

Studying the History of Occupation: Quantitative Sources on Canadian Teachers in the Nineteenth Century

by SUSAN LASKIN, BETH LIGHT and ALISON PRENTICE

Tracing the history of an occupation is an intriguing business and not least among the fascinations is the tracking down and critical analysis of the sources. As in any historical inquiry, there are questions that one would like to ask but which are problematic because the sources are less than perfect. Typically, for many of the older occupations, there is the question of “origins”. What can we discover about a trade or profession in the days before statistics on occupations began to be gathered systematically in the nineteenth century? A related question is the deceptively simple one of occupational identity. Who should be considered a member of a particular occupational group, as it developed over time, and who excluded from consideration on the grounds that they fell outside its essential ranks? Then there is always the problem that the publicly prominent of any given labour force have invariably left to posterity more information about themselves than the rank and file, whose voices, if recorded at all, seem muffled by comparison.¹ Finally, regional and jurisdictional variations in record keeping have also meant that members of an occupational group in some localities can be more easily studied than their counterparts in others. For the same reasons, developments in different jurisdictions cannot always be easily compared.

All of the above problems affect the study of teaching in the nineteenth century. Generally speaking, for periods before the institution of government censuses and the systematic gathering of information by departments of education, our knowledge of who taught school and under what conditions they taught is at best impressionistic. Even when statistics began to be routinely collected, record keeping varied immensely from one place to another, ensuring that for some

¹ This applies with special force when a labour force is female, as Susan Trofimenkoff shows in her study of the female industrial workers who testified before the Royal Commission on Capital and Labour of 1886-1889. Susan Trofimenkoff, “102 Muffled Voices: Canada’s Industrial Women in the 1880s”, *Atlantis*, 3.1 (Fall 1977).

jurisdictions much more information is available about teachers than for others and creating serious problems of comparability. The many titles and ranks assigned to nineteenth century teachers often make it difficult to decide who to include in a given educational labour force, especially if inter-jurisdictional comparisons are contemplated. Finally, as might be expected, the ideas and beliefs of the leaders of school systems, such as superintendents, inspectors or principals, are easier to discover than are those of the schoolmistresses and masters who were its rank and file workers.

Nevertheless, the occupation of school teaching may well be richer in sources for studying its ordinary members than many others. Moreover, in Canada, we are especially fortunate in having multiple sets of records illuminating a formative period in the history of teaching, the second half of the nineteenth century. What follows is a discussion of some of the major sources for quantitative research in the history of Canadian teachers between 1851 and 1891. The discussion of local records focusses on those of seven Ontario counties, as these were the first jurisdictions chosen in an ongoing study of the social structure of teaching in the nineteenth century.² The discussion of provincial records ranges more widely to include all of those provinces whose departments of education produced annual reports in the period before 1900, and which were analyzed in connection with the production of illustrations on the history of teachers for the Historical Atlas of Canada.³ Since neither the seven counties' study nor the atlas research undertook to examine all sources from all points of view, this discussion does not pretend to be comprehensive. Rather our concern is to outline and illustrate some of the problems we have encountered using Canadian quantitative sources on teachers and to point to the complexities as well as the value of using routinely generated information about the members of an occupation comparatively.

I

Most recent studies of teachers in the nineteenth century have tended to focus on urban public school systems. Concerned with the development of educational bureaucracies and the hierarchies associated with bureaucratic structures,⁴ with the

2 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Women in Canadian History Project. "The Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching: An Ontario Case Study". We are grateful to O.I.S.E. for its generous financial support of this project. We also wish to thank Rosalie Fox, Liz Good Menard and Lise Kreps who assisted with the gathering and entry of the quantitative data and lent much enthusiasm and support to the project.

3 Historical Atlas of Canada Project, funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council.

4 Michael B. Katz, "The Emergence of Bureaucracy in Urban Education: The Boston Case", *History of Education Quarterly*, 8, 2 and 3 (Summer and Fall, 1968) and David Tyack, "Bureaucracy and the Common School: The Example of Portland, Oregon, 1851-1913", *American Quarterly*, 19, 3 (Fall, 1967).

sexual division of labour in teaching,⁵ or with aspects of the history of professionalization,⁶ these studies have seen the urban context as crucial to the major transformations that occurred in teaching prior to the twentieth century. Yet change was happening in rural places too in the Victorian era. It was to examine the sexual division of labour in teaching in the context of rural social change that we undertook the study of teachers in seven Ontario counties between the year when the first relatively complete decennial census for Upper Canada was taken, 1851, and 1881, the last year for which the manuscript census is currently available.⁷

The seven sample counties of Prescott, Dundas, Northumberland, Ontario, Oxford, Essex and Grey were chosen to represent the geographic regions of the province and the various stages of economic and social development which seemed to characterize the settled parts of rural Ontario at mid-century.⁸ We examined four kinds of quantitative records for the study: the manuscript census returns for the counties; the provincial department of education reports for the years in which they provide data at the individual county level on teachers, that is up to and including 1864; local superintendents' annual manuscript reports, which date from 1855 to 1870, for five townships; and the trustee minute books which exist for two Oxford County school sections, for the period between 1845 and the mid-1870s. Each source had its own special strengths and weaknesses. Frequently each raised as many questions as it answered. Used together and, to some extent in comparison with each other, however, they shed considerable new light on the evolution of the sexual division of labour in teaching in rural Ontario.

Basic to our study was the need to identify teachers not only as such, but also by the other variables which defined their lives. Our most valuable source was therefore the manuscript census, which allowed us to examine such variables as the religious affiliation and ethnicity, the household and marital status, and the age as well as gender of individual teachers over time. The manuscript census returns also permitted us to study the teachers in their familial groupings and residential settings.

-
- 5 Alison Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching in British North America and Canada, 1845-1875," *Social History/Histoire sociale*, 8 (May, 1975) (reprinted in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice, eds., *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977); Myra H. Strober and David Tyack, "Why do Women Teach and Men Manage?" *Signs*, 5, 3 (Spring, 1980); David B. Tyack and Myra H. Strober, "Jobs and Gender: A History of the Structuring of Educational Employment by Sex," in Patricia Schmuck and W.W. Charles, eds., *Educational Policy and Management: Sex Differentials* (San Diego: Academic Press, forthcoming); Myra H. Strober and Laura Best, "The Female/Male Salary Differential in Public Schools: Some Lessons from San Francisco, 1879," *Economic Inquiry*, 17, 2, (April, 1979). By sophisticated manipulation of statistics, Strober and Best were able to show that education and experience were less important than gender in determining the average teacher's "position and type of school of employment," as well as salary differentials, in San Francisco in 1879.
- 6 Wendy E. Bryans, "Virtuous Women at Half the Price: The Feminization of Teaching and Women Teacher' Organization, 1875-1900", (University of Toronto M.A. Thesis, 1974) and Elizabeth Hansot and David Tyack, "A Dream Deferred: A Golden Age for Women School Administrators," CERAS paper, School of Education, Stanford University.
- 7 While earlier census material is available for some southern Ontario townships, notably for the year 1842, the Census of Canada for 1851/52 is the earliest official census of the Canadas.

Our first task with the census returns was to identify the teachers. In all of the returns studied, the occupation column was scanned for individuals reporting an employment in education. These included not only common school teachers and schoolmasters or schoolmistresses, but also governesses, professors of various types, and music and dancing teachers to mention just a few. A total of sixty-four categories of “teachers” in fact emerged from the returns for the seven counties. With the teachers’ names, we coded the other variables that seemed relevant: place of birth and/or origin; religious affiliation; age, sex and marital status. If the teacher was married, the spouse’s occupation, birthplace or origin, religion and age as well as the numbers and sexes of children and their school attendance were recorded. The household status, whether head, spouse, child, or boarder/visitor, was also determined. For those teachers who were not the heads of their own households, occupational, marital, ethnic and religious variables for the household head and the structure of the household also received our attention. The information was transferred through direct data entry into a computer file and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.⁹

Although we have included all sixty-four categories of teachers in our data base, we decided for the purposes of the initial study to eliminate all categories except teacher, school teacher, common school teacher, schoolmistress and schoolmaster. Because colleges and grammar schools were generally located in centres such as Cobourg, teachers identified as professors or grammar school masters and the like would detract from the rural focus of our study. But the main reason for the decision to confine our analysis to those five types of teacher was our interest in studying the transition to a predominantly female teaching force in government elementary or common schools. It could be argued that only with those teachers actually designated “common school teachers” could we be absolutely certain of identifying these individuals, since some of our “schoolmistresses”, “schoolmasters” or even plain “teachers” must certainly have taught in private venture schools, colleges, academies or grammar schools. Yet what we know about rural Ontario schooling in the period in question would suggest that the vast majority of such teachers would have been involved in public and elementary, rather than private or “higher” education.¹⁰ Our modified sample from the four census decades of 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881, we would therefore argue, were

8 Those counties closest to the metropolitan and cultural centre of Toronto, (Oxford, Ontario and Northumberland) were highly developed, prosperous and densely settled by the 1850s. The more remote counties of Dundas and Essex, although settled early in the province’s history, appear to have been less advanced economically. Prescott and Grey in the east and the north were new counties, recently settled and poor. Using the Department of Education Annual Report for 1861, we also determined that the seven counties selected presented a balanced picture of teachers by gender. Only Prescott showed a majority of female teachers in that year. Dundas, Northumberland and Essex employed women as 25% to 49% of their teachers while Oxford, Ontario and Grey reported that less than a quarter of the teachers in their common schools were female. As a group then, the seven counties fairly represented both the diverse of feminization in the teaching occupation in the province at mid-century.

9 Norman H. Nie et. al. *SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975).

10 The distinction between “elementary” and “secondary” schooling and “higher” education was only in the process of being made in the 19th century. The terminology for designating the various levels

mainly common school teachers. The sample added up to a total of 1,798 individuals.

As has been reported in more detail elsewhere,¹¹ computer analysis of the data on these teachers yielded extremely interesting results. A basic theme, as we expect, was the steady growth in the number of women teaching in the seven counties. The total numbers grew from only forty-six in 1851 to five hundred and seventy-two in 1881, an increase of over ten-fold, while over the same period, the number of male teachers only doubled. But the manuscript census returns also revealed important differences between female and male teachers concurrent with the change towards an increasingly female teaching force. The women who were listed as teachers were, on the average, younger than the men and there was a trend to increasing youth for both sexes over time. Female teachers were more often Ontario-born and single, compared to the men, no doubt at least in part because of their relative youthfulness. The women's ages similarly influenced their household status. Few women were enumerated as household heads, while a minimum of 36 percent of male teachers maintained their own households in all four census decades. Women were increasingly found to be living at home with their parents while they were teaching school. While it is outside the scope of this paper to elaborate or to comment on the significance of these findings, it is apparent from even this brief sketch that there is more to sexual division of labour in rural teaching during this period than simply the shifting boundaries of gender. Male and female teachers also differed in other ways, ways that seem likely to have had considerable influence on their relative positions in the communities they served. The point we wish to emphasize here is that the details of these differences could only be detected through quantitative analysis, using manuscript census returns.

Despite their usefulness in providing individual data, however, the manuscript census records do pose several problems for the historian. We have already referred to the difficulty of pinpointing exactly what kind of teacher any given individual may have been. Because the census was decennial, furthermore, the returns provide only a snapshot every ten years with the result that annual fluctuations in the teaching force are invisible. Missing returns, in our case for Cobourg and parts of Essex County in 1851, affect the totals for individual counties, as does the fact of changing boundaries, a problem to which we will return. Another problem emerges from the altered categories of information sought by the enumerators over the years. Although "place of birth" can be identified in all four census years, "origin" is available only for 1871 and 1881.¹² Finally, when our

and kinds of schooling was also by no means uniform or fixed. Thus elementary teachers working in government supported schools in Ontario were generally referred to as teachers of common schools until the 1870s when they began to be called public school teachers. But other designations were also possible. In provinces east of Ontario the terms parish school teacher or primary teacher were more generally in use.

- 11 Marta Danylewycz, Beth Light and Alison Prentice, "The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching: A Nineteenth Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study", Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Los Angeles, 1981 and forthcoming in *Histoire sociale/Social History* (Spring, 1983).
- 12 The 1851 and 1861 schedules' column headed "origin" was used to record the individual's place of birth. For the 1871 and 1881 censuses, this information was actually recorded as place of birth. The new column "origin" in the latter years was used to identify the nationality of origin of the family, based normally on the male line.

samples of teachers in two of the countries are compared to the numbers of teachers in those countries according to the annual reports by the Ontario Department of Education, it becomes clear that census enumerators failed to record all of the individuals who were teaching in rural schools and were guilty, especially, of underenumerating mid-nineteenth century female teachers.

TABLE 1: DISCREPANCIES IN DATA, 1851 and 1861

	1851			1861		
	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	Total
NORTHUMBERLAND CO.						
Aggregate Census	68	9	77	106	26	132
Manuscript Census	45	14	59	104	26	130
Superintendent's Annual Reports	81	47	128	82	32	114
DUNDAS CO.						
Aggregate Census	11	8	19	15	10	25
Manuscript Census	26	8	34	41	16	57
Superintendent's Annual Reports	43	21	64	41	31	72

As Table 1 shows, the annual reports for Dundas and Northumberland Counties in 1851 and 1861 list more teachers altogether and, in particular, more female teachers, than appear in the manuscript census returns. Since there was no reason for either local school superintendents or the provincial government to inflate the number of teachers, the education records in this case are taken to be the more accurate.¹³

¹³ In cases where the census reports more teachers than are recorded in provincial departments of education reports, and these cases do occur, we would argue that the additional teachers were primarily private school teachers, or, especially in urban centres and later in the 19th century, individuals teaching beyond the common school level.

There are two probable explanations for the discrepancies between the two sets of records. First, in a great many rural places, women traditionally took schools only in the summertime and were replaced by male teachers in the winter. Since both the 1851 and the 1861 census enumerations took place in January, it is not surprising that a good many women who taught during the year were not enumerated as teachers. Indeed, the discrepancies between the two sources are concrete evidence that the pattern of a summer/winter division of labour by gender persisted in those years. Equally plausible is the explanation that census enumerators were more conscious of male than female employment, perhaps because even winter work as school teachers was judged to be only temporary, for young women whose real work was marriage and the care of their own future children. Probably both explanations have some validity. Whatever the causes of the underenumeration of teachers and especially of women teachers, it seems important to underline that the data from the manuscript census returns probably do not fully reflect the whole teaching force in any given county, at least in 1851 and 1861, the two years for which comparisons can be made.

Since the printed annual reports of the Department of Education were more accurate in terms of numbers, it seemed essential to consult the manuscript returns on which these reports were based. Those which have been preserved do not, unfortunately, cover the entire period in question, but we are nevertheless lucky that for Ontario there exists a large body of manuscript superintendents' annual reports for the years 1855 to 1870, inclusive.¹⁴ Unlike the census returns, these records presumably reveal almost all of the individuals who taught in the jurisdictions for which the superintendents were responsible (provided they were reasonably faithful in making their inspections) regardless of the season of the year or the gender of the teacher. They have the further advantage of having been produced on an annual rather than a decennial basis. Indeed, each year, the school superintendents of Ontario recorded on large blue sheets of paper a staggering amount of information on the schools that they inspected. Included among many other items (and separately identifiable for each school) were the names, religious affiliations, and salaries of the teachers employed in each inspectorial district, as well as the numbers of pupils enrolled, the numbers of days the schools were open, and whether or not blackboards, globes and maps, prizes or opening and closing prayers were in use.

It would be fascinating to examine these variables in relationship to one another. Were women teachers more or less likely than men to use blackboards, or other pedagogical innovations of the time? What relationships existed, if any, between teachers' gender and religious affiliation or the length of the school year or the use of prayers in school? To date, the project has only been able to examine the variable of gender by itself. The townships included in the study of superintendents' returns were Matilda Township in Dundas County, Harwich Township in Kent, Dereham

¹⁴ Annual Reports of Local Superintendents, Department of Education Records, RG2, F-3-B. Public Archives of Ontario.

in Oxford, Cramahe in Northumberland and Sydenham in Grey.¹⁵ Over the fifteen year period, we discovered, a total of 1260 teachers were employed in these five townships. Of the 1251 whose sex can be determined, 773 or 61.8 percent were men and 478 or 38.2 percent were women.

Two crucial facts emerge from this study that were not revealed in either the manuscript census returns or the printed aggregate Department of Education reports. The first is the very large number of men and women who were moving in and out of teaching over the fifteen year period. Each township employed an average of slightly more than 250 teachers altogether between 1855 and 1870 or approximately fifteen new teachers every year. This is a significant number when one realizes that few townships would have had many more than fifteen schools and that most of them employed only one teacher. Of equal interest is the second finding, namely the considerable fluctuations that occurred in the sex ratios of the teachers over these years. The manuscript superintendent's reports clearly show that, as women and men moved in and out of teaching, the ratios of male to female teachers were capable of changing quite significantly on an annual basis. These records thus challenge the impression given by the manuscript census returns, or even the printed aggregate department of education reports, of steady and regular change over time.

TABLE 2
SEX RATIO OF TEACHERS IN FIVE TOWNSHIPS, 1855-1870

Year	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	
No. Male	55	50	29	45	57	57	52	58	
%	72.4	55.6	59.2	65.2	66.3	74.0	68.4	66.7	
No. Fem.	21	40	20	24	29	20	24	29	
%	27.6	44.4	40.8	34.8	33.7	26.0	31.6	33.3	
Totals	76	90	49	69	86	77	76	87	
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Year	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	Total
No. Male	60	46	47	45	45	46	31	50	773
%	72.3	68.7	58.0	54.9	53.6	51.7	44.3	58.8	61.8
No. Fem.	23	21	34	37	39	43	39	35	478
%	27.7	31.3	42.0	45.1	46.4	48.3	55.7	41.2	38.2
Totals	83	67	81	82	84	89	70	85	1,251
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.00

From the Superintendents' Annual Reports, for Matilda, Harwich, Dereham, Cramahe and Sydenham Townships, 1855-1870. Public Archives of Ontario.

¹⁵ The townships were selected to be representative of the various regions of nineteenth century Ontario and, with the exception of Harwich, all of them are to be found in counties included in our seven county study. Harwich was selected because of the existence of interesting records at the school section and township government level, which we hope to consult.

Seeking further confirmation of the irregularity of local fluctuations and perhaps some explanation for them, we turned to the fourth source, the trustee minute books for two Oxford County school sections.¹⁶ Certainly trustee records from the mid-nineteenth century do provide the most concrete evidence we have of the checkered “careers” of teachers in many rural systems. If the minute books of School Section I in Northwest Oxford or School Section II in Norwich North are typical, rural teachers were indeed a transient lot. In these two school sections, male teachers seem to have been somewhat more career-oriented than the women who taught, but neither the men nor the women typically stayed very long at any one school, if indeed they stayed in teaching.

Take the minute book for Northwest Oxford, S.S. 1, which opens with an entry for the 1st of August, 1845, indicating that the trustees had elected David Curtis, Jr. to be the teacher that year at a salary for £48 per annum. Curtis lasted for an untypical five years. For the second half of 1846 he was temporarily replaced by Sarah Vining, but in May, 1850, he was replaced permanently. The school then went through an unsettled period, Mary Shepard, William John Mulvenny, Adam E. Ford, James Forest, Lucinda Piper, Henry Buckland, Eliza Barbar, James Morrison, once again a Miss Piper, then a Miss Durel and a Mr. Wilson, all following each other in quick succession between 1850 and 1859. In 1853 and again in 1857 the school went through three teachers in a single year. Hiring records for the school section are missing after 1859, but resume with the engagement of Margaret Frazer in 1867, the only female teacher in the school section for the next twelve years. Thereafter, S.S. No. 1 hired only men. Eight names are recorded altogether between 1868 and 1879, no teacher remaining longer than three years.

The preference for a male teacher in this school section during the decade after Confederation may be related to improvements undertaken in the mid-1860s, when both a new school house and a teacher’s residence appear to have been built. By the early 1870’s, the school’s trustees were advertising for teachers in the *Globe*, clear evidence that they were no longer willing to rely on the local community in their search for a suitable instructor. The maintenance of a teacher’s residence also suggests a determination to have a male “head of household” in charge of the school if possible.

The books for School Section No. 11, of the village of Norwich, in Norwich North, do not begin until 1863 but are equally informative. The section appears to have been a relatively prosperous one for it boasted a two story brick school house, although the upper room was still unfinished in 1863 and the school was being conducted on the monitorial system for want of an “assistant teacher”. The first teacher recorded in the minute book is R.J.W. Robinson, who stayed at the school until 1866, when he was replaced by James Stowell. By this time, the trustees had finished the upper class room and engaged Mrs. Ellen Tidey as “second teacher”. From 1866 on the minutes make the intentions of the trustees crystal clear. A male

16 Trustee minute books, S.S. 1 Northwest Oxford and S.S. 11 Norwich North, Local School Records, RG 51, 10816, No. 1 and RG 51, 10861, No. 2 respectively. PAO.

teacher was to be in charge of the school and a female teacher was to instruct the junior department, in the capacity of an assistant. In 1866 a Mr. and Mrs. Hall were hired. The Halls were followed in 1869 by a Dr. Sutherland, assisted first by a Miss Bell and then by a Miss Amelia Poldin. In 1871, Sutherland and Poldin were replaced by another married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Ryerson. When the Ryersons gave notice the same year, they in turn were replaced by Mr. J.H. Farrington and Miss Poldin, who was reinstalled as second teacher. Thus it continued until a few years later when the school expanded to three teachers.

Two basic impressions emerge from the confusion of the years between the 1840s and the 1870s in these Oxford County school sections. The first is that in a small school hiring only one teacher, it was quite possible for trustees to waver back and forth between male and female teachers over a ten year period. It was equally possible that they would settle down and hire only one sex for the same length of time. At the same time, if Norwich village school is typical, as soon as the school section required two teachers, the assumption seems to have been that the first teacher would be a man. Second and third teachers were expected to be women. Only when the greatest difficulties were encountered in finding assistant teachers in 1879, did S.S. II consider the possibility of advertising for a "2nd class teacher male or female".

The trustee minute books provide us with the finest lens of all for looking at rural decision making in the selection of teachers. They confirm the importance of local records and of series which are available for consecutive years in studying the history of an occupation.

To sum up, each of the records examined revealed something slightly different about the sexual division of labour in teaching in nineteenth century Ontario. In the case of the manuscript census and the annual reports of the Department of Education, discrepancies between the two sets of records were themselves instructive. They suggested different attitudes towards the enumeration of male and female employment in teaching, as well as continuing seasonal differentiation between women and men in the occupation, with the former teaching more often in the summer than in the winter when the censuses of 1851 and 1861 were taken. When more detailed local school records were consulted, what looked like steady change in all of the aggregated records stood revealed as fluctuating and idiosyncratic.

II

If we turn from the microcosm to the macrocosm, problems with the records increase in complexity. Because of this, studies or comparisons of the changing composition of teaching forces over relatively long periods of time, at either the county or provincial levels, seem at first glance to verge on the impossible. The only immediately apparent advantage of the larger regional study is that it need not be confined by an end date of 1881, since the manuscript census is not involved.

Looking first at the aggregate census, we discover that information on teachers is limited as, in many cases, is the period of time over which statistics on teachers were recorded in this source. Only in Ontario and Quebec, for example, were teachers distinguished in the occupational classifications for all five census years from 1851 to 1891. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick teachers were identified only

in 1871, 81 and 91; information on teachers was included only for the latter two census years in the remaining provinces studied.¹⁷ In all cases, only two variables relating to teachers were recorded: numbers provincially, as well as numbers in each census district (except in 1891); and the numbers of male and female teachers (except in 1871). But perhaps the major problem in using the aggregate census for a study of teachers is the failure of this document to distinguish one type of teacher from another. In 1871, a "professor" category was introduced. Otherwise, no distinctions were made, rendering impossible any differentiation of private and public school teachers, religious or lay teachers, or instructors of elementary as opposed to other kinds of schools.

In contrast to the aggregate census, the published reports of the departments of education of the various provinces contain statistics on many variables relating to teachers. The data are confined to the teachers of government or state supported educational institutions on the whole. They are available for most of the second half of the nineteenth century for Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and for the last three decades of the century for Manitoba and British Columbia.¹⁸ Yet, valuable as these records are, the inconsistencies in the data and the varying methods that were used in their collection and presentation create great difficulties in tracing over any length of time, the history of teachers within the provinces, let alone comparing their histories from one province to another.

Even more than is the case with the census, the information collected by departments of education tended to change over time, with problematic results for every set of provincial records. The changes were no doubt connected with the development of the occupation and are thus not without interest in themselves. Shifts over time in the categories of teaching certificates, for example, are evidence of efforts to improve standards in the profession or at least to refine certification by increasing the number and complexity of the certificates, and also evidence of the increasing tendency towards hierarchy in the occupation.

Whatever their value in this respect, however, variations in the types of statistics that were reported and published remain obstacles to statistical studies ranging over the period under study. In most cases, only a few variables were recorded at first, their number increasingly only gradually, as education departments centralized and record keeping procedures became more established. For example, in Prince Edward Island from the 1840s to the early 1860s, the name of the teacher, the location of the school and type of school were all that were noted. Moreover,

17 *Census of Canada*. 1851-52, Vol. I, App. No. 7 and 8. 1860-61, Vol. I, App. No. 7 and 8. 1870-71, Vol. II, Table No. XIII. 1880-81, Vol. 2, Table No. XIV. 1890-91, Vol. II, Table XII.

18 Specifically, statistics on teachers can be found in the annual reports of the departments of education beginning in 1871-72 for British Columbia, in 1852 for New Brunswick, in 1850 for Nova Scotia, in 1850 for Ontario, in 1843 for Prince Edward Island and in 1853 for Quebec. The beginning date of the Manitoba records is obscure. Although the Protestant schools superintendent's report was contained as a *Sessional Paper* of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly in 1871, the report of the Catholic School superintendent was not included and we were unable to discover when the Catholic School superintendent began reporting on teachers.

complete returns for each of three counties during this period are not available, chiefly because the schools were not all visited every year by the county school inspectors.¹⁹

All too frequently the data reported in the provincial annual reports seem to reflect the fleeting interests of provincial authorities. In British Columbia "nationality" was included as a variable in the early reports on teachers, but disappeared after 1877-78. Marital status was recorded in New Brunswick, but only from 1864 to 1872, while the numbers of teachers in that province who were living in the homes of others as boarders were identified only for the years between 1867 and 1872.

The non-uniformity of the data within any given set of provincial records was further complicated by changing approaches to collecting or presenting the information. In New Brunswick the statistics on parish school teachers were collected and compiled annually until 1858, at which time the data were gathered and presented separately for two terms, summer and winter. Averaging the figures on teacher for the two terms provides only a rough picture of any given year, because the turnover of teachers from one term to another was significant.²⁰

Further problems occur when intra-provincial comparisons are attempted. In Ontario, information on common school teachers was consistently given at the level of individual villages, towns, cities and counties (in the latter case, not including their urban centres) only until 1864, after which the figures were generally presented as totals for all villages, towns, cities and counties considered collectively.²¹ Though rural/urban differences can still be examined, comparative change at the county level cannot be documented after 1864. In Quebec, most of the data on teachers were presented at the inspectorial district level until 1890-91. But the districts were quite distinct from other political jurisdictions and it is unclear to what extent their boundaries could be accurately traced. Their number increased furthermore from 24 in 1853 to 37 by 1889-90, as the settled territory grew; few if any were territorially constant over the period.

The Quebec information on teachers is also problematic because of the way in which the statistics were tabulated. Since the most detailed of the Quebec tables included all types of educational institutions, it is only reasonable to assume that the teachers listed in those tables also taught in every type of institution. It is therefore impossible to focus on the elementary teachers of the province or to do a precise study comparing the elementary teachers of other provinces with those of Quebec over the whole period in question, 1851 to 1891. Only between 1855 and 1882 were

19 It appears that the record collecting procedures were not centralized under a chief superintendent of schools for Prince Edward Island until the mid 1870's.

20 For example, in 1871, in New Brunswick, there were 909 parish school teachers in the term ending March 31st, including 402 males and 507 females. There were 932 parish school teachers in the term ending September 30, 365 males and 567 females (New Brunswick. Department of Education. *Annual Report*. 1871. Appendix. Table A, Part I, p. x. Table B, Part I, p. xxx.)

21 There were some exceptions even after 1864. For example, in 1891, statistics for individual counties including villages were given but no information was presented for individual towns and cities. (Ontario. Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1892. App. III, Table C, pp. 16-19).

additional charts reproduced in the Quebec reports that dealt specifically with teachers in the "primary division" of education. These however, provided no variables other than total numbers of teachers for the province.

By the 1880s, the Quebec Department of Education reports included new kinds of data on primary school teachers. For two years, in 1884-85 and 1885-86, the number of teachers in each county in Quebec was noted and from 1886-87 to 1889-90, the inspectors' reports contained statistics on male and female teachers which were distinguished by type of school. Thus the sex, certification and salaries of teachers in the elementary and model schools in the province could be determined for those years. Unfortunately, in 1890-91 the way in which the information was presented changed again and teachers without diplomas were no longer distinguished in terms of type of school.

Figure 1 summarizes the major statistics on elementary public²² school teachers which can be found in the annual reports of departments of education for all of the provinces, for the years 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891. As the chart suggests, the records of the Department of Education for Ontario contain the greatest range of data on common school teachers for the greatest length of time, at the provincial level. But for intra-provincial comparison, the statistics are scanty. There is much information on the parish school teachers of Nova Scotia at both the provincial and county levels and a considerable amount for New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, although the records do not appear to be as complete in all years for these provinces as for Nova Scotia. There is a great variety of statistics on the common school teachers of British Columbia beginning in 1871-72 when the reports first started. On the other hand, complete reports for all Manitoba schools are not available until 1891. In both of the latter provinces, the small numbers involved when it came to teachers raise questions about the significance of the statistics. The relative lack of information about the primary teachers of Quebec in the provincial reports is also clear from this chart.

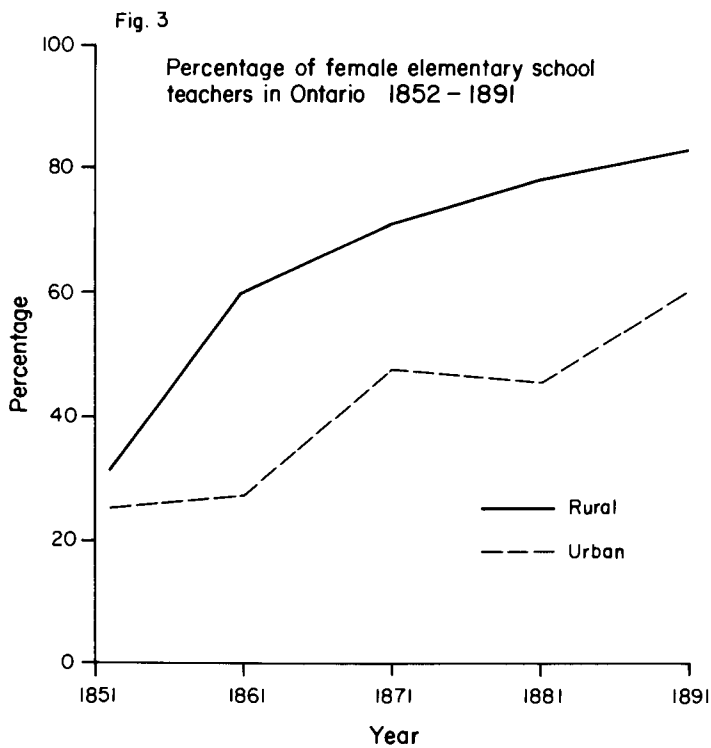
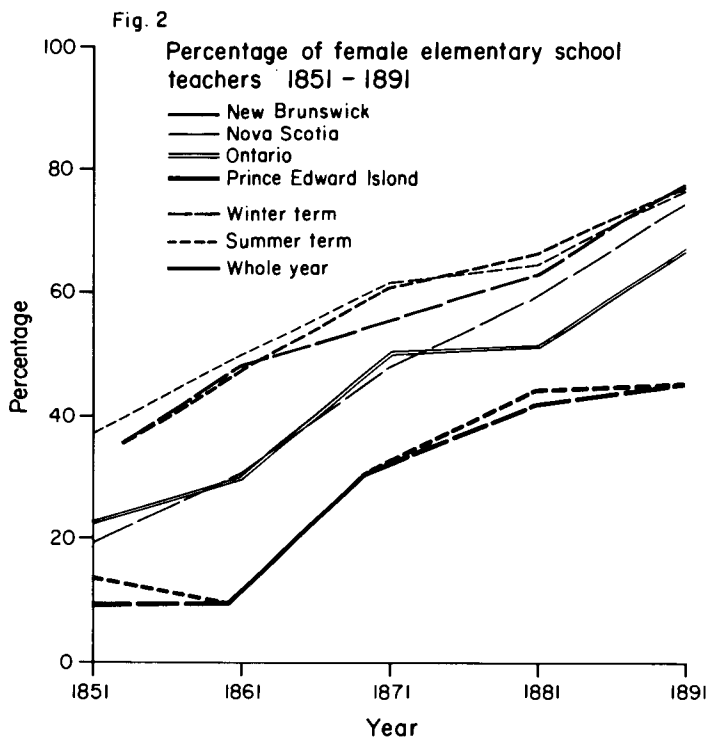
Of all variables other than number, the gender of school teachers was most often distinguished in the department of education reports, a fact of considerable significance in itself. Certification and salaries were also frequently recorded, especially in later years. However, comparative analysis of even these variables among the provinces is restricted. The seasonal nature of data collection in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island makes it possible to compare these provinces, but between the Maritimes and other provinces in which data were collected annually, comparisons are problematic because of the significant turnover of teachers each term.

In sum, longitudinal or comparative studies of teachers using provincial department of education reports present many problems. Still, some possibilities do exist for instructive analysis. The graph in Figure 2, for example, raises questions

22 Like the distinctions of level of schooling, the distinction between public and private was still blurred in the nineteenth century, and in some provinces was possibly more meaningful than in others. We use the term "public" to designate schools receiving financial aid from government and under government jurisdiction. In Quebec such schools were described as "sous contrôle".

FIGURE 1:
 INFORMATION ON COMMON SCHOOL TEACHERS CONTAINED IN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REPORTS

Year	Number	Sex	Religion	Marital Status	Total or Average Salary	Period of Service	Certification
1851	N.S. s,p,c Ont. p,c	N.S.s,p,c Ont. p,c	Ont. p,c		N.S. s,p,c Ont. p,c,m,f		Ont. p,c Ont. p,c
1861	N.B. s,p,c N.S. s,p,c Ont. p,c P.E.I. p,c Que. p	N.B. s,p,c N.S. s,p,c Ont. p,c P.E.I. p,c	N.B. s,p,c Ont. p,c	P.E.I. f	N.B. s,p,c N.S. p Ont. p,c,m,f		N.B. s,p,c,m,f Ont. p,c,m,f
1871	B.C. p,c N.B. s,p,c N.S. s,p,c Ont. p P.E.I. p Que. p	B.C. p,c N.B. s,p,c N.S. s,p,c Ont. p	N.B. s,p,c Ont. p	N.B. s,p,c,m,f	B.C. p,c,m,f N.B. s,p,c N.S. s,p,c Ont. p,m,f	B.C. p,c,m,f	B.C. p,c,m,f N.B. s,p,c,m,f N.S. s,p,c,m,f Ont. p
1881	B.C. p,c N.B. s,p,c N.S. s,p,c Ont. p P.E.I. s,p,c Que. p	B.C. p,c N.B. s,p,c N.S. s,p,c Ont. p P.E.I. s,p,c		B.C. f	B.C. p,c,m,f N.S. s,p,c,m,f Ont. p,m,f	B.C. p,c,m,f	B.C. p,c,m,f N.B. s,p,c,m,f N.S. s,p,c,m,f Ont. p P.E.I. s,p,c,m,f
1891	B.C. p,c Man. p N.B. s,p,c N.S. s,p,c Ont. p P.E.I. s,p,c	B.C. p,c Man. p N.B. s,p,c N.S. s,p,c Ont. p P.E.I. s,p,c		B.C. f	B.C. p,c,m,f Man. p N.B. s,p,c,m,f N.S. s,p,c,m,f Ont. p	B.C. p,c,m,f	B.C. p,c,m,f Man. p N.B. s,p,c,m,f N.S. s,p,c,m,f P.E.I. s,p,c,m,f



about varying rates at which the four provinces depicted moved towards elementary teaching forces that were predominantly female and illustrates the impact of the seasons on percentages of women teachers. Urban/rural comparisons can be made in the rates of change in Ontario, as shown in Figure 3. Finally, for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, it is possible to map the changing sexual division of labour in teaching at the county level, in winter or in summer, after 1858.

As might be expected, it is when we return from the macrocosm to the microcosm, from the larger comparisons to the smaller regional ones illustrated by the maps, that the most interesting new questions are raised. Why did Inverness County show one pattern and Shelburne County another? What do we know about these regions that would explain the hiring of women rather than men, or vice versa, during the period between 1851 and 1891? We would argue that it is in the more local regional studies, using records such as trustee or superintendent's manuscript records, or the manuscript census, most profitably in conjunction with information on local economies and with literary sources, that these questions are most likely to be answered.

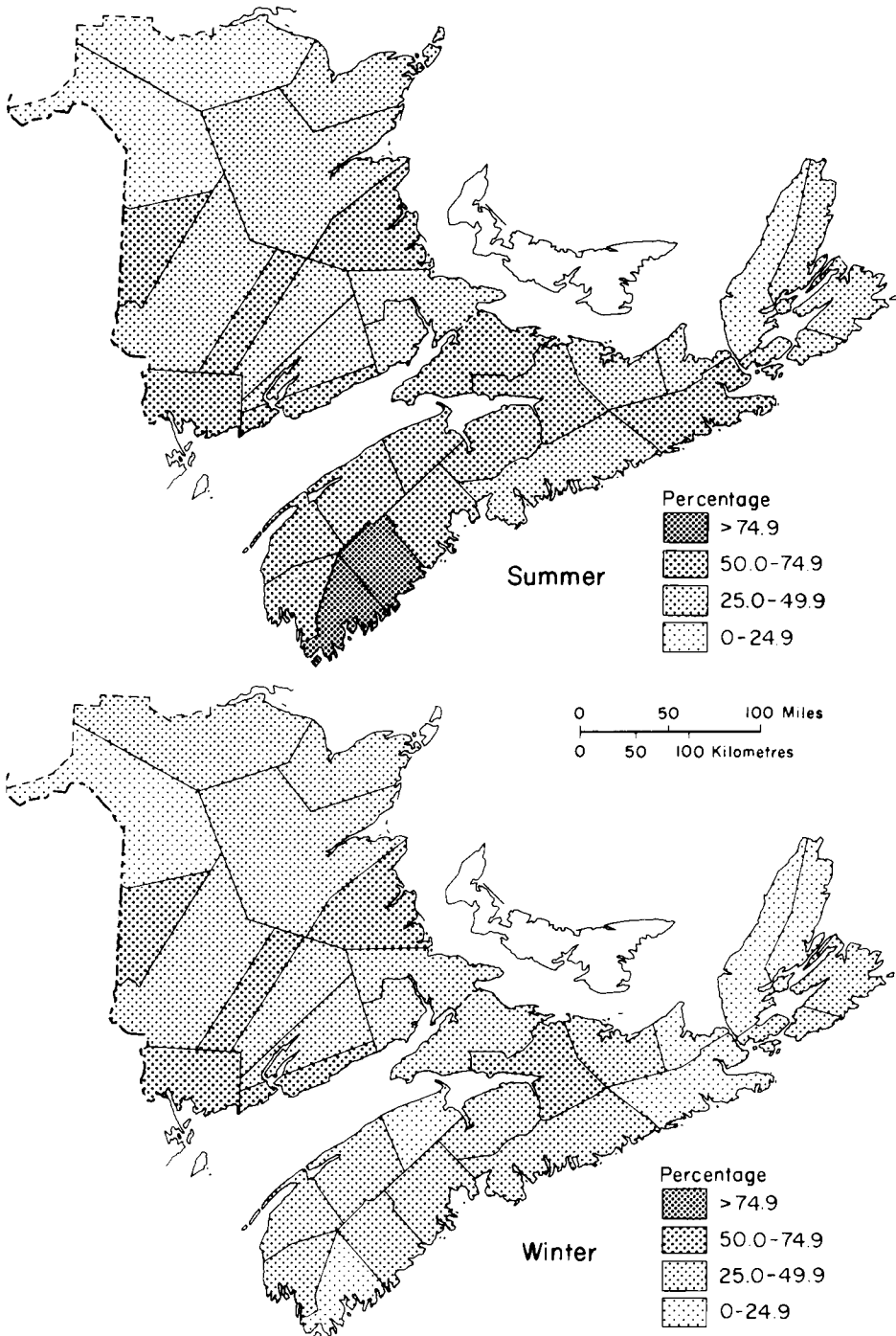


Fig.4. Percentage of female elementary school teachers in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, by county and by season, 1861

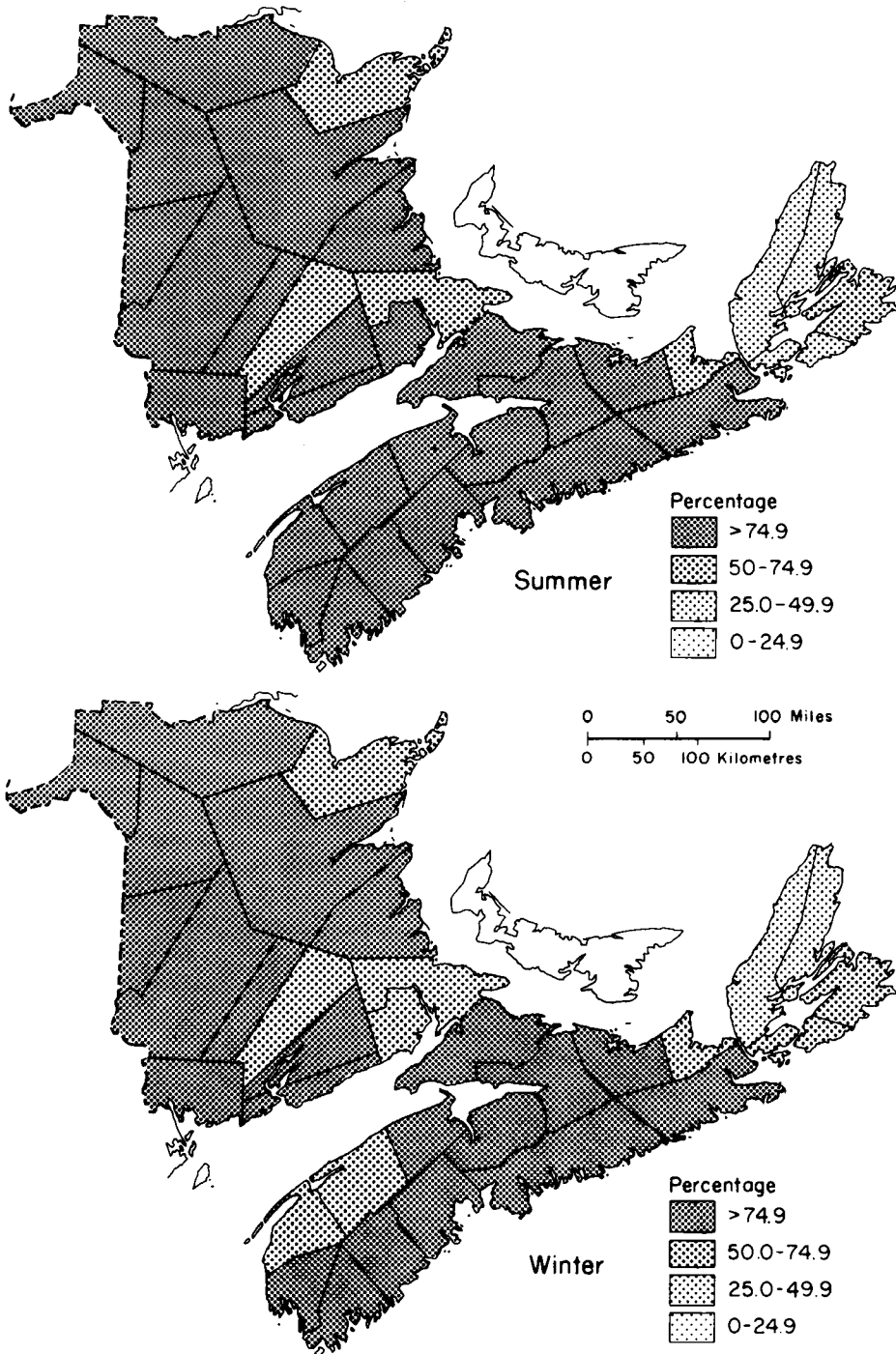


Fig. 5. Percentage of female elementary school teachers in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, by county and by season, 1891