest of them got married from our house...I would say 80 per cent of the girls stayed in Grand Falls. One went back, this was in the 1930s.”³⁷ In referring to the number of elderly women living in Grand Falls who stayed, one former mill worker remarked: “They [domestics] came here when construction started on the mill. All down through the years Newfoundlanders went to where the work was.”³⁸ Relatedly, when some women discussed their parents’ migration to the company town in more general terms, they

³⁵Barbara Neis, “From ‘Shipped Girls’.”

³⁶Interview with Margaret C.

³⁷The figure of 80 per cent was most likely an exaggeration, for the majority of domestics left Grand Falls. Interview with Carmel B.

³⁸Interview with Richard S.

unintentionally mentioned their mothers had first come to Grand Falls to work as domestics.⁵⁹

Mildred B.'s experience of moving to Grand Falls was representative of the generation of young women who moved there before World War I. Mildred B. migrated in the 1910s from Fox Harbour in Placentia Bay after the death of her father, a carpenter on the town site.⁶⁰ Her uncles had followed her father to the company town and informed her that she would definitely secure work if she wanted to move there. Upon arrival Mildred B. got a job as a domestic at the Erin House, where she worked under the direction of Mrs. Ireland -- the hotel's proprietor.⁶¹ She left Erin House to marry a mill worker. Her husband, originally from Little Bay (a mining community in Notre Dame Bay) had stopped in Grand Falls on his way from the Bell Island mines to work in the Sydney mines in Cape Breton. He never completed his journey to Sydney because he got work as a paper maker. Once married, she "took up housekeeping," according to her daughter, who is now 80 years old.⁶² As the wife of a mill worker, Mildred B. hired domestics. In fact, she continued her relationship with her home community of Fox

⁵⁹These women were discovered by happenstance. Their daughters were not initially conscious that their own mothers arrived in the company town as domestic servants, but when they were asked why their parents moved to Grand Falls they said they came in as domestics.

⁶⁰Interview with Gertrude L.

⁶¹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921.*

⁶²Interview with Gertrude L.

Harbour by hiring young women from there:

The people she would hire were from Fox Harbour. They would write to mother...it was just a place to come and stay and it didn't cost [my parents] very much. They were very very nice. Most of them were relations anyway.⁶³

In interpreting Mildred B.'s recollections it is difficult to know whether her statement that "most of them were relations anyway" was an apology for living in a household that employed domestics because of her awareness of the status difference, or whether her comments reflected the way the labour market for domestic servants worked. Was it a moral economy based on kinship responsibilities between women, such as her mother and her female relatives, during a period when the Newfoundland economy had reached a crisis? Mildred B.'s mother also found situations for young women from Fox Harbour through her connection to Mrs. Ireland, her former employer at Erin House. Mildred B. continued to hire servants until the family moved to Corner Brook, because her husband "got a more lucrative position" working for the International Power and Paper Company in 1928.⁶⁴ While Mildred B. started her early working life as a domestic in the company town, her daughter had more advantages. In fact, she was able to attend nursing school in Nova Scotia before she married.

Lena D.'s experience was also representative of a young woman who gained access to Grand Falls through marriage. In the 1910s, she left her home community of

⁶³Interview with Gertrude L.

⁶⁴Interview with Gertrude L.

Glenwood, where her father had been cutting lumber for the mill, to move to Grand Falls. She found a situation in a household headed by the AND Company's technical staff.⁶⁵ Perhaps exceptionally, her employer offered her a job at the mill – the recently created position of telephone operator. She met her husband in the office at the mill. He had left the fishery behind to seek work in Grand Falls, and eventually became the purchasing agent for the company. Once married, Lena D. was forced to leave her job. Like Mildred B., she employed domestic servants, but she did not recruit them from her home community. This difference was perhaps due to the fact that she had moved around as a young child with her father, who logged for a living.

Both Mildred B. and Lena D. moved to Grand Falls from coastal communities to take work as domestic servants, they both married mill workers, and in their married lives they both hired domestics.⁶⁶ Even though these women moved to the town when it was in the early stages of development, the pattern they represented continued throughout the interwar years. In fact, in a town like Grand Falls, where social status was a key feature of community life, residents can generally identify those married women who had gained their initial access to the town by taking domestic work and who are now married to mill workers, as one woman noted: "Some of them [former domestics] here have beautiful

⁶⁵Interview with Violet T.

⁶⁶Interestingly, it only became apparent over the course of the interview with former employers of domestics, that domestics and employers did not necessarily form two distinct groups.

homes and have done extremely well” indicating that migration status has continued to divide women into the present.⁶⁷ This pattern of women’s migration to Grand Falls and eventual marriage to a mill worker raises important questions about their self definition.⁶⁸

After fourteen years working as a domestic in St. John’s and in Botwood, Sarah C. married the brother of one of her acquaintances in the early 1930s. Her husband worked as a time-keeper for the AND Company, first in Botwood and then in Grand Falls. When asked if she employed a young woman she replied, “Oh yes, lots of times.” In responding to a question about how she recruited them, she said, “Different parts of outports. One girl will tell another such a place and that’s how I used to get my girls,” suggesting that as an employer she used similar means to recruit domestics as she had done when she herself was looking for work as a young woman.⁶⁹ Sarah C. was the only woman who discussed what it was like to be on a different side of the social equation (or employer/employee relationship). For instance, when she was asked directly about whether her past experience working as a domestic influenced the way she treated the young women who worked for her, she noted: “I had to treat them like I’d like to be treated...I knew what it was like I wouldn’t do anything to hurt their feelings or put obstacles in their way, I wouldn’t do

⁶⁷Interview with Violet T.

⁶⁸In 1927, one woman, born in St. George’s on the west coast in 1911, moved to Buchan’s Junction to work as a servant for a fox farmer who had a family of 14. She married a prospector in Buchans Junction and became the community’s midwife. Red Indian Lake Development Association, *Khaki Dodgers*, 13.

⁶⁹Interview with Sarah C.

that.”⁷⁰ When she responded to a question about whether the domestic ate with her family she stated: “Just the same as myself because I know what that was like.”⁷¹ It was more common for women who married mill workers and stayed in Grand Falls to hire domestics within marriage than it was for former domestics who left and settled in coastal communities with their husbands.

A close look at census data on the circumstances of married women living in Grand Falls in 1945 who worked as domestics in 1935 provides insight into their socio-economic status in the town. It should be noted that 90 per cent of all married women in Grand Falls in 1945 were either housewives, students, or “at home” in 1935.⁷² However, as Table 7.3 shows, of the 10 per cent of women who did report earning wages in 1935, 29 per cent had worked as domestic servants.⁷³ These women were between 24 and 39

⁷⁰Interview with Sarah C.

⁷¹Interview with Sarah C.

⁷²There was a total of 832 married women in Grand Falls in 1945. Of those 749, had been housewives, students, or indicated a blank in the 1935 occupation column.

⁷³Interviews with Grand Falls residents for this project revealed that a much larger number of women moved to Grand Falls and married mill workers than the census indicated. These women would not have necessarily turned up in the 1945 nominal census if they did not indicate their former employment as domestic to the enumerator, nor would they have turned up in the 1945 nominal census if they worked as domestics in any year other than 1935. For example, one of the former domestics interviewed was recorded in the 1935 nominal census as a domestic, and even though she lived in Grand Falls, she did not state her previous occupation as domestic servant in the 1945 census schedule.

years, indicating that in the mid 1930s, they would have been in their teens and twenties.⁷⁴ Over half of these women had worked as domestics in Grand Falls in 1935, the other half had worked in communities such as Bishop's Falls, Notre Dame Bay, and Bonavista.⁷⁵ Of those who worked in Grand Falls as domestics in the mid 1930s, the majority were migrants from Bonavista Bay (six), Placentia (one), Trinity Bay (two), and Conception Bay (two).⁷⁶

Table 7.3: 1935 Occupation of Married Women, Grand Falls 1945 (N=83)

1935 Occupation	Number married women	% of married women
sales	27	33
domestic	24	29
office	13	16
nurse	7	9
teacher	5	6
telegraph operator	4	5
tailoress	2	2
total	83	100

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland and Labrador, 1945*

⁷⁴Ten of these women were between 30 and 35 years. *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

⁷⁵The fact that half of these women's residence in 1935 was not in Grand Falls does not necessarily mean that they had never worked as domestics in Grand Falls, for women did a substantial amount of moving around from situation to situation during this period.

⁷⁶*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

These women almost exclusively married men born in Grand Falls, from non-elite groups. In 1945, for example, their husbands generally worked in semi-skilled jobs, such as grinder, finisher, core maker, sulphite worker, mechanic, and watchman, with reported annual earnings between \$1,000 and \$1,700.⁷⁷ They also lived in poorer neighbourhoods located to the east of the mill on streets such as Valley Road, East Street, Gilbert Street, and Third and Fourth Avenues, where rentals ranged from \$11 to \$14 a month.⁷⁸ One pioneering resident emphasized the class distinctions: "the houses on Gilbert Street and Valley Road were real cheap. That's where the poorer people lived."⁷⁹ Four of these former domestics and their husbands lived on the same street in 1945.⁸⁰ The monthly cost of renting houses from the company varied, but most mill workers paid between \$17 and \$20 a month, and those living on in more elite and well-serviced neighbourhoods paid between \$36 and \$75 per month in 1945.⁸¹ By comparison, those women who earned

⁷⁷*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.* Most of the men these women married would have been in their 20s in 1935, and given poor labour market conditions in the mill in the late 1930s, they would have been more likely to get jobs near the bottom of the occupational hierarchy than their older co-workers.

⁷⁸Oral history reveals that Fred K., who worked as a labourer on the AND Company farm, married a domestic. Interview with Hattie K. and Fred K.

⁷⁹Interview with Iris B.

⁸⁰Former domestics who married more elite mill workers may have failed to tell the enumerator that they had worked as domestics in 1935 because of the stigma attached to the occupation.

⁸¹*Census (nominal) Newfoundland 1945.* Differential rentals were determined by cross-referencing street names and rental rates in the census.

wages in retail in 1935 and who married mill workers were slightly better off (at least materially) than were former domestics. Their husbands had better mill jobs; they worked as paper makers, machinists, watchmen, electricians, and foremen, earning around \$2,000 per annum in 1945.⁸² They generally rented houses for around \$20 a month. Some of these women hired domestics in 1945.

It is not surprising that the former domestics who migrated to Grand Falls and married mill workers had fewer years of formal education than their husbands, and they had left school at a younger age. As discussed earlier, opportunities for formal education for young women in rural Newfoundland during the interwar years was limited. In Grand Falls, however, much emphasis was placed on formal education for sons and daughters. These disparities are reflected in the census data, which reveal that former domestics had 6.3 years of formal schooling on average, while their husbands had an average of 7.75 years.⁸³ These gender disparities were also evident in age at leaving school. Moreover, former domestics stated they left school at the average age of 12, and their husbands left school at the age of 16, compared with the average for women and men over twenty and born in Grand Falls of 15.5 years and 15.4 respectively.⁸⁴

⁸²*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.* Information on the status of former retail workers can be found by looking at their household circumstances in the 1945 nominal census for Grand Falls.

⁸³*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

⁸⁴*Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945.*

It is probable that the number of domestics who married mill workers and stayed in Grand Falls is highly under-represented in the census. Issues of stigma and status may have prevented some married women from stating domestic servant as their previous occupation, and if they had worked as a domestic in any year other than 1935 they would have been excluded. Such limitations have come to the fore by cross-referencing oral history with the census. In so doing, two women who worked as domestics in the 1930s and married mill workers were found in the census schedules. Their experiences were representative. Rachel O. moved to Grand Falls in the 1930s from Twillingate.⁴⁵ After working for a number of years as a domestic servant, she married Raymond G., who moved to Grand Falls from Green Bay as a young boy. In 1945, Raymond G. earned around \$1,700 per year working as a painter. The couple had one child.⁴⁶ Likewise, Kate M. was born in Notre Dame Bay and worked as a domestic servant in Grand Falls before she met her future husband, Gerald F., born in the southwest coast fishing community of Fortune. This couple's circumstances appear to have improved between 1935 and 1945. In 1935, for example, they had one small child and they lived on the wages Gerald earned as a carpenter, totalling \$750 per annum. By 1945, Gerald F. still worked as a carpenter, and reported earning \$2,600 the previous year; they owned a house and had four children

⁴⁵Interview with Stella B.

⁴⁶Interview with Violet T., and *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945*.

as well. Gerald F. did not indicate having any formal schooling, and Kate M. had four years.⁸⁷

Whether women like Kate M. and Rachel O. initially intended their move to Grand Falls during the interwar years to be permanent or not, their marriage to mill workers ensured their position in the company town. Ironically, domestics had closer access to the community than the temporary male workers who boarded there during the same time period, because domestic servants were sanctioned to live in Grand Falls (if employed in a household) and if they married a mill worker they became legitimate citizens through their husbands' steady job and access to a company house. Occupation of a company house required marriage. An example of the complexities involved in securing a company house appears in Brian S.'s story.⁸⁸ As a young boy Brian S.'s parents took ill and they returned to their home community of Trinity Bay, at which point he went to live with a lower income family on Gilbert Street. He did not get work in the mill after he left school. Instead he worked at a variety of jobs, including the hospital laundry, making peppermint knobs at the candy store, and doing odd jobs for the Goodyears' contracting company. Finally the AND Company hired him temporarily to work in the coal and wood handling department and he eventually secured a permanent position in the paper shed. When he explained why he moved to Windsor instead of Grand Falls, he stated that if he had been

⁸⁷Interview with Violet T., and *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935 and 1945*.

⁸⁸Interview with Brian S.

married when his father went away, "the chances were that he could have had that house [his fathers']."⁸⁹

Marriage to a mill worker did not necessarily mean that these women's lives changed dramatically. None of the women who stayed in Grand Falls after marriage stated explicitly that they earned wages. Instead, however, over the course of the interviews they hinted at ways in which their domestic labour sustained their households in crucial ways despite the gender ideology of the male breadwinner. The way that former domestics, such as Sarah C., slipped in and out of discussing their work experiences as domestics and their domestic work within marriage demonstrates the distinction between the two contexts was blurred in their memories. This is the way Sarah C. recalled her female employer's appreciation of her ability to cook and bake:

She [her employer] used to be tickled to death with the baking... She wasn't that kind to have people in... Oh, she liked the baking alright and she didn't know how to do it. That's what she used to call mine, dainties, because I used to do different kinds...And long after I got married I done cooking for five years from my kitchen. One Christmas one woman ordered twelve dozen coconut dips...they were delicious my dear and not because I done it. And I had no trouble, she [her employer] used to come in the morning.⁹⁰

Sarah C. finished her pre-marriage wage earning life as a domestic servant in a household where she did most of the cooking and the baking. She made good use of her skill within marriage when she sold baking out of her Valley Road company house.

⁸⁹Interview with Brian S.

⁹⁰Interview with Sarah C.

Nellie M.'s memories of her work experience before and after marriage show how the categories of domestic servant, family member, and subsequently paid and unpaid work blurred in her recollections. Nellie M. met her husband in Grand Falls but she moved to Toronto to get married. The couple did not, however, stay in Toronto for very long "because [his] parents wanted us to come back."⁹¹ By the 1940s her three children had grown up and her extended family lived in the household as well. In describing who lived in her house she stated:

Me daughter married, she had two children living in the house, my son he had two children living in the house, I had me grandparents, me parents, his parents, all living together -- four generations.⁹²

She also took in thirteen male boarders, who were friends of her father-in-law from Bay Roberts (his birthplace). The availability of wage work brought them to Grand Falls temporarily, as she recalled "they were all working on contract. They would try to get finished as soon as they could," increasing the burden of her domestic labour. They slept on the couch, in the attic, "wherever she could set them up," and they paid her \$12.50 a month for room and board. She hired a domestic servant to help her during this hectic period, which lasted sixteen years. "I would get up one morning and the next morning she [the domestic] would get up. We worked together." Nellie M.'s perception of the amount of work she had to do is illustrative:

⁹¹Interview with Nellie M.

⁹²Interview with Nellie M.

I had potatoes for dinner, and peas pudding, and cabbage and carrot and turnip every Thursday and Sunday. I baked every day... Make bread. Yeh I worked hard... When I got up in the morning I had to make the beds and clean up. We never had no carpet then. It was only canvas. We'd go to the tap. We did [have water] on Junction Road where we moved. Where we lived first there were no toilets, no bathrooms. No lights or nothing. No electric lights no.⁹³

Nellie M.'s description of her work within marriage did not differ much from the way in which former domestics described their work days when they worked for somebody else. Some former domestics who married mill workers may have found paid domestic work on a live-out basis, especially if their husbands took ill or fell victim to cut-backs in hours and wages at the mill. Newspaper evidence and oral history indicates that a gradual transition to live-out arrangements for domestic servants occurred during the 1930s. While live-out arrangements were becoming more the norm in larger urban centres throughout the interwar years, the transition was neither as dramatic nor consistent in Grand Falls. These positions were usually filled by women from Windsor, or from poorer neighbourhoods in Grand Falls, as the wife of one of the company's managerial assistants recalled,

We used to have a woman come in by day. She was from Windsor. They used to come from Windsor. Mostly day workers. Most of the maids in Grand Falls went to the hotels, that's where most of the maids went they all came from outside.⁹⁴

⁹³Interview with Nellie M.

⁹⁴Interview with Vera A.

In the late 1930s, two women advertised for positions as domestics, stating they would be able “to come by the day.”⁹⁵ Interestingly both of these women lived in Grand Falls, and they both lived on Third Avenue. One of them was a widow.⁹⁶ Another woman, living on 4 Station Rd., advertised for a general maid who “may go home at night.”⁹⁷ It is also generally understood that women who had domestic responsibilities of their own, such as children and husbands preferred live-out arrangements.

That paid and unpaid domestic work was intertwined in the identities of former domestics demonstrates the centrality of housework to their identities. Despite the variety of these women’s work and migration experiences they shared much in common. Whether they left Grand Falls or stayed in the mill town after they married, most former domestics revealed that working in domestic service was a continuity in their lives. They never stopped “working,” even when they were no longer earning wages for their labour, suggesting that in their own minds there was little division between notions of paid and unpaid work in their lives. As one woman said to me, “I hope you never got to work so hard as I did.”⁹⁸ Equally important, their experience in domestic service formed a distinct memory of their lives, but they did not necessarily perceive that work experience as a key

⁹⁵*Grand Falls Advertiser*, 11 March 1939 and 31 December 1937.

⁹⁶*Census (nominal) Newfoundland*, 1935.

⁹⁷*The Grand Falls Advertiser*, 5 June 1937.

⁹⁸Interview with Stella B.

transformation. Their gender, migration and class backgrounds shaped their self-perceptions.

Pulp and paper development and the industrialization of Grand Falls and its attendant cultural, economic, and social dimensions reconstituted the lives of many men and women. How and the extent to which their lives were influenced by living and working in Grand Falls were contingent on gender, class and on whether the migrants' relationship to the town was temporary or more permanent. The lives of the women who moved to work in households for pay did not all follow the same trajectory even though marriage represented a common end. Their work experiences distinguished them as a group, insofar as they shared a common social origin and a common position on the occupational scale; but the reasons for their migration and the outcomes of that migration varied. If they married, who they married and where they lived after marriage influenced the course of their lives. Equally important, these factors also shaped these women's perceptions of their domestic work experience in Grand Falls in their memories. Indeed, however, a crucial message of this chapter is that domestic service, or housework, as these women sometimes preferred to call the job, represented a continuity in their lives, no matter what the context of their lives within marriage.

Conclusion

This dissertation centred on young women from fishing and logging communities who moved to Grand Falls to work as live-in domestics in the households of mill workers, those of the town's elite, and hotels and boarding houses in the interwar years. The analysis relied on the manuscript censuses of 1921, 1935, and 1945, as well as oral history and other documentary sources to capture an aspect of the history of women's work in Newfoundland that has rarely been studied in historical terms. By adopting Grand Falls as a case study for understanding women's work and migration experiences, it explored several themes relating to the gendered nature of uneven development in Newfoundland during a period of extreme economic hardship and a downturn in the fishing economy.

Rather than placing workplace relations in the foreground, as so often has been the case in studies of single industry towns, the mill at Grand Falls served as a backdrop to the present analysis. In 1905, with enormous concessions from the Newfoundland government, the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company began the process of starting up their closed company town within Newfoundland's marginalized economy. It stood as a marker of the development policy that successive governments promoted and supported throughout the late 19th century and into the 20th century. Since the town was built in a location where no previous European settlement existed, and in a period of the island's history when household production remained the mainstay of economic and social relations, the AND Company sought to transform a disparate group of workers, as well as their wives, and children, into citizens of an industrial town. Part and parcel of that

transformation was the dominance of the gender ideology of the male breadwinner and female domesticity. The Harmsworths based their plan for Grand Falls on a model of the Garden City and made a considerable effort to accommodate families. These efforts set Grand Falls apart from most single-industry towns in Newfoundland at the time. The mining towns of Notre Dame Bay, Bell Island, Buchans, and St. Lawrence, for example, did not reap the benefits of company paternalism to the same extent as mill workers in Grand Falls. The accommodation of families and the air of permanence in Grand Falls contrasted sharply with the ad hoc ways in which those other towns were established. The AND Company's benevolent policy shaped and reshaped migration patterns and social stratification within the workplace, the household, and the town, and these historical developments have been crucial in understanding the work and migration experiences of domestics in the interwar years.

By the late 1920s and 1930s, for instance, a sense of localism emerged in Grand Falls, as the labour market narrowed and residents began to distinguish themselves from those of the outlying districts, which was most obvious in their views of their less-fortunate neighbours in Grand Falls Station. That localism prohibited a cross-class alliance with loggers who struggled for better working conditions and a living wage throughout the 1930s, was not the only outcome. Localism also reinforced the relationships of inequality between wives and daughters, and the domestics they hired. Perhaps the most significant demographic change in the company town was that by 1935

the gender ratio of the population favoured young women over men, which was unusual for resource-dependent communities.

One of the main concerns of the present study was to understand where these women came from and why they chose Grand Falls. Through census research and oral history I determined that the migration of young women was inextricably linked to the migration of mill workers. In short, the initial migration to Grand Falls was a male-led migration of workers who came to secure jobs in the company's primary labour market. The second migration, though linked to the first, was a migration of temporary AND Company employees and domestic servants.

By focussing on the movements and experiences of young women domestics within the town and outside of its boundaries, I have attempted to untangle the unanticipated ways in which the development of enclave industrialism shaped and reshaped gender and class relations within the company town and in northeast coast fishing and logging communities. Though migration was a factor of kinship connections between mill workers, their wives, and other female kin, migration was also related to a general shift in orientation from the sea to the land among certain families and communities, which intensified as social and economic conditions worsened in the interwar years. Pre-existing logging settlements of Millertown and Lewisporte supplied migrants to Grand Falls, as did the fishery-based communities of Bonavista Bay, Trinity Bay and Conception Bay and the declining mining communities of Notre Dame Bay. While these migration patterns formed part of a continuum with traditions of migration

from regions which supplied workers to places, such as Sydney, Nova Scotia, the “Boston States”, and New York, the migration to Grand Falls also revealed the dynamic nature of the Newfoundland population, especially during periods of downturn in the fishery. Foreign capital took advantage of surplus labour during the fishery decline of the 1920s and 1930s. Gender and migration status did, however, matter in the migration process and in terms of access to the labour market for core permanent jobs, and in terms of gaining access to the town.

For a variety of reasons, the household served as an important unit of analysis for the present study. The concept of the household economy was critical because the emergence of the family fishery as the dominant mode of production in the cod fishery by the 19th century meant that daughters of fishing families, who were no longer needed at home, were shipped out to work with other households, or they left home for an urban centre. In the interwar years, Newfoundland did not depend on the trans-Atlantic migration of young women to fill positions as domestics on the island. In that regard Newfoundland was distinct from other places in North America, which depended on migrants from peripheral regions to take jobs as domestics. Ethnic divisions were thus not a major factor in Newfoundland during this period.

Household production within the family fishery shaped the pre-migration experiences of the young women domestics who moved to Grand Falls. Migration was a common strategy of the family fishery and as this dissertation has explained leaving home to work in Grand Falls should be understood in the context of the outmigration of other

family members. In short domestic service was part of the seasonal round, and young women sometimes adapted the timing of their migration to suit the seasonal demands of the rural economy. Gender mattered, however, insofar as patriarchal productive relations shaped the lives of daughters within the household; characteristically parents also preferred that their daughters live and work in a nearby community or with kin. The research has also revealed that co-residence was not necessarily a factor in defining a member of a household. Parents jotted down their daughters' names in the census of their communities of origin and most of these young women sent home a portion of their cash wages – an essential input into the household economy. Furthermore, many women returned home with or without enhanced means to marry a man from their home community, another aspect of circular migration.

This dissertation is not simply about how patriarchal productive relations shaped women's lives, driving them away from the parents' households into a life of drudgery. Following the lead of historians writing on domestic service in the United States and elsewhere in terms of systems of oppression in the colonial labour market, this study has revealed that in Newfoundland, the pulp and paper companies created a two tiered labour market: a primary labour market for workers who secured access to "Grand Falls jobs," and a secondary labour market, which offered almost no job security. Domestics were linked to the former in cases where their friends and relatives hired them; they were linked to the secondary labour market through their fathers, brothers, and future husbands. There was, however, considerable overlap. By focussing on the migration and work

experiences of young single women, it has been determined that links between the rural household economy and the households within the company town were maintained and manifested in the labour market for domestic servants. This labour market was primarily, though not exclusively, negotiated through kin. In short, a labour market for domestic servants intersected with the formal labour market for men's jobs in the pulp and paper mill during the fisheries crisis of the 1920s and 30s. Supply and demand intersected.

Viewing domestic service as a work experience and as a social relationship between women in the household reveals another axis of inequality, that of class or migration status. In recognizing class as a complex process, especially when women's domestic labour has been the focus, it has been revealed that relationships between women were shaped within the household and in terms of cultural practices, and gender ideology. Researching and writing about domestic service as a social relationship has revealed ways in which inequalities between women were formed at certain points in time and especially within the household.

Oral history was an important methodology, for it enabled us to illustrate the ways in which former domestics remembered their work experiences and their perceptions of going to Grand Falls in the interwar years. The process of interviewing former domestics proved that women's memories and self-perceptions are often contradictory. Most of them did not overtly question the inequalities in their positions. Significantly, however, they tended to separate their perceptions of their skill and ability to do housework, which formed a key component of their identities, and their experiences of isolation and unequal

status within the context of the wider community of Grand Falls. But their stories about going to Grand Falls and interacting with their employers indicated the imbalances of power and authority. Former domestics generally expressed they were undaunted by the work load, which was a factor of their age and breadth of experience.

The case-study approach facilitated an assessment of the range of work situations that existed for domestic servants in Grand Falls. Census data revealed that mill workers represented the largest group of employers of domestics in the interwar years, and factors such as life cycle of the family, ability to pay, and kinship connections influenced their decision to hire. "Need" was not an objective category, as supply and demand were inextricably linked. Not surprisingly, members of the community's elite were the most consistent employers of domestics. In a hierarchical mill town like Grand Falls, where some married women's lives centred on maintaining social status meant that they hired domestics to free them up. Domestics were also needed by elite women, because unlike in most mill workers' households, these women were highly active in community and church-related activities. The less familial situation of hotels and boarding houses was preferred by most domestics. A focus on domestics as agents within a restrictive framework revealed that they quit situations to get better pay and more leisure time.

It has also been argued that housework in the mill town was distinct from housework in these women's communities of origin. Instead of working alongside their fathers, brothers, sisters and mothers, or in the house of another in the production of a staple for export, these young women were more isolated in the household in Grand Falls.

They now worked in a household that was primarily a unit of consumption and performed tasks that were confined to the space of the company house. Former domestics differentiated between the types of housework by distinguishing light work from heavy work and indoors work and outdoors work.

Oral history and census evidence revealed that some women stayed in Grand Falls for over ten years working as domestics, perhaps because they had no other way out. Most domestics, however, did marry and left Grand Falls after they married. Domestics did not generally experience marriage as a transition into adulthood in the in the same way as the daughters of mill workers, who earned wages in retail, as stenographers and book keepers. These women participated in a feminine working-class workplace culture, and they sent each other off. Most domestics left Grand Falls to get married, and followed their husbands to their home communities, while others stayed in Grand Falls and married mill workers. These women became dependent on their husband's wages for their existence, even though they generally sustained their families in crucial ways. Some of these former domestics became employers of household help themselves, which has raised interesting questions in regard to their self-definition.

Today, former Grand Falls domestics Nellie M., Doris A., Margaret C., and Sarah C., who are now in their 80s and 90s, are living out their final years at the Carmelite House, a senior citizen's home in Grand Falls. Formerly the AND Company-run Staff House, which was the workplace of a number of domestic servants in the 1930s, Carmelite House stands as a reminder of the dominance of the AND Company in the historical

development of social relations within this closed town from 1905 to 1961. This senior citizen's complex is also symbolic of the more recent development of a service-oriented economy in Grand Falls-Windsor, an economy highly dependent on the low paid labour of working-class married women, who generally work in gender-specific jobs.¹ In many ways, the work days of the care givers and domestics² at Carmelite House represent a continuity with the domestic work that their clients -- women such as Nellie M., Doris A., Margaret C., and Sarah C. -- performed in mill workers' households, in those of the community's elite, and in hotels in the late 1920s and 1930s.

Nevertheless, in Grand Falls, as elsewhere, caregiving and domestic labour have been commodified since the period covered in this dissertation. The arduous domestic tasks of laundry, housecleaning, and baking bread are now eased by labour-saving devices or purchased in stores. But, following a general tendency elsewhere, the demands on women have not decreased, instead the nature of those demands has changed. Equally important, the work of reproduction now generally takes place within the marketplace, where working-class women continue to over-represent employees in the low paid, and

¹A study on women's economic lives in Grand Falls-Windsor revealed that most wage-earning women are married and work in the health care sector, in banks, in retail, and in offices. Elke Detmer, "What is Women's Work? Gender and Work in Grand Falls," in Carmelita McGrath et al. eds. *Their Lives and Times*.

²The word "domestic" appears on the name tags of some of the employees at Carmelite House.

generally non-unionized service sector of the economy.³ In Grand Falls married women now struggle to balance their own paid work, their domestic work, and, for some of them, work associated with a demanding social life. In addition, as sociologist Marilyn Porter has pointed out, “relatives come to Grand Falls precisely because of these facilities [such as the hospital and Carmelite House]. They need visiting, and their other needs taken care of.”⁴ This work remains primarily the responsibility of women.

Other former domestics such as Martina L. spent their final years living in the households of their daughters, representing another recent trend in the care of the frail elderly -- a retreat to the household. Married women in Newfoundland, as elsewhere, are increasingly carrying the burden of balancing paid work with the care of elderly relatives and child care within their own homes, as de-institutionalization, shorter hospital stays, and cut backs in medicare and other social services translate into more work for wives and daughters.⁵ Domestics of the interwar generation also took care of ailing parents and in-laws in their parents’ households, in the households of others for pay, and within their married lives. Caregiving formed a critical aspect of these women’s domestic work at all stages of their lives. Ironically, these former domestics who worked in a period when

³For a general discussion of issues of domestic labour in the marketplace, see Sedef Arat-Koc and Wenona Giles, *Maid in the Market*, 1-12.

⁴Marilyn Porter, *Place and Persistence*, 133.

⁵Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1994) 122-25.

there was virtually no safety net in Newfoundland are now sharing common experiences with their daughters and granddaughters. The theme of continuity and change in women's paid and unpaid domestic work has been central to the organization of this study.

The case study of Grand Falls may have implications for understanding social differentiation as a gendered process in Newfoundland more generally. Thousands of women who grew up in coastal communities during the interwar period worked as domestic servants for a period of their lives, and many of those young women who did not themselves work as domestics, lived in households which hired domestics. The issue of who can pay for this service and who provides it has divided women in the past and in the present.

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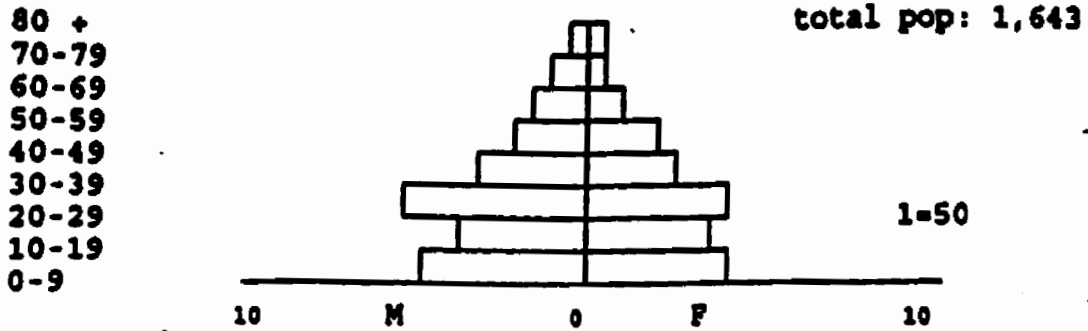
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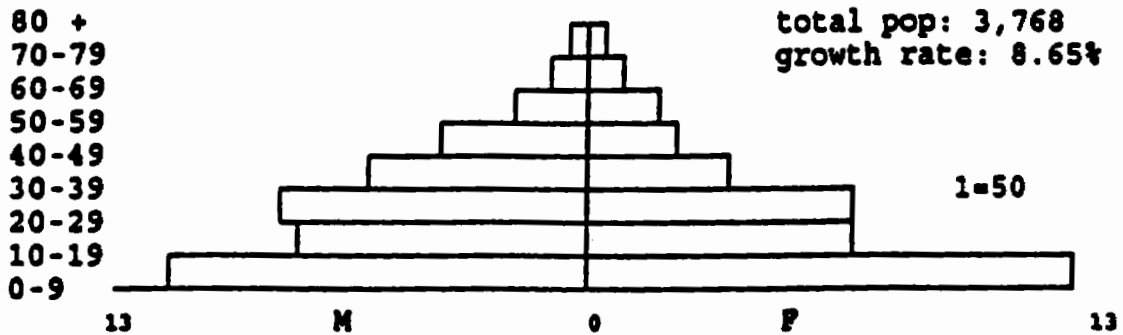
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Appendix A: Population Pyramids and Growth Rates, Grand Falls 1911 -1945

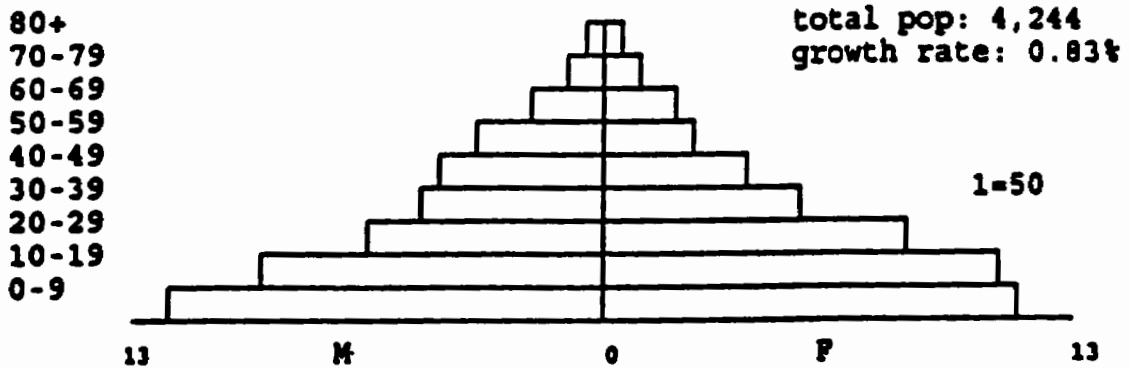
1911



1921



1935



1945

total pop: 4,552
growth rate: 0.7%

*Source: Census of Newfoundland, 1911, 1921, 1935, 1945

Appendix B: Population Loss/Gain By Percentage of Total Population By Age and Sex Cohort, 1911-1920, and 1921-1934

	1911-1920	1911-1920	1921-1934	1921-1934
	M	F	M	F
0-9	359.1	445.1	3.1	-8.4
10-19	127.2	118.1	23.2	39.9
20-29	81.7	110.9	-24.7	12.5
30-39	103.7	73.4	-5.5	38.8
40-49	115.4	120.3	17.1	37.7
50-59	206.6	176	70.6	49.2
60-69	141.6	337.5	110.3	65.7

Calculated as percentage of total population of the earlier census year. Source: Census of Newfoundland, 1911, 1921, 1935

Appendix C (a): Women in Grand Falls, 1921-1945

	sex ratio of women in total population (females: 100 males)	women as a percentage total city population over 15 yrs
1921	83	46
1935	106	52
1945	105	51

based on population of Grand Falls over 15 years old.

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921, 1935, 1945*

Appendix C (b): Single Women in Grand Falls, 1921-1945

	Sex ratio of single women in total population (females: 100 males)	Single women as a percentage of total single adult population
1921	65	39
1935	114	53
1945	104	51

based on single population of Grand Falls over 15 years old.

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921, 1935, 1945*

Appendix D: Total Earnings of Household Heads, Grand Falls 1934 (N=710)

total yearly earnings \$	Number of heads	Percentage
under 100	10	1.4
100-200	20	2.8
201-300	12	1.7
301-400	15	2.1
401-500	14	1.9
501-600	14	1.9
601-1,000	195	27.5
1,001-1,500	205	28.9
1,501-2,000	86	12.1
2,001-2,500	37	5.2
2,501-3,000	22	3.0
3,001-4,000	7	0.1
4,001-5,000	14	1.9
5,001 and over	4	0.1
not stated	55	7.7
total	710	98.3

source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935.*

Appendix E: Production of Paper By Ton, Grand Falls, 1925-1939

year	tons of paper
1925	69,572
1926	84,485
1927	89,299
1928	92,441
1929	100,558
1930	155,807
1931	119,686
1932	127,953
1933	137,845
1934	154,694
1935	166,843
1936	161,845
1937	173,960
1938	138,292
1939	150,465

source: For 1925-1929 and 1935-1939, Anglo Newfoundland Development Co. Ltd., Coll 188, CNS Archives, 1955, ch.10, p.1 and ch.11, p.2. For 1929-1935, F.A. Price, *Fifty Years of Progress at Grand Falls: The Impact of the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company, Ltd, on the Economy of Newfoundland, Pulp and Paper Magazine* (October 1959) 34-41.

Appendix F: Birthplace of domestic servants enumerated in Grand Falls, 1921

Trinity Bay		Bonavista Bay		Notre Dame Bay	
Ranem	1	Bonavista	4	Jackson's Cove	1
Trinity	2	Greenspond	4	Point Leamington	1
Trouty	1	Gander Bay	1	Leading Ticks	2
Clareville	1	Plate Cove	1	Pilley's Island	2
Bonaventure	1	Musgrave	1	Tilting	1
Old Shop	1	Open Hall	1	Twillingate	2
Foster Point	1	Wesleyville	1	Springdale	1
Dildo	2	Alex Bay	1	Lewisporte	1
New Harbour	1	Musgrave Town	1	Carmanville	1
Britannia	3	Southwest Arm	1	Little Bay	3
Dildo Cove	1	Tickle Cove	1	King's Point	1
Shoal Harbour	1			Burlington	1
South Dildo	1			Fortune Harbour	1
Chance Cove	4			Herring Neck	1
				Moreton's Harbour	1
				Tizzard's Harbour	1
total	21		17		21

Appendix F contd.

Conception Bay		Placentia Bay		Central		Other	
Spaniards Bay	1	Point Verde	1	Norris Arm	1	St. George's	1
Avondale	1	Placentia	4	Borwood	1	Bay of Islands	1
Brigus	3	Woody Island	3			British Columbia	1
Shearstown	2	Haystack	1			North Sydney	1
Holyrood	3	Fox Harbour	2			Shoal Cove	1
Clarke's Beach	1	Bar Haven	1			Curling	1
Salmonier	1	Red Island	1				
Western Bay	1						
Conception Harbour	2						
Total	15		13		2		6

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1921*

Appendix G: 1935 Residence of Domestics Working in Grand Falls in 1945

Trinity Bay		Bonavista Bay		Conception Bay		Placentia Bay	
Queen's Cove	1	Bonavista	10	Port de Grave	3	Placentia Bay	1
Trinity South	1	Bonavista North	1	Harbour Grace	1		
South Dildo	1	Gander Bay	2				
Trinity	1	King's Cove	1				
		Sweet Bay	2				
		Plate Cove	1				
total	4		17		4		1

Notre Dame Bay		Central		Other	
N.D.B.	3	Badger	1	Green Bay	3
Tizzard's Hr.	1	Grand Falls	21	Corner Brook	1
Fogo	3			St. Barbe	2
Twillingate	2			Bear Cove	1
Tilting	1			Peter's Arm	1
La Scie	1				
Summerford	1				
Joe Batt's Arm	1				
Little Bay	1				
Campbellton	3				
Horwood	1				
total	18		22		8

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1945*

Appendix H: Percentage of Domesticity in Relation to Total Earnings of Household Heads, Grand Falls 1935 (Excluding Hotels)

total yearly earnings of household heads \$	Number of domesticity	Percentage of domesticity
under 100	0	0
100-200	1	0.8
201-300	0	0
301-400	3	2.5
401-500	1	0.8
501-600	2	1.7
601-1,000	18	15.3
1,001-1,500	27	22.8
1,501-2,000	23	19.5
2,001-2,500	13	11.0
2,501-3,000	12	10.1
3,001-4,000	4	3.4
4,001-5,000	11	9.3
5,001 + over	3	2.5
total	118	99.7

Source: *Census (nominal) Newfoundland, 1935*