"The Gendered Worlds of New England's Quebecois Migrants, 1870-1930"*

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As many as a million French Canadians – one-third of the province's population – migrated from Quebec to New England from the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. Nearly three-quarters of them made this journey between the years 1870-1930.[1] While men and women traveled the same routes and settled in the same cities, the two sexes experienced migration in very different ways. The migrants' beliefs regarding what it meant to be a man or a woman shaped every aspect of the migration process; most notably, these beliefs colored their perceptions of life in the United States and determined how individuals acculturated to their new lives south of the U.S.-Canadian border.

My presentation will consider some of the ways in which the migrants' understandings of gender influenced their decisions regarding whether, and how, to become "American" and/or remain "French Canadian." The disparate ways in which the migrants viewed American manhood versus American womanhood highlight the gendered distinctions in the migrants' understandings of the links between national identity and individual identity. For these migrants, becoming and being an American meant very different things for men and women. Because of this, French Canadian men and women had vastly different perceptions of the opportunities life in New England afforded them.

To many French Canadian male migrants, American manhood, defined largely in civic terms, involved many of the same qualities that made for a good French Canadian man. As a result, men's choices regarding how to adapt to life in the United States did not necessarily redefine their identity as men. To these men, being Quebecois meant allegiance first and foremost to the French Canadian *nation*. This allegiance encompassed their devotion to the

French language, the Catholic faith, and Quebecois moral values *(langue, foi, et mœurs)*. For men, the *mœurs* that marked a good French Canadian man included being a strong, sober, and hardworking head of household, providing for one's family, and representing the family in the public arena.[2]

Because many immigrants were poor, unskilled, and did not know English, it was sometimes difficult for adult men to find steady work at wages high enough to support their large families;[3] otherwise, though, life in the United States was well suited to their being able to continue to live as good *canadiens*. Many migrants felt that the United States Constitution actually did a better job of protecting their rights to speak French and practice Catholicism than was the case in late-nineteenth-century Canada. From French Canadians' perspective, the initial promise of Canadian Confederation in 1867 was that Canada's newly-strengthened federal government would draw equally from both the French and English traditions; those who believed in this promise were sorely disappointed in the years that followed.[4] During the last decades of the 1800s, the federal government did little to support Francophone rights outside Quebec; yet Anglophones gained ever more protections in the province that was supposed to have been the French homeland, while neither provincial nor federal government did much to alleviate the economic woes that made it impossible for many men to support their families in Quebec.[5]

Despite their allegiance to their French Canadian identities, many French Canadian men also came to embrace American identities. Paradoxically, rather than being in conflict with their identities as French Canadians, many of these men saw American citizenship, as well as the laws and traditions of the United States, as a path to preserving their unique Quebecois heritage. Their perception of the prerequisites for American manhood meshed well with their understandings of loyalty to a political system and way of life that would allow them to practice

their faith and speak their own language freely, while being able to make a living for themselves and their families – something that, in their minds, Quebec was no longer able to do under Confederation.

Therefore, becoming an American man in no way challenged their masculine identity as French Canadians; in fact, some men argued that naturalizing as American citizens actually made men better French Canadians. As one journalist asserted in 1880, "One can become a United States citizen while remaining [fully] French Canadian."[6] The following year, an editorial in another migrant newspaper spelled out this philosophy more explicitly:

> The best way for anyone to be a good citizen is always to remain that which God made him…one can be an exemplary citizen of the United States while at the same time remaining thoroughly Franco-Canadian. Moreover, we maintain that the best American citizens among us are also the best [French] Canadians.[7]

To those who subscribed to this seemingly contradictory stance, turning one's back on one's heritage as a French Canadian – including allegiance to the French Canadian *nation*-without-sovereignty – was the mark of a traitor, and indicated that one would be a poor citizen of any nation, whether sovereign or only imagined.[8] Thus, ongoing loyalty to Quebec, even as one became an American citizen, was evidence that a French Canadian migrant was suited to be the best sort of citizen possible, for both his newly-adopted country and his subject homeland.

Suffrage was the key to putting this dual allegiance into practice. Naturalization gave men the right to vote in U.S. and state elections, and the right to vote made it possible for men to act on behalf of their compatriots back in Quebec – for example, working to get both the United States and individual states in New England to pass new tariff laws that would be more favorable to Quebec, thereby helping to boost Quebec's struggling economy.[9] Men who could vote were

also in a better position to improve life for French Canadians in New England on the local and state level. For instance, in the Corporation Sole Controversy (1906-1913), French Canadians in Maine took their disputes with Irish-ancestry bishops over control of their own French-language parishes to the Maine state legislature, in an effort to get the state's law giving the Bishop of Portland direct control over all Church property within the state repealed.[10] Although the initial petition for repeal of this law was unsuccessful, observers at the time noted that a larger proportion of Francos in the state legislature would have no doubt led to a different outcome. By 1920, French Canadians not only were the largest ethnic group in several of New England cities and towns, from Lewiston, Maine to Woonsocket, Rhode Island; but they also held many seats in local and state governments, where they were in a strong position to represent the interests of New England's "Little Canadas."

In contrast, for women who migrated from Quebec during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, being a good French Canadian centered on allegiance to a way of life, rather than allegiance to a *nation* per se. Religious expectations for women, rather than civic duty, were at the heart of this identity. As the Catholic Church prescribed, women were to be sexually pure until marriage, dutiful wives and attentive mothers after, and obedient to male authority – whether in the guise of father, husband, or priest – and the teachings of the Church at all times.[11] Although American manhood seemed highly compatible with the definition of a good man in Quebec during this era, the same was not true for womanhood. Instead, the migrants, men and women alike, perceived American womanhood as the antithesis of what made for a good *canadienne*. The Quebecois migrants were accustomed to defining themselves in defensive opposition to the dominant culture that surrounded them. Like Anglo-Canadian women, American women (from the perspective of the migrants at least) developed careers outside the

home, postponed or avoided marriage and motherhood, divorced their spouses, and dabbled in such radical movements as feminism and woman suffrage. To the migrants, these hallmarks were all indications of a decadent Protestant culture that would destroy the essence of French Canadian womanhood, and by extension the French Canadian way of life, if given the chance.[12]

The definitions of womanhood that the Quebecois migrants held so dear were hardly unique to Catholic French Canadians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; indeed, many Protestant New Englanders also believed that men should be sole breadwinners, while women's workplace was the home. What is important is not the extent to which these ideas were unique to the French Canadian migrants, but rather the extent to which the migrants perceived these *mœurs* to be distinctly Quebecois. The gulf they perceived between American womanhood and Quebecois womanhood left many women feeling as if they had to choose between two polar opposites; the tension that ensued from some women's choices precipitated numerous struggles within French Canadian migrant communities. As the examples cited above indicate, men in a variety of positions, from priests and other community leaders to working-class men, developed various ways of combining being French Canadian with new identities as Americans, while maintaining a focus upon the civic connections between these identities and their masculinity. Yet as we will see, the fluidity men exercised in negotiating a path between two "national" allegiances hinged in part upon their efforts to restrict female migrants' ability to renegotiate their own identities, as women of French Canadian ancestry living in the American republic.

Despite their attempts to regulate the behavior and loyalties of the women within their migrant communities, the men's activities in this regard were destined to fail on a number of levels. First, some migrant women embraced the opportunities that life in the United States presented them, whether they viewed these opportunities as a chance to escape the restrictive

confines of Quebecois culture and society, or the chance to explore options that had previously been unavailable to them. As existing oral histories, letters from women published in migrant newspapers, and other sources indicate, a significant proportion of female Quebecois migrants perceived the options that New England cities offered to them as choices between life as it would have been in Quebec, and life as it could be in the United States. For these women, choosing the "American" way over aspects of their Quebecois heritage represented a deliberate and conscious decision to embrace what they perceived as the greater relative freedoms of life in "the States."[13]

For many of these women, the opportunities that an "American" existence offered included a wider range of choices for a meaningful career outside the home or the church. When interviewed in the 1970s about their lives following emigration from Quebec, former employees of textile mills in Manchester, New Hampshire highlighted the satisfaction their mill jobs had given them; one woman declared, "I like weaving[;] I always liked it," while another exclaimed, "For me it was a life of glory to work in the mills. Oh, did I like it! I liked it enough to miss it when I was all done."[14] Contemporary observers also noted that many female mill workers seemed to prefer millwork to the domestic tasks that filled the days of housewives. As a Maine state labor bureau official noted in Lewiston in 1908, many of that city's female mill operatives, who were predominantly from French Canadian backgrounds, "greatly prefer the factory to house work…Most of the women have spent so much time at the machines, where the work becomes largely mechanical, that the numerous home duties, or work along domestic lines, is irksome to them. 'Why,' said one woman, '…I'd much rather tend my looms.'"[15]

That women associated these expanded job opportunities, and the increased personal satisfaction (not to mention higher wages) that came with them, with life in the United States is most apparent in the reflections of female migrants who ultimately returned to Quebec, often

going back against their own wills when their families of origin decided to return to Canada. One woman, still single and living at home when her father decided the family should move back to Quebec, explained that she and her siblings "wanted to stay [in the U.S.]…because [there] we were earning money!"[16] In comparing her factory job in *les états* to the domestic service work she faced in Quebec, another return migrant stated that in the U.S., "we were freer and got a better salary."[17] For whatever reason, these women did not feel they were in a position to resist their families' wishes and stay behind, but the emotional toll of return migration was high; as one of the interviewers summarized the impact of return migration upon these women, "Giving up their work was often like death to the soul."[18]

For other women, the opportunity to work per se was less important than the possibility of being financially independent; for these women, work made it possible to marry later than they otherwise would have (and certainly later than their communities would have preferred),[19] or even to avoid marriage altogether. As one female migrant, still single at age twenty-seven, stated in 1910, the working woman in the United States "adores the work [i.e., paid employment] that makes the time pass quickly for her, well-pleased not to owe her daily bread to anyone [but herself]" (emphasis added).[20] For at least some of the many women who began their working careers while still teenagers, their early work experiences enabled them to envision a life of independent self-reliance as an alternative to the roles of dutiful daughter or economically-dependent wife. Cora Pellerin, a Manchester mill worker who postponed marriage until her early thirties, explained decades later that

> I was an old maid at thirty, but I was happy to be an old maid. My friends were all married with four or five kids. Some of them were divorced. I didn't want that…I made good money. I dressed up well, I went dancing – I was having a good time…I didn't want to switch with my friend who had five or six children and a husband that came in drunk every weekend. Nothing doing!
>
> In those days, it was the woman who stayed in the house, she was a housewife

…You were supposed to do what your husband told you to do. I didn't like that.[21]

Like some of her peers, Pellerin seems to have perceived marriage, and its ensuing domestic and maternal duties, as restrictive; instead, she consciously chose a life of single independence throughout her twenties, one that would most likely have been unavailable to her in rural Quebec. In many ways, Pellerin and the thousands of other women like her were merely doing the same thing that male migrants did: making the most of the opportunities that life in the United States presented to them. Like Pellerin, many working-class men, including Félix Albert, sought to capitalize on the work prospects available to them in the United States.[22] However, when Albert criss-crossed the U.S.-Canadian border in search of improved work prospects, his efforts to better support his family only reinforced his identity as a solid *canadien*, and nothing in his actions precluded his being a good American as well. But when Cora Pellerin pursued (and relished!) her employment outside the home, her paid work and delayed marriage marked her, in the minds of fellow migrants, as an "American" woman, the polar opposite of a good *canadienne*. Priests and laymen alike regularly chastised women who chose such "American" habits over the more "French Canadian" pursuits of motherhood and domesticity, both in public[23] and in private, especially when working women tried to combine their outside employment with marriage and motherhood. As one incensed working-class man wrote to his wife's boss at a Manchester mill in 1896, "[Please] Discharge her…I want her to stay at home."[24]

So it seems clear that one reason men's efforts to keep their sisters and mothers from "becoming American" failed is because American life, as the migrants perceived it, held a number of attractions to many migrant women, especially those who were young and single. But a second reason that men's efforts to restrict their wives and daughters to the role of bearer of French Canadian culture – in other words, to be a living symbol of the homeland they had left behind, thereby giving the men themselves free license to pursue other paths – failed is because

of the women's distinct relationship to the French Canadian *nation* in the first place. In modern nation-states, it has not been uncommon for women's relationship to the state to be more tenuous than that of male citizens. For example, as Linda Kerber has convincingly argued, from the founding of the American republic, a woman's primary allegiance was not to the state but rather to her husband; particularly before women gained the right to vote in 1920 and the right to apply for naturalization in 1922, women's most important contributions to the U.S. have more often been defined in terms of producers of future citizens than as active citizens in their own right.[25] Likewise, Quebec leaders seemed to conceive of women's responsibilities in the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth, primarily in terms of their duties as wives and mothers; before Quebec women gained the provincial vote in 1940, decades after Canadian women could vote in federal elections, a *Québécoise*'s duties to the French Canadian *nation* were more or less limited to producing more French Canadians, in the effort to out-reproduce Anglo-Canadians known as the "revenge of the cradle."[26]

Without direct civic ties to the homeland they had left behind, and with church-based values and ideals at the heart of the cultural identity they were expected to perpetuate through their actions, it is not surprising that various groups of women either failed to define their womanhood exclusively in terms of a strict allegiance to *nation* per se, as many men had done, or otherwise saw the dividing line in their own lives between being French Canadian and American less rigidly than their male counterparts would have liked, instead moving as easily from one to the other as did the men – thereby usurping the privilege the male migrants and their descendants had reserved for themselves. Perhaps women's tendency to avoid referencing their "national" identities explicitly is the most telling example of the ways in which loyalty to this or that nation carried a different degree of significance for them than it did for men.

Comparing the thoughts of Quebecois priests and female religious in the U.S. provides a useful illustration. In the decades around 1900, "the" American Catholic Church was actually sharply divided along ethnic lines, with priests and laymen alike insisting upon the impossibility of separating their identity as Catholics from the identities linking them to their nations of origin. In sharp contrast to the French Canadian parish priest who first established the order in Massachusetts in 1889, only to later disown the women he had called to religious life, the members of Les Petites Franciscaines de Marie, also known as the Little Franciscans of Mary or PFM, defined themselves primarily as Catholic nuns with a calling as part of the universal Catholic Church. Much to the consternation of their original patron, Fr. Brouillet, they refused to respect the ethnic lines that set them apart from Irish Catholics as well as from Protestant women's groups. In their initial struggle to establish themselves on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border, they avoided labeling themselves as Canadian or American whenever possible; used such labels only when absolutely necessary; and in those cases, chose one or the other based on its immediate utility in advancing their larger cause as Catholic nuns – rather than slavishly insisting, as Brouillet and many of his New-England based colleagues did – that they were French Canadians first and Catholics second.[27]

The disparities in how men and women from Quebec perceived and experienced migration highlight the importance of considering not only differences between the sexes when studying a phenomenon such as international migration, but also the crucial role that ideas about gender, and related conceptions of power hierarchies,[28] played in influencing these experiences. For the Quebecois migrants, especially women, ideas about men's and women's proper behavior were as critical in defining their actions, and the potential consequences of the choices they made, as were the options available to them in the first place. In particular, the different

meanings and significance attached to "becoming American" and "remaining French Canadian" indicate that any study of migrant acculturation and adaptation is incomplete unless it examines how gender influenced these processes.

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[1] Yolande Lavoie, "Les mouvements migratoires des Canadiens entre leur pays et les Etats-Unis au XIXe et au XXe siècles : Étude quantitative," in *La population du Québec: Études rétrospectives,* ed. Hubert Charbonneau, (Montréal: Éditions du Boréal Express, 1973), 76; see also 78. This estimate represents the total migration from 1840-1940, nearly three-fourths of this migration (approx. 720,000) occurred between 1870-1930; see ibid., 45, as well as Bruno Ramirez, "L'émigration canadienne vers les Etats-Unis, perspective continentale et comparative," in *Amérique sans frontière: les Etats-Unis dans l'espace nord-américain*, ed. Catherine Collomp and Mario Menéndez (Vincennes: Presses Université de Vincennes, 1995), 98.

[2] On these qualities, see, for example, "La Convention: La tempérance," *L'Etendard National* [Worcester, Massachusetts], 18 juillet 1872, pp. A-B; "Devoirs de famille," *Le Foyer canadien* [Worcester, Massachusetts], 25 mars 1873, p. 2; "Aux Travailleurs," *Le Travailleur* [Worcester, Massachusetts], 20 mai 1881, p. 4; G. de Tonnacoeur, "La Situation," *Le Travailleur,* 5 janvier 1887, p. 2; "Les Devoirs du Citoyen," *Le Jean-Baptiste* [Worcester, Massachusetts], 17 octobre 1891, p. 2; "Comment réussir Dans le monde," *Le Messager* [Lewiston, Maine], 6 septembre 1904, p. 8; Fortunat Belleau, "La Naturalisation," *Le Messager*, 14 mai 1910, p. 2; "La femme," *L'Opinion publique* [Worcester, Massachusetts], 7 août 1915, p. 6; "J'en suis," *L'Opinion Publique,* 11 octobre 1919, p. 4; "Le Dévergondage," *Echo du Maine* [Lewiston, Maine], 30 octobre 1919, p. 4; ""Doctrine catholique," *Le Messager,* 31 octobre 1919, p. 4; "Apprennons [sic] l'anglais," *Echo du Maine*, 8 novembre 1919, p. 4. It is worth noting that at least one of these articles, the 1915 article from *L'Opinion Publique* cited above, was reprinted directly from a Quebec periodical; New England's French-language newspapers frequently reprinted articles from each other as well as from publications originating in Quebec. Many women in migrant communities also expected their husbands to be sober, hardworking providers and good Catholics; when a female newspaper columnist asked her readers to write to her with descriptions of the ideal husband, these qualities were at the top of many women's list, alongside requirements such as love, devotion, and affection to wives. So many women (from the local area as well as throughout the state and even in neighboring states) wrote in response to the columnist's query that their lists filled the writer's column for several weeks. See Marguerite, "Chronique," *L'Opinion Publique*, 18 mai, 25 mai, and 8 juin 1897, p. 2.

[3] Contemporary observers and historians looking back have both noted that the reliance of certain industries upon poorly-paid female and child labor in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made earning a "family wage" much more difficult for adult men; such economic environments tended to have fewer jobs available for men overall, and those jobs that existed often paid worse than did similar jobs in more diversified economies, where employers were less likely to rely on female and child labor in order to boost profits. See Eva L. Shorey, "Industrial Conditions Surrounding Women and Children in the Textile Industry," in Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, *Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine: 1908* (Waterville: Sentinel Publishing Company, 1908), 4; Paul Raymond Dauphinais, "Structure and Strategy: French-Canadians in Central New England, 1850-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maine, 1991), 88.

[4] For a general overview of Canadian Confederation (and its shortcomings) from a French Canadian perspective, see A. I. Silver, *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation, 1864-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

[5] The émigrés kept close tabs on such situations north of the border, as their frequent reports of Anglo-Canadian inroads in Quebec and trampling of Francophone rights elsewhere in Canada indicates. For example, see J. A. Mousseau., "Bulletin," *L'Étendard National,* 31 octobre 1872, p. 525; L. Duplessis, "Correspondance," *L'Étendard National*, 30 janvier 1873, pp. 1-2; "Émigration et Repatriement [sic]," *Le Foyer Canadien,* 20 mai 1873, pp. 2-3; Fred. Houde, "Question du Repatriement [sic],"*Le Foyer Canadien,* 9 septembre 1873, p. 3; J. D. Montmarquet, "Émigration et Rapatriement," *L'Étendard National*, 12 février 1874, p. 84; "Riel expulsé du Parlement Canadien: Victoire du Fanatisme Orangiste," *Le Foyer Canadien*, 21 avril 1874, p. 3; [no title], *Le Travailleur*, 31 mai 1875, p. 1; Montmarquet, "Émigration et Rapatriement"; [Letter to the editor], *Le Messager,* 25 mars 1880, p. 3 (see also response from editorial staff); Dr. R. G. Janson LaPalme, "Le Déclin au Canada," *Le Jean-Baptiste* (Worcester,

Massachusetts), 20 août 1892, p. 2; François Tujague, "La Langue française au Canada: Opinion d'un Français," *Le Messager,* 11 octobre 1892, p. 3.

[6] Emphasis inferred. In original: "[O]n peut devenir citoyen de la république américaine tout en restant Canadien-Français." "Le 24 Juin à Québec," *Le Messager*, 25 mars 1880, p. 3.

[7] In original: "Le meilleur moyen pour un chacun d'être bon citoyen, c'est de rester toujours ce que Dieu l'a fait… on peut être excellent citoyen des Etats-Unis tout en restant Franco-Canadien. Plus que cela, nous dirons que les meilleurs citoyens Américains parmi nous sont aussi les meilleurs Canadiens." *Le Courrier de Worcester,* 3 novembre 1881, p. 2.

[8] As Matthew Frye Jacobson and others have illustrated in the decades since Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* first appeared, Anderson's definition of "nation" (5-7), which includes not only that nations are entities formulated in the collective imaginations of those who adhere to them, but also that nations are sovereign, does not ring true for many groups, from colonized peoples including French Canadians since the fall of New France, Irish and Polish "nationals" in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, and American Indians throughout much of the past four centuries, to groups who have spent much of their existence without a defined homeland, such as Jews. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[9] "Club de réciprocité," *L'Opinion Publique*, 18 octobre 1904, p. 5. Albert Faucher discusses the negative effects of late-nineteenth-century U.S.-Canada reciprocity agreements, on both the economic situation in Quebec and efforts to keep Canadians from emigrating south, in "L'Émigration des canadiens français au XIXe siècle: Position du problème et perspectives," *Recherches sociographiques* 5 (septembre 1964): 283, 299-303. For other examples of efforts to rally naturalized émigrés to exercise their franchise in the United States on behalf of causes in the homeland, see, for example, "Bachelier," "Naturalisation," *L'Étendard National*, 3 octobre 1872, p. 2; J. Israel Tarte, "L'Élection présidentielle et les canadiens-français," *Le Travailleur*, 22 juin 1892, p. 2; [no title], *Le Travailleur*, 27 août 1892, p. 1; [no title], *Le Travailleur*, 4 novembre 1892, p. 1.

[10] In the Corporation Sole Controversy, which dominated Maine's two French-language newspapers (Biddeford's *La Justice* and Lewiston's *Le Messager*) from 1910-1912, French-speaking Catholics in Maine sought to gain greater control over local parish finances while maintaining the existence and autonomy of national parishes, all of which then-bishop Walsh, who was of Irish ancestry, challenged at every step of the way. This battle, which Maine's French Canadians waged on many fronts and which they dubbed *La Cause Nationale* early on, included an effort to repeal the 1887 Maine law that made the Bishop of Portland owner of all property in his diocese (including parish churches), a system known as Corporation Sole. Only when an initial petition to the state legislature for the repeal of the 1887 Maine law never made it to the floor of the legislature for consideration did those concerned appeal directly to Rome. In response, the Vatican called for the abolishment of all remaining Corporation Sole laws in the United States; see "Le Corporation Sole," *Le Messager*, 20 octobre 1911, 1. For a brief summary of the abortive efforts to work through legislative channels that led to the Papal appeal, see "Le Corporation Sole," *Le Messager*, 23 octobre 1911, p. 1. For a brief overview of other dimensions of and battles in Maine's Corporation Sole affair, see Michael J. Guignard, "Maine's Corporation Sole Controversy," in *Religion catholique et appartenance franco-américaine – Franco-Americans and Religion: Impact and Influence*, ed. Claire Quintal (Worcester: Institut français, Assumption College, 1993), 17-24. Among other examples of naturalized French Canadian immigrants and native-born Franco-Americans seeking to wield power at the polls on behalf of their nationality within the United States, see G. de Tonnacoeur, "La Situation"; [no title], *Le Travailleur*, 5 octobre 1892, p. 1; [no title], *Le Travailleur*, 4 novembre 1892, p. 1.

[11] See, among others, "Role de la femme dans la société," *Le Foyer canadien*, 13 mai 1873, pp. 1-2; "Vocation des femmes," *L'Etendard national*, 26 juin 1873, p. 312; "Une précieuse ridicule," *Le Travailleur*, 8 janvier 1884, p. 4; "Conférence du R. P. Lamarche," *Le Messager*, 12 mars 1907, p. 1; "Aux mères chrétiennes," *Le Messager*, 10 mars 1919, p. 6; "Vive la Canadienne!," *L'Opinion Publique*, 22 juin 1910, p. 4; "La Femme," *Petit-journal* [Lewiston, Maine], 20 août 1915, p. 5; "Obligations de la mère," *L'Opinion Publique*, 21 août 1920, p. 7. Again, New England's French-language newspapers frequently reprinted such pieces, and in so doing borrowed both from each other and from newspapers in Quebec; for example, the 1915 *Petit-journal* piece cited above, which was originally published in the Canadian publication *Du Droit* of Ottawa, reappeared several years later in *Le Messager* as "Le role de la femme" (2 septembre 1920, p. 8).

[12] Notable examples of the migrants associating such characteristics with women in the United States include "Les Veillées du Père Tuquetaine," *Le Foyer canadien*, 7 octobre 1873, p. 3; "Le Vote Des Femmes," *Le Travailleur*, 8 janvier 1884, p. 4; Marguerite, "Chronique," *L'Opinion Publique* 23 mars 1897, p. 2; "Mgr Guertin et le divorce,"

L'Opinion Publique, 1er décembre 1908, p. 1; Dr. Bohémier, "Education: Le Travail des femmes," *Le Messager*, 8 septembre 1922, p. 4.

[13] For an expanded discussion of the arguments in this section, see FlorenceMae Waldron, "'I've Never Dreamed It Was Necessary to *Marry!*': Women and Work in New England French Canadian Communities, 1870-1930," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 24:2 (Winter 2005): 34-64.

[14] Interview with Antonia Bergeron, in *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-City*, ed. Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 61; interview with Marie Proulx, in *Amoskeag*, 66.

[15] Shorey, 25-26.

[16] In original: "Nous autres, on voulait rester encore…parce qu'on gagnait de l'argent!" Interview with Mme Milot, as quoted in Jacques Rouillard, *Ah les États! Les travailleurs canadiens-français dans l'industrie textile de la Nouvelle-Angleterre d'après le témoignage des derniers migrants* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1985), 27.

[17] In original: "on était plus libre et on touchait un meilleur salaire." Interview with Mme Plante, as quoted in *Ah les États!*, 27.

[18] In original: "C'est souvent la mort dans l'âme qu'ils abandonnaient leur travail." Ibid.

[19] Sources ranging from newspaper articles and letters to late-twentieth-century oral histories suggest that, in the collective minds of the migrants, the transition to *vieille fille*, or "old maid," took place sometime in a woman's mid-twenties; a never-married woman was definitely a *vieille fille* in most people's minds by her thirties. Marguerite, "Chronique," *L'Opinion Publique* (Worcester, Massachusetts), 2 mars 1897, p. 2; "Variations d'une fille," *Petit-Journal* (Lewiston, Maine), 9 juillet 1915, p. 5; Manon, "Eloge de la Femme de 35 ans," *Le Messager*, 13 août 1920, p. 5; interview with Cora Pellerin, in *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-City*, ed. Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 210.

[20] In original: "Surtout aux Etats-Unis, le pays exempt des sots préjugés sur le compte de celles qui travaillent, la femme fait la grande lutte pour la vie, elle adore le travail qui lui fait paraître très courtes les heures, bien contente de ne devoir son pain a personne… " Liane [Camille Lessard], "Le Suffrage des Femmes," *Le Messager*, 4 février 1910, p. 2. Lessard, who had taught school in Quebec before migrating with her family to Maine, worked in Lewiston's mills for a number of years before becoming the first French Canadian woman to make a career as a journalist in the United States. The above excerpt comes not from one of her regular columns, but from a public debate on woman suffrage in which she proclaimed herself to be the first *Canadienne* to speak publicly in favor of enfranchising women; the full text of her speech appeared in the following day's newspaper. By the time of this debate, 1910, Lessard had been writing columns for Lewiston's premier French Canadian newspaper for several years, and had already become the paper's first female member of the editorial board, although she may still have been putting in some hours at the mill; the 1912-1913 Androscoggin Country directory still lists her occupation as "mill op[erative]." For biographical information on Lessard, who used the pen name of "Liane" throughout much of her journalistic career (a practice then common among other *canadienne* journalists and some of their male counterparts), see "LIANE Mlle Camille Lessard," *Le Messager*, 7 février 1910, p. 5; see also Janet L. Shideler, *Camille Lessard-Bissonnette: The Quiet Evolution of French-Canadian Immigrants in New England* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

[21] Interview with Cora Pellerin, in *Amoskeag*, 210.

[22] Albert's autobiography, which the illiterate immigrant dictated to someone in his local community, first appeared as *Histoire d'un enfant pauvre* in 1909, and was reprinted in English as *Immigrant Odyssey: A French-Canadian Habitant in New England*, introduction by Francis H. Early, translated by Arthur L. Eno, Jr. (Orono: The University of Maine Press, 1991).

[23] See, for example, J.D. Montmarquet, "Une convention," *Le Messager,* 2 novembre 1882, p. 2; Dr. Bohémier, "Education: Le travail des femmes," *Le Messager*, 8 septembre 1920, p. 4; "La femme et le travail," *L'Opinion Publique*, 29 septembre 1920, p. 4;

[24] Letter from husband of Philman T., as quoted in Tamara K. Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 53. Philman T.'s husband was hardly the only one who felt this way; Raymond Dubois (see interview in *Amoskeag,* 161), Évelyne Desruisseaux (see interview in *Ah les États!*, 109), and Alice Olivier (see interview in *Amoskeag*, 155), all mentioned male relatives expressing similar sentiments on a regular basis at home.

[25] See Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); idem, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Biology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: Published by the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

[26] On the ideal Quebecois woman in the nineteenth century, useful secondary works include Martine Tremblay, "La représentation de l'idéal féminine en milieu rural québécois au XIXe siècle" (M.A. thesis, Université de Québec à Trois-Rivières, 1987), and idem, "La division sexuelle du travail et la modernisation de l'agriculture à travers la presse agricole, 1840-1900." *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 47:2 (automne 1993): 221-244. As Nicole Thivierge has illustrated, when the Quebec government began to take a greater interest in the education of its citizens in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – a task that had previously been handled, as with many of the province's social services, primarily by religious orders – its major contribution to female education was encouraging religious orders, through words as well as generous financial subsidies, to establish special primary schools devoted to teaching young girls the art and science of housekeeping, as well as to transform existing girls' schools into *écoles ménagères*. See Nicole Thivierge, *Histoire de l'enseignement ménager-familial au Québec, 1882-1970* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1982). Classic proclamations on *la revanche des berceaux* include Fr. Louis Lalande's piece "Nos forces nationales: la revanche des berceaux," *L'Action Française* (Montréal) 2:3 (mars 1918): 98-108; Lalande's arguments run parallel to those made by another priest south of the border a decade before (see "Conférence du R. P. Lamarche," *Le Messager*, 12 mars 1907, p. 1). That women's role as wives and mothers derived from Catholic teachings and beliefs is especially clear in discussions of "revenge of the cradle"; the exception, of course, was women who entered religious life – in which case, their role in society was still spelled out in terms of religious obligations rather than civic duties and responsibilities.

[27] My observations in this paragraph stem largely from archival research that I conducted in the summer of 2004 in Baie-Saint-Paul, in the historical records of the PFM motherhouse. See FlorenceMae Waldron, "Nuns and *Nation*: (Trans)National Identities and Les Petites Franciscaines de Marie, 1889-1930," paper presented at the 13th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Claremont, CA, June 2-5, 2005; idem, "Gender, Religion, and (Trans)National Identity: The Petites Franciscaines de Marie of Worcester and Baie-St-Paul, 1889-1910," paper presented at the 119th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Seattle, WA, January 6-9, 2005. For more on the general history of the PFM, see Sr. Marie-Michel-Archange, p.f.m., *Par ce signe tu vivras: histoire de la congregation des Petites franciscaines de Marie (1889-1955)* (Baie-Saint-Paul: Les Petites franciscaines de Marie, 1955); reprinted in English as *By This Sign You Will Live: History of the Congregation of the Little Franciscans of Mary, 1889-1955*, tr. by Sr. Marie-Octave, p.f.m., and Betty Dunn (Worcester, Massachusetts: [n.p.], 1964).

[28] Here I borrow the ideas of Joan Wallach Scott on the connections between gender and power as outlined in her landmark essay "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91:5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.