

# A Culture in Continuity: Master-Man Mutualism in Hamilton, Ontario, during Early Industrialization

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*By the early 1870s, the men who owned industry in Hamilton, Ontario, were almost all former craft workers themselves. While the city's industrialization was significant and diverse, these artisan-entrepreneurs maintained in their workplaces such central craft practices as the progression from apprentice to journeyman to master, a fundamental core of craft culture. Work routines had been partially modified by industrialization, but masters and men retained a mutual identification as craft workers. The fact that the artisan-entrepreneur came from the same ranks as those he employed affected the social relations of production in the workplace and community. Various aspects of artisan culture that pre-dated industrialization persisted to foster a social closeness between master and man in Hamilton's early period of industrialization.*

*Au début des années 1870, les hommes à qui l'industrie de Hamilton, en Ontario, appartenait étaient eux-mêmes presque tous d'anciens artisans. Si l'industrialisation y était vigoureuse et diversifiée, ces artisans-entrepreneurs perpétuaient tout de même dans leurs milieux de travail des pratiques fondamentales de leur métier telles que la progression d'apprenti à compagnon à maître, un pilier de la culture artisanale. L'industrialisation avait partiellement modifié les routines professionnelles, mais les maîtres et les ouvriers continuaient à s'identifier mutuellement comme des artisans. Le fait que l'artisan-entrepreneur soit issu des mêmes rangs que ses employés avait une influence sur les relations sociales de la production au sein du milieu de travail et de la communauté. Divers aspects de la culture artisanale antérieurs à l'industrialisation ont persisté, favorisant la proximité sociale entre le maître et l'ouvrier au début de la période d'industrialisation de Hamilton.*

HISTORIES of vibrant, colourful, and multidimensional workers are most often set in contrast to a static and uniformly oppositional group of employers — the ubiquitous capitalist class. During early industrialization in Hamilton,

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Ontario, however, aspects of pre-existing crafts-work culture influenced social relations between crafts workers and their bosses. By the early 1870s the men who owned industry were, almost wholly, former crafts workers themselves. They achieved a significant degree of industrialization, but maintained an almost pervasive pre-capitalist mode of production. The work environment of Hamilton crafts workers may have been significantly modified, but it had not been fundamentally transformed. While the city's industrialization was significant and diverse, these artisan-entrepreneurs maintained in their workplaces such central craft practices as the progression from apprentice to journeyman to master, a fundamental core of craft culture. Work routines had been partially modified by the early 1870s, but masters and men retained a mutual identification as crafts workers. The fact that the artisan-entrepreneurs came from the same ranks as those they employed affected the social relations of production in those workplaces and communities.<sup>1</sup> Various other aspects of pre-existing crafts-work culture that also fostered a social closeness between master and man were maintained atop this structural arrangement.

The story of the breadth and depth of Hamilton's industrialization has been oft told, and only its general contours warrant repeating here. While the city early acquired a reputation as a regional metal centre, the roots of a diversified manufacturing sector had been laid by the early 1850s.<sup>2</sup> The opening of the Great Western Railway in 1854 provided a powerful boost to industrial development, both from direct stimulus and through the numerous linkages it occasioned in opening new markets and providing cheaper access to primary production goods. An economic depression, fuelled in part by railway speculation, kicked the feet out from under much of this new industrial activity in the late 1850s, but, when the ashes of this economic distress began to settle by about 1860, it was evident that the city's industrialization had not been thwarted.

By 1871 Hamilton's flourishing industrial sector had achieved a considerable size and diversity. In the secondary metals sector — the traditional core of industry — producers of such items as furnaces, stoves, heaters, agricultural implements, custom castings, tinware, and sheet iron products had grown in size and output and were joined by many newcomers. This sector had also undergone significant internal diversification with the addition of

1 Robert Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism: Craftworkers and Industrialization in Hamilton, Ontario, 1840–1872* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

2 For a detailed account of the city's early industrial development, see *ibid.*, chap. 2. Other accounts include John C. Weaver, *Hamilton: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1982), chap. 2–3, and “The Location of Manufacturing Enterprises: The Case of Hamilton's Attraction of Foundries, 1830–1890”, in Richard Jarrell and Arnold E. Roos, eds., *Critical Issues in the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine* (Thornhill, ON: HSTC, 1983), pp. 197–217; Bryan D. Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860–1914* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), chap. 1.

railway car and locomotive shops, a rolling mill, and producers of boilers, scales, wire, and, most importantly, sewing machines. However, significant value-added contributions were also made by other sectors including the clothing industry, wood and paper products, construction and primary products. This was the year Hamilton named itself the “Birmingham of Canada”.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, by 1871 all this economic activity had enabled Hamilton to emerge as a major industrial centre both provincially and nationally.<sup>4</sup> The fortunes of industry turned just two years later as Hamilton joined the rest of the fledgling dominion in an economic depression that lasted the remainder of the decade.

During the generally buoyant years of industrial growth between 1860 and 1873, a remarkable degree of craft continuity — of the residual culture — existed between master and man in Hamilton shops. Here, I outline important continuities in the communal masculine work experience of master and men — both on the shop floor and as it was celebrated by them off the job — and examine residential location to show that masters were also still very much an organic part of the working communities that took shape around their plants.

Studies that examine the work culture common to master and man have yet to find a place in the historiography. From the 1970s the “new” labour history has been largely built on the presupposition of conflict between these two groups. Early studies, in particular, sought to locate the potential of workers — especially nineteenth-century crafts and skilled workers — to use the culture of their workplace and community to confront and resist the capitalist society that was forming around them. The potential for realization of class-consciousness guided much of this research.<sup>5</sup> It is not surprising that aspects of a politically motivated research agenda that threatened to degenerate into a search for the country’s first class-conscious worker soon came under criticism, first by practitioners of the so-called “old” labour history.<sup>6</sup> Soon, from

3 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 13, 1871.

4 Census data show that by 1871 the city had become the nation’s fifth largest industrial centre among cities with over 5,000 population in terms of capital invested, number of employees, total yearly wages, raw material value, and total product value. More importantly for a consideration of social experience, Hamilton led the nation — surpassing even Montreal — in the percentage of its total population engaged in industrial pursuits. See Kristofferson, “Craft Capitalism: Craftworkers, Industrialization and Class Formation in Hamilton, Ontario, 1840–1872” (PhD thesis, York University, 2003), pp. 60–61, and especially Table 2.4, for these detailed calculations. Data provided by Bloomfield and Bloomfield’s study of the 1871 Census show the following percentages of total population engaged in industry among Canadian cities with over 10,000 population in 1871: Hamilton (21.6%), Montreal (20.7%), Toronto (18.9%), Ottawa (14.6%), London (14.6%), and Saint John (14.2%). See Elizabeth Bloomfield and G. T. Bloomfield, “Patterns of Canadian Industry in 1871: An Overview Based on the First Census of Canada” (Research Report No. 12, Department of Geography, University of Guelph, 1990), p. 55.

5 In addition to a number of article-length studies, the two standard accounts of working-class culture are Gregory S. Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867–1892* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), and Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict*.

6 See especially David Bercuson, “Through the Looking Glass of Culture: An Essay on the New Labour History and Working Class Culture in Recent Canadian Historical Writing”, *Labour/ Le Travailleur*, vol. 7 (Spring 1981), pp. 94–112; Kenneth McNaught, “E. P. Thompson vs. Harold Logan: Writing about Labour and the Left in the 1970s”, *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 62, no. 2 (1981), pp. 141–168.

the ranks of the new labour history itself, a gentler, more trenchant critique arose that questioned the “class-for-itself” nature of the workplace culture of the nineteenth-century craftsman.<sup>7</sup> These studies suggested that at the very least crafts workers might not have carried around with them an inherent propensity towards socialist action.<sup>8</sup>

Common to both schools of the new labour history, however, was the image of the dispossessed crafts worker, despoiled of the means of production and cast into the contradictions of life-time wage-earning, whether he realized it or not. In whatever guise, these accounts generally portrayed crafts-worker culture as something jarringly transformed from some kind of golden age of small-scale artisanal production, when mutualism and tradition nurtured a craft harmony, to the capitalist exploitation and industrial degradation of the large modern workplace.<sup>9</sup> The conflict between master and man, rooted in the so-called “bastardization of craft”,<sup>10</sup> has become the received view of the work culture that existed for crafts workers of the mid-to-late nineteenth century in Canada and elsewhere.

In contrast, this study explores the pre-capitalist cultural ties between master and man (not just those between journeymen) that helped them negotiate their respective entries into the industrial age.<sup>11</sup> It gives attention to the

7 See, in particular, Craig Heron, “The Crisis of the Craftsman: Hamilton Metal Workers in the Early Twentieth Century”, *Labour/ Le Travailleur*, vol. 6 (Autumn 1980), pp. 7–48; Ian McKay, “Capital and Labour in the Halifax Baking and Confectionery Industry during the Last Half of the 19th Century”, *Labour/ Le Travailleur*, vol. 3 (1978), and “None But Skilled Workmen”, reprinted in Laurel Sefton MacDowell and Ian Radforth, eds., *Canadian Working Class History: Selected Readings* (Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press, 1991), pp. 135–158.

8 This debate also occurred south of the border, where the distinction of “consciousness-achieved” or “consciousness-denied” has dominated much of the debate among historians of nineteenth-century artisanal culture in the early republican United States. The “consciousness-achieved” advocates include Paul Faler, *Mechanics and Manufacturers in the Early Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, 1780–1860* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). Advocates of the “consciousness-denied” school include Susan E. Hirsch, *Roots of the American Working Class: The Industrialization of Crafts in Newark, 1800–1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978); Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800–1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980).

9 Gary Kornblith refers to this general rubric as the “declension model”. See his “The Artisanal Response to Capitalist Transformation”, *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 10 (Fall 1990), p. 316.

10 Sean Wilentz popularized this term. See his *Chants Democratic*, p. 108

11 There are modest exceptions to this, but none that ultimately escapes the dispossession model. See, for example, David Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-employment and Social Mobility in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994); Paul Craven and Tom Traves, “Dimensions of Paternalism: Discipline and Culture in Canadian Railway Operations in the 1850s”, in Craig Heron and Robert Storey, eds., *On the Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1986), pp. 47–74; Paul Craven, “Labour and Management on the Great Western Railway”, in Craven, ed., *Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 341–374; Craig Heron, “Factory Workers”, in Craven, ed., *Labouring Lives*, pp. 479–594. For a twentieth-century treatment, see Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), part 2.

broader character of workplace culture, not just the culture nineteenth-century craftsmen may or may not have shared with other wage-earners. It focuses on what shop-floor relations meant to crafts workers and masters at the time, not to historians a century or so later. Such a research direction should not attempt to compare a craft's deviation over time from some "golden age" of handicraft production rooted (one assumes) in the middle ages. Virtually all crafts changed in innumerable ways at many different times. Even from the late eighteenth century, crafts in Canada rarely adhered to European guild standards.<sup>12</sup> Some crafts were obliterated by the new technologies of the industrial revolution; others simply absorbed those new technologies by modifying craft routines and weathered the storm. In some cases industrial technology called into existence whole new groups of crafts workers who adapted traditions based on the workplace customs of established crafts.<sup>13</sup> In all, historians should entertain the possibility that craft work routines could have been significantly modified without a fundamental transformation of craft culture.

### **Cultural Expressions of Master-Man Mutuality**

In 1871 about 95 per cent of industrial proprietors in the city were former crafts workers intimately familiar with work cultures and craft traditions of their shop floors. Like masters of smaller, more traditional shops, even owners of large industrial concerns maintained workplaces in which the traditional crafts worker's road to independence — the progression from apprentice to journeyman to master — was preserved. It remained common for local journeymen to become their own masters. They were often mentored in that endeavour by local artisan-industrial proprietors, who frequently took them into partnership or helped them set up in business. Larger employers dealt with problems of scale by appointing their most experienced journeymen to numerous new foreman or superintendent positions, thereby expanding pre-existing patterns of craft mobility. As a new rung on an old ladder, these situations also frequently led to partnership in the enterprise or later self-employment. These practices remained ensconced in workplaces where traditional craft work routines, while revised, had not yet been fundamentally transformed. The acquisition and practice of craft skill thus remained a central feature of the shopfloor experience of those employed.<sup>14</sup> Contrary to the view that masters had abandoned a common identity with their workers by this stage of industrialization, the evidence suggests that they remained connected to the work cultures on the shop floor and beyond.

12 Peter Moogk, "In the Darkness of a Basement", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 58 (1976); Joanne Burgess, "Work, Family and Community: Montreal Leather Craftsmen, 1790–1831" (PhD thesis, Université du Québec, 1986), p. 132.

13 Heron, "Factory Workers", pp. 507–509.

14 See Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism*, pp. 90–108, 174–217.

***Sharing the Shop Floor***

The city's masters were not just well versed in the skills demanded by their operations; they often still practised them side by side with their workers. The presence of the master on the shop floor, practising the skills he either shared with or was presently imparting to his workers (both directly and through his foremen), could have encouraged the city's younger crafts workers to believe that some similar form of independence and security might be realized from their commitment to craft. Masters' intimate connections to the shop floor well into their mature business lives helped perpetuate a work mutualism between master and man that was characterized more by continuity than by change.

By the early 1870s, the continued presence of masters practising their skills alongside their workers was most visible in small shops, by then still representing the majority of industrial establishments in the city. Even in larger establishments, however, masters remained a common sight on many shop floors throughout the 1860s and 1870s and even beyond. Henry G. Cooper, proprietor of by far the largest carriage works in the city into the 1870s, had worked as apprentice, journeyman, and foreman for carriage-maker James M. Williams before acquiring control of the operation in the late 1850s. By 1871 Cooper's oldest son William worked in the shop as a carriage-maker along with his younger brother Henry, then an apprentice blacksmith. Over the next decade the two sons assumed control of the concern. Following in the footsteps of their father, the firm's new proprietors happily styled themselves as "energetic, practical and enterprising" young men with a "thorough knowledge of the details of the business, and fully alive to the most recent improvements in carriagemaking".<sup>15</sup> Such an example of family succession would have signalled limited opportunity within that enterprise to other journeymen. In such cases, however, opportunity still often beckoned from outside the walls of the plant. Two of Cooper's employees, foreman carriage-trimmer Richard Morgan and carriage blacksmith John Malloy, went on to found the Dominion Carriage Factory a block north of their former master's plant in 1870. They were joined in business in 1875 by journeyman carriage-maker James Malcolm. Morgan appears to have left the partnership sometime in the mid-1880s. Malloy and Malcolm bought the Coopers' Hamilton Coach Company when it was put up for sale around 1895.<sup>16</sup> In all, there is little evidence that opportunity had been narrowed by exclusive family connections by the early 1870s. Across all industrial sectors, journeymen continued to toil in workplaces where practices of recruitment were still com-

15 *Times* [Hamilton], Decmeber 8, 1863; "Williams, James Miller", *Dictionary of Hamilton Biography* [hereafter *DHB*] (Hamilton: Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, 1981), vol. 1, pp. 211–212; 1871 Census Index; *Industries of Canada: Historical and Commercial Sketches*, Hamilton (Toronto: M. G. Bixby and Company, 1886), p. 76.

16 Hamilton, *City Directory*, 1869–1895; *Industries of Canada*, p. 76; *Hamilton Spectator*, June 15, 1875.

mon between non-relatives.<sup>17</sup> Sons following their fathers into proprietorship, of course, was itself traditional to the crafts.

The assumption of the title of mechanical superintendent by sole owners or partners in a number of Hamilton shops also spoke of their continued application of practical skills to the day-to-day operations of their plants. The three brother-proprietors of the L. D. Sawyer shop and the various junior partners associated with them over the years each headed up a mechanical department within their works.<sup>18</sup> Charles Meakins and his sons, “all practical workmen”, were a common sight on the shop floor of their brush factory in the early 1870s, with all the work at that plant still “wholly under the supervision of members of the firm”.<sup>19</sup> John Tarbox’s involvement as junior partner and mechanical superintendent of the large R. M. Wanzer Sewing Machine Company also appears to have required the daily application of his machinist training to that concern’s production.<sup>20</sup> An 1884 profile of stove, tinware, and refrigerator manufactory Mathew Howles reveals his active hand in that enterprise around 1870.<sup>21</sup>

Press reports and company promotional literature often adopted similar advertising tones when touting proprietors as taking a “practical hand” or “personal involvement” in their enterprises — and for good reason. As boosterist publications that often sought advertising revenue from the firms they profiled, they tried to assure potential customers of product quality by plugging proprietors as “mechanics of the first order” who exercised a “personal management and supervision” of production. The link between these claims and actual practice must have become more tenuous at some later point, but such evidence from the 1860s and early 1870s allows a revealing glimpse of masters moving in the same space on the shop floor, practising the mysteries of their craft and even wearing similar clothes as employees. One 1865 *Times* report declared that the “great success” of Atlas Engine and Boiler Works was “doubtless attributable” to the proprietors’ “personal supervision of their business”. In a detailed department-by-department walk through the works, the same reporter related seeing F. G. Beckett, the firm’s principal proprietor, along with his father and younger brothers, “mingling in the busy throng with upturned sleeves”.<sup>22</sup> Foundrymen William Burrow, Charles Stewart, and John Milne reportedly remained “personal supervisors of their business” even after accommodating the rapidly increasing demand for the products of

17 See Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism*, chap. 2–3, for extensive documentation of continued practices of mobility in large enterprise through the early 1870s.

18 Hamilton Public Library [hereafter HPL], Micro #121, Richard Butler, *Saturday Musings*, n.d., n.p.

19 *Times*, July 11, 1871; HPL, Logie-McQuesten Papers, Bond, Luther Sawyer to Calvin McQuesten, September 23, 1853, pp. 523–530.

20 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 2, 1872.

21 E. P. Morgan and F. L. Harvey, *Hamilton and its Industries* (Hamilton: Spectator Printing Company, 1884), p. 57.

22 *Times*, June 27, 1865.

their Hamilton Malleable Iron Works by erecting a large new plant in 1871. Milne, who would go on to play a major part in the consolidation of the local iron and steel industry in coming decades, served as foreman-moulder in the old works and had become a junior partner only a few months previously. Burrow and Stewart had worked as journeymen moulders in James Stewart's McNab Street Foundry as recently as the mid-1860s when they opened their own small shop and performed much of the work themselves.<sup>23</sup> Particularly telling is Alexander Somerville's description of his visit to Allan Easson's broom factory in 1868. As Somerville entered the shop, he observed Easson labouring away at the bench alongside the firm's other workers, all wearing "short aprons of leather, and secure a very lively fraternity when at work".<sup>24</sup>

The continued presence of masters on the shop floors of many Hamilton workplaces by the early 1870s helped maintain an atmosphere of immediacy sufficient to perpetuate pre-existing forms of craft mutualism between masters and journeymen. This was especially true of the city's many small industrial establishments, but it also appears that even in large workplaces many masters had not yet donned the white collar and attached themselves to more "genteel" cultures that shunned the dirt, din, and practice of the shop floor. The masters roaming the floors of the city's larger workplaces had undoubtedly begun to function more as overseers than traditional master-workmates to their men, but they remained well ensconced in pre-existing social networks of the shop floor. Their growing success may have modified their relations with their men, but their continued enlightenment in the mysteries of the craft helped keep that relationship from any fundamental transformation.

### ***Celebrating Mutualism: Picnics, Excursions, Testimonials, and Parades***

The best evidence of how workers and bosses related to each other in this context may be provided by accounts of how they reflected on the dimensions of this work culture after the workday was over. The participation of master and man alike in a common craft world can be gleaned by examining how work mutualism was talked about, understood, and even celebrated off the job. The continued integrity of the craft world was reflected in social situations ranging from picnics and excursions to testimonial dinners and parades.

Some historians have viewed crafts workers' organized leisure activities as forums of a developing working-class consciousness that became increasingly exclusive to journeymen. Others have looked at the mixed nature of these events, often both sponsored and attended by employers, as evidence of a type of paternal labour discipline extended by employers into the realm of leisure. These historians are generally interested in employers' use of leisure

23 *Times*, November 6 and 25, 1871; January 2, 1909; October 9, 1915; *Hamilton Spectator*, December 2, 1915; March 26, 1922; HPL, Butler, *Saturday Musings*, vol. 3, pp. 171–174; "Burrow, William", "Milne, John", and "Stewart, Charles" in *DHB*, vol. 1, pp. 40–41, 154–155, 187.

24 *Hamilton Spectator*, January 2, 1868.

activities as efforts to “restore intimacy to workplace relations” that had been drifting apart on the job.<sup>25</sup> Both these views have been at least partially refracted through the lens of the dispossession model with the *a priori* assumption of class relations rooted in capitalism. It is important for historians not to lose sight of the fact that certain leisure activities were traditional to the crafts. They had long been held with the primary purpose of celebrating the abundance that can accrue from a job well done. To crafts workers, they represented the rewards of mutualism at work and the opportunity to reflect on that mutualism in a relaxed atmosphere.

The local press provided frequent accounts of these events. Labour historians are commonly keen to uncover how the bourgeois gaze of the press may have tainted its accounts of crafts-worker gatherings. However important it is to understand newspapers as organs of various political positions or the financed voice of bourgeois elements, historians also need to consider that they were often equally (or even more so) creations of the local craft community. In Hamilton by the early 1870s, editorship and often ownership of the local press were commonly in the hands of crafts workers.<sup>26</sup> Contained within their pages, with some qualification, was often a “voice” of the craft community. They often expressed the voices of crafts workers as forcefully (though perhaps with a different texture) as the much-vaunted labour newspapers so thoroughly mined by historians.

In the summer months, picnics and excursions were common. Hamilton crafts workers of all stripes had attended the annual events sponsored by the Mechanics’ Institute for close to three decades by the early 1870s.<sup>27</sup> Crafts workers also attended many of the excursions, picnics, and balls hosted by one of Hamilton’s many fraternal organizations, national societies, fire brigades, or literary and debating societies.<sup>28</sup> As Hamilton industrial workplaces expanded in the 1850s and 1860s, members of the city press began to marvel at the increasingly frequent spectacle offered by the workplace excursion and picnic. The city’s boot and shoemakers held their first annual picnic and excursion as a trade in 1853,<sup>29</sup> and by the 1860s it had become an annual affair. The event received common billing as the “Annual Festival of the Sons of St. Crispin”. However, rather than a city-wide gathering of journeymen shoemakers, attendance was specific to one workplace, Robert Nisbet & Company, the city’s largest boot and shoe manufactory.

The event itself was attended by employer and employee alike. Into at least the early 1870s, Nisbet and his successors in business annually displayed

25 For the first view, see Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict*, especially chap. 2. For the second view, see Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*; Heron, “Factory Workers”, pp. 533–535.

26 Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism*, pp. 29–30, 144–145, 149–150, 159–160.

27 HPL, Hamilton and Gore Mechanics’ Institute, “Minutebook of the Management Committee”, August 16, 1844; November 5, 1845; July 3, 1846.

28 Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict*, chap. 2; Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism*, chap. 7.

29 *Hamilton Spectator*, July 26, 1853.

their “usual liberality” towards the festival by either donating money or chartering a steamer to a choice picnic spot.<sup>30</sup> In return, workers paid eager tribute to their employer. In 1864, for example, after dancing and the “liberation of a supply of champagne from its confinement”, Nisbet was heartily toasted by his employees.<sup>31</sup> This was perhaps the cement of the personal labour relationship, but it was also an opportunity for all to tout the community of interests between employer and employed. In the employer’s response at the previous year’s festival, for example, high praise was lavished on the superior article turned out by the skilled work force and the success that had afforded the establishment.<sup>32</sup>

Workplace mutuality was also a common theme at the various excursions, picnics, and balls held for employees of the city’s various sewing machine factories beginning in the early 1860s. As one reporter noted, the “free, open air gala” on Burlington Beach held for employees of the Wanzer Sewing Machine factory in 1862 was the right atmosphere to contemplate the “comfortable living” afforded by a successful manufacturing enterprise. In these surroundings, he wrote, time could best be spent “relaxing from labor, for the day, and enjoying mutually, employer and employed, the change from labor of the workshop or office”.<sup>33</sup> The Wanzer picnic became an annual fixture, the firm itself picking up much of the expense for the outing. These became occasions when the shopfloor relations of master and men could develop a more social side. At the 1863 company picnic, Wanzer partner John Tarbox eagerly transferred his superintendence of the shop floor to organization of and participation in the series of athletic events transpiring throughout the day.<sup>34</sup> These bouts of leisure helped foster a social closeness that built on the craft culture of the shop floor. It is no surprise, then, that at the Annual Wanzer Winter Ball in February 1871 one newspaperman noticed that a jubilant Mr. Tarbox “may well feel proud of the class of men he has gathered around him, and from the way he shared in their festivities last night, we rather think he does”.<sup>35</sup> At their second annual Reunion Picnic in 1871, the partners of the Wilson, Bowman Sewing Machine Company “with their families mingled with the merry-making crowd and participated in their enjoyments”.<sup>36</sup> These events allowed workers and owners alike to appreciate the benefits of an industrious mutualism at work, as well as to cultivate its social side in more relaxed surroundings.

Metal workers and their bosses shared this type of mutuality at the annual picnic for the employees of Burrow, Stewart and Milne’s Hamilton Malleable

30 *Hamilton Spectator*, July 10, 1869; July 4, 1872.

31 *Times*, July 23, 1864.

32 *Hamilton Spectator*, August 25, 1863.

33 *Times*, September 1, 1862.

34 *Hamilton Spectator*, August 24, 1863; July 5, 1866; *Times*, December 26, 1867.

35 *Hamilton Spectator*, February 18, 1871.

36 *Hamilton Spectator*, August 12, 1871.

Iron Works in September 1872. The *Hamilton Spectator's* man on the ground cheerfully reported how “pleasant was the presence of the firm and their families, who seemed to vie with their employees in making every one happy”. Annual gatherings such as these, he added, “must have a most beneficial effect morally and physically, and will do more towards cementing a kindly feeling and introducing a spirit of mutual interest in the business of master and man”.<sup>37</sup> This report was part of a larger effort to patch divisions within the local crafts community in the dying days of the Nine Hour agitation of 1872, but it would be premature to view it as a bourgeois attempt to recreate artificially the cement of a lost paternalism. *Spectator* editor and part-owner David McCulloch was a former GWR upholsterer and scion of the local craft community.<sup>38</sup> Along with his assistant editor A. T. Freed, himself a former printer, McCulloch offered strong support for the Nine Hours principle throughout 1872, though he differed with the officers of the Nine Hours League on their tactics. In this report and others, he sought to heal divisions caused, in his view, by the rash actions of the League. These divisions were themselves much less significant than some historians have assumed, in that they were not firmly rooted in class opposition and, as such, still easily healed.<sup>39</sup>

Picnics hosted by unions and seemingly exclusive to journeymen and their families were also on the rise at this time. In this it appears that the Iron Moulders’ International Union No. 26 took the lead, but only in the late 1860s and early 1870s.<sup>40</sup> Members of the Hamilton tailors’ and typographical unions seem to have followed suit by the early 1870s.<sup>41</sup> These union-centred social activities did not preclude the continuation of similar employer-sponsored events, such as the excursion to Burlington Beach attended by upwards of 175 workers and their families from James Stewart and Company’s Mac-Nab Street Foundry in 1871.<sup>42</sup>

The line between exclusive union events and those involving employers was also fuzzy. The “annual” trek of printers to nearby Rock Bay in early September, for instance, was billed interchangeably as a picnic of “*Spectator* employees” in 1870 and as the “Typographical Union Picnic” the following year. Whether the change in billing was simply loose semantics or some signal of growing divisions is unclear, though the *Spectator* did provide equally hearty statements of support for both events.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the eager endorsement by the city press of the “Grand Working Men’s Picnic” at the Crystal

37 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 17, 1872.

38 “McCulloch, David”, *DHB*, vol. 2, pp. 103–104; Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism*, pp. 146, 151, 181, 208–210, 228–229, 288–289, 299, 305, 328, 357.

39 For a recent reassessment of the Nine Hours Movement, see Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism*, chap. 8.

40 *Hamilton Spectator*, July 17, 1869; July 20, 1874.

41 *Times*, August 25, 1874; *Hamilton Spectator*, September 5, 1871.

42 *Times*, August 14, 1871.

43 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 12, 1870; September 5, 1871.

Palace in 1869 happily noted that “the support of several principal employers in the city” had made the event possible.<sup>44</sup>

The evidence also suggests that it was not unusual for employers to attend the early picnics and excursions hosted by journeymen’s unions. The *Hamilton Times* reported that “a majority of the employers in the tobacco trade” were among those present at the picnic of the Cigar Makers’ Protective Union in August 1866. Perhaps the eager reportage of this event was partly prescriptive, a positive approval of this accord of employer and employed in contrast to the scenes of strife in a trade that just a few months before had been upset by a city-wide strike. But the fact that the cigar bosses attending this event “participated in the diversions of the day with a relish” shows how fast craft camaraderie could still replace conflict in this trade. Since this was an “annual festival”, the participation of employers was likely traditional.<sup>45</sup> In another decade or so, the union excursion and picnic became an event more exclusive to journeymen.<sup>46</sup>

From the testimonial dinner and presentation, we can find more telling evidence of a common appreciation of the continuation and maintenance of craft mutualism on the shop floor, articulated by master and man alike. The city press commonly reported these events through at least the early 1870s. Participants in the testimonial dinner and presentation were often drawn together from a specific workplace for the express purpose of honouring someone they considered “one of their own” at a transitional moment, such as a retirement or entry into a new job situation or matrimonial life. In these ways the testimonial was often used to recognize an individual’s attainment of some important marker of crafts-worker manhood. Honourees were frequently men who had reached some end-point in their struggle up through the craft ranks — craftsmen-industrialists who had reached the end of their working lives, foremen who were moving on to “better” situations, or simply employers in receipt of their workers’ high esteem.

The time of day and location varied. A testimonial might be offered at work either during lunch or at the end of the day. Many were held in the evening, usually in the more comfortable surroundings of a restaurant or bar where a “sumptuous supper” or liquid refreshment could accompany the proceedings. A procession consisting of employers, employees, and invited guests might form at the workplace and march *en masse*, often accompanied by a marching band, to the home of the guest of honour.

To celebrate the variety of occasions mentioned above, the testimonial presentation itself followed a ritual. A congregation would form, usually consisting of the honouree’s workmates, including his superiors, representatives of

44 *Hamilton Spectator*, July 27, 1869.

45 *Hamilton Spectator* November 2, 1865; *Times*, March 30 and August 7, 1866.

46 In 1885 upwards of 2,000 Hamilton unionists attended a picnic held at Dundurn Park in support of striking cigar makers. See *Palladium of Labor*, May 30 and June 6, 1885; *Hamilton Spectator*, June 9, 1885.

the city press, and other invited guests. A chair and a vice-chair directed the ceremony. Especially if dinner and drinks were involved, the monotony of toasts and speeches might be relieved by the inclusion of various entertainments: musical performances, or songs or poetry recitations by members of the testimonial party. The celebration always culminated in a toast to the guest of honour, usually read by the chair on behalf of the honouree's "fellow workmates", and the presentation of a handsome gift, purchased often from the receipts of a common collection at the shop. The high esteem of the men was usually reflected in the appreciable value of the gift, be it a meerschaum pipe, a silver tea service, an expensive watch, or a gold chain and locket. Next, the guest of honour would offer a reply that inevitably made known his mutual good feelings with those present. The event was often concluded with three cheers for the honouree, and the proceedings then gave way to an air of informality, perhaps with guests spending the balance of the evening "speechifying, singing and drinking toasts". In the praise offered in the formal toast and its reply, we can view the testimonial as a celebration of a maintained craft mutualism at work. David Burley has identified this exchange as a ritual in which masters and men spoke of their reciprocal obligations as these fit with the logic of capitalist social relations. While the testimonial may well have been assuming something of that form in Hamilton's larger shops, it was on balance still formulated with the primary purpose of celebrating the continuity of the craft world.<sup>47</sup>

Testimonials were forums of high praise. Toasts would lavish tributes on the honouree's conduct, bearing, and comportment at work. Most common were comments on the reason for his success, a statement that usually contained reference to the steady application of superior craft skills and mechanical abilities to a given enterprise. The employees of knitting machine maker C. J. Appleton proclaimed that their "sense of confidence" in that enterprise and "high regard" for its proprietor stemmed from his proficiency as a "skilled mechanic in all departments of the work". Sewing machine manufacturer John Tarbox was heralded by his men as a "liberal master of well tried ability". Foremen, who in this era represented a new addition to the still-functioning progression of journeyman to master and frequently went on to become junior partners or proprietors of their own shops, received similar praise. Gardner Sewing Machine Company foreman William McBeth was toasted by his men for his "actions as a man and ... ability as a mechanic". One union moulder toasted retiring Gurney foreman James Mason as a "fellow workman". On his retirement from the same shop, foreman Robert Lucas was lauded by his journeymen and apprentices as "one from whose experience many of us have learned wisdom in our art".<sup>48</sup>

47 Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, pp. 57–61.

48 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 6, 1870; September 7, 1871; September 2, 1872; June 27 and October 25, 1873.

Those giving testimony also spoke of the atmosphere of shop-floor mutuality that flowed from this shared craft knowledge. Employers and foremen alike were praised for adherence to craftly codes of shop-floor conduct. Gurney moulders expressed appreciation for the always “kind and honest treatment” bestowed on them by foreman Lucas, “one of the most indulgent of taskmasters, one who while he expected every man to do his duty, never required anyone to do more”. James Mason was regarded for his “kindly spirit” and the discharge of his “duty honorably ... and in the best interest of [his] employers”, which ensured that the “best of feelings has at all times existed ... amongst ourselves”. C. J. Appleton’s men remarked on “the kindness you have been solicitous to show us and ours upon all occasions ... that excellent feeling which cements man to man in a brotherly regard”. On the occasion of his retirement in September 1872, between 300 and 400 employees of the Wanzer Sewing Machine Company paraded to the residence of John Tarbox, to memorialize their former mechanical superintendent. J. Greenfield, chair of the committee representing the men, declared the group’s “desire to remember your former kindness and the gentlemanly manner in which you have invariably treated your men”. Before presenting Tarbox with a number of expensive items purchased by the employees, Greenfield also attempted some fence-mending by expressing the hope that a “little incident” like the Nine Hours Movement had done nothing to “mar the good feeling always existing between master and men” at the plant. To the “rousing cheers” of his men, Tarbox gratefully accepted the gifts.<sup>49</sup>

Toasts often revealed something beyond a simple working relationship. Most also expressed quite warm and friendly feelings towards those being honoured. Upon foundryman John Milne’s “return to married life”, for example, his “employees and friends” raised their glasses to his “kind and forbearing spirit” as an employer and his “social and agreeable” nature “[a]s a friend”. James Mason’s men charged that they were “losing a friend, who is indeed a friend, and who has by his acts shown himself to be such”.<sup>50</sup>

In his reply, the honouree offered similar acclamations of the skill and craft knowledge of his shopmates, celebrating the mutualism of the workplace. John Tarbox eagerly accepted the testimony of his men “with the true spirit of a mechanic”. James Mason expressed the “pleasure of working side by side” with his fellow workmen for many years. Robert Lucas pledged to his workers to retain fond memories of “the years I worked among you”.<sup>51</sup> Comments such as these suggest that those in charge recognized that the positive perpetuation of the craft world and successful production were dependent on maintaining the cooperative work atmosphere on the shop floor.

49 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 6, 1870; March 11 and September 2, 1872; June 27 and October 25, 1873.

50 *Hamilton Spectator*, January 2 and June 27, 1873.

51 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 6, 1870; September 2, 1872; June 27, 1873.

In a work environment where upward mobility through the crafts was still widespread and actively facilitated by those senior in the craft hierarchy, the young crafts worker could also still see the fruits that such shop-floor comportment could bear. John Tarbox reminded the crowd of former employees celebrating his retirement:

It may interest you to know that during the time I have been director of mechanical skill nearly 150 young men passing from under my charge have become heads of departments or manufactories. I have had the pleasure of assisting and promoting many of them, and I hope, Providence permitting, to have the pleasure of assisting and promoting many hundreds more....

The benefits of continued traditional craft workplace relationships did not escape employee representative J. Greenfield, who followed these remarks with his appreciation that Tarbox “had always treated by him more like a father than an employer”.<sup>52</sup>

Honourees, too, confirmed their adherence to a shop-floor conduct reflective of their situation as crafts workers among crafts workers. Eloquent on this point was Wilson, Lockman Sewing Machine Company foreman James McInerney:

I am well aware that a foreman is too often looked upon by the workmen as a person placed over them to play the part of a hard taskmaster, but for my part I shall always endeavor to discharge my duty to my employers in an honest, faithful and efficient manner, and in regard to the workmen I hope I shall never forget that “A man’s a man for a’ that”....

Gardner foreman William McBeth also echoed the sentiments of the Scottish poet in stating to his workmates, “I have done my duty towards you. I always endeavor to treat a man as I would like to be treated myself.” Read one way, such sentiments could be understood as attempts to patch fractious shop-floor relations. They also spoke, however, of masculine shop-floor relations traditional to the crafts. McInerney’s journeymen still thought well enough of their “hard taskmaster” to pool funds for a silver tea service as a wedding present. The fact that both McInerney and McBeth were founding members of Hamilton’s machinists’ union also gives greater weight to these statements as expressions of craft unity.<sup>53</sup>

Proper shop-floor comportment among masters and men maintained good feeling and reflected their common respect for the craft. While shop-floor conflict sometimes did occur, it was rarely mentioned in these forums. When

52 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 2, 1872. For an examination of the residual elements of craft culture in Hamilton through this time period, see Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism*, chap. 5. For a similar point, see Heron, “Factory Workers”, p. 533.

53 *Herald*, November 7, 1903; *Hamilton Spectator*, September 1, 1871; August 5, 1872.

it was, it was portrayed as rare and fleeting. "I have had many hundred workmen and mechanics under my supervision," John Tarbox remarked at his retirement testimonial, "on but one occasion have their fullest confidence been taken from me." That "little incident", of course, was the Nine Hours agitation occurring just a few months previously.<sup>54</sup> He continued, "let us hope that circumstances will never again place us in a like position", reminding his workers that he always endeavoured "to do justice to all under my charge". "If in this I have at any time failed," he proclaimed, "my judgment, not my heart, has been at fault." A high value was placed on maintaining the good feeling between employers and employed. As C. J. Appleton put it to his workers, "it is my pride, gentlemen, that all is harmony in our works."<sup>55</sup>

The guest of honour often took harmonious workplace relations beyond their immediate business practicality and personalized his relations with his men, thereby exposing the emotional stock he held in their well-being and friendship. John Doty expressed to his machinists his "earnest interest in their welfare and happiness". "[I]t affords me great pleasure," announced foundryman John Milne to his moulders, "to find that I have won the eulogium of those who have had the opportunity of watching my career for a great number of years." Expressions such as these spoke of a man-to-man relationship with workers. Exclamations of feelings could get downright mushy. Gurney foreman Robert Lucas expressed appreciation that he had gained from his moulders their "esteem and good will" and "an opportunity to know him thoroughly". In the darkened din of the moulding shop, a tongue-tied Lucas readily admitted to the assembled throng, "my feelings are overwhelmed". William McBeth similarly declared, "my heart swells with emotion" to the group of assembled mechanics and workmen he preferred to view as "so large a number of friends".<sup>56</sup> The testimonial served as a forum for speaking about and celebrating what remained common between masters and men on the shop floors of Hamilton's industrial workplaces in the early 1870s. Resonating throughout these testimonials was a mutual recognition that the skills of those honoured and their commitment to putting those skills to industrious use had gained them the success in which their fellow workmates hoped one day to share.

Trade processions were another example of public comment on relations at work. Bryan Palmer has portrayed these events as decidedly class conscious, terming them the "most striking assertion of the craft unionists' presence ... in the grand context of class conflict [and the] continuous expansion of the labour movement".<sup>57</sup> Arguing that trade processions were conspicuous for

54 For a reassessment of the Nine Hours Movement in Hamilton, see Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism*, chap. 8.

55 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 2, 1872; October 25, 1873.

56 *Times*, April 21, 1866; *Hamilton Spectator*, September 6, 1870; September 12, 1871; January 2, 1873.

57 Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict*, pp. 56, 58. For a similar account based on the same evidence, see Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond*, p. 41.

their “continuous presence” in Hamilton from 1860, he offers the Confederation parade of 1867 as the only example of this trend before the 1880s. Much is made of this imposing grand procession. Parading butchers, iron moulders, shoemakers, bakers, and other fellow “unionists” evidently turned this event into “a proud moment for Hamilton’s workingmen”.<sup>58</sup>

What is not mentioned is that some trade groups marching in this procession did so as representatives of specific workplaces, such as the Canadian Oil Company, the Hamilton Glove and Mitten Manufacturing Company, Messrs. Wanzer and Company’s Sewing Machine Manufactory, or the Times Printing Company. Neither do these processional groupings seem to have been composed solely of journeymen “unionists”. A strong trade union element does not appear to have marched in the parade at all. The only evidence that butchers, iron moulders, bakers, and shoemakers were “unionists”, in fact, is that the city press referred to them by the names of their trades rather than as representing specific workplaces. In no report were these groups referred to as journeymen. The only trade grouping evidently not represented by both masters and men was the “Times newsboys”, who were hardly at the forefront of working-class agitation in the city.

Rather, butchers, iron moulders, bakers, and shoemakers were likely trade contingents, composed of all men and boys in the city who shared a common craft, be they journeymen, apprentices, self-employed small masters, or larger manufacturers. The call to organize the “bakers” contingent, for instance, requested “a general attendance of city bakers and journeymen”.<sup>59</sup> It is notable that the proprietor of the city’s largest bakery, Issac Chilman, took the chair when the meeting commenced.<sup>60</sup> Nothing is known of the composition of the contingents of “iron moulders” or “tinsmiths” (whose intention to participate in the parade was not realized). Similarly, no information is given of the “butchers”, but one can deduce that participants in that contingent consisted primarily of self-employed masters in what was still a very decentralized trade.<sup>61</sup>

A more detailed understanding is provided by the cordwainers’ contingent, whose participation in this event has been offered as strong evidence of a “solidarity” symbolic of a developing consciousness of class among the members of a degraded craft.<sup>62</sup> Closer scrutiny of the backgrounds of those

58 Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict*, pp. 56, 57.

59 *Hamilton Spectator*, June 25, 1867.

60 *Hamilton Spectator*, June 27, 1867.

61 The fact that the butchers chose an ox to surmount their float on Confederation Day makes some suggestion as to the composition of this group. Samuel Nash ran the city’s only large meat-curing establishment, employing 23 hands by 1871, but processed only pork. On the other hand, John Campbell, the city’s largest beef processor, employed only six men and two boys in his establishment by this date. Most common was still the small butcher shop operated by a master with one or two helpers. *Hamilton Spectator*, July 2, 1867; 1871 Industrial Census.

62 Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond*, p. 41; Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict*, pp. 57–60.

shoemakers who can be identified as having organized and participated in the parade leads to a much different conclusion. The “shoemakers of Hamilton” met two weeks before the big day to organize “a most credible and imposing part of the procession” that would reflect well on their position as “one of the largest and most influential of the trades” in the city. These “followers of King Crispin” initially met at the King William Street Engine House, identified as “a centre of skilled workers’ associational life”.<sup>63</sup> That their second meeting was held at the shop of Robert Hopkins, a master shoemaker and one of Hamilton’s largest boot and shoe manufacturers, suggests that this group was not viewed as antagonistic by the manufacturers. The social composition of the group attending this meeting can be determined. Press reports list the names of the 23 members of the committee elected to organize the shoemakers’ part in the parade and to hold positions of honour in the contingent. Listed among this number were the names of only six journeymen. The rest of the committee was composed of foremen (three), large boot and shoe manufacturers (three), and self-employed boot and shoe makers (eight).<sup>64</sup>

The mixed nature of the shoemakers’ complement is also confirmed by a look at those who were elected to lead the procession in the roles of King Crispin and “sundry other worthys”. Journeyman M. Silver was chosen to don the flowing pink robes and gold crown of the shoemaker’s patron saint, and M. Dean, another journeyman, was picked to play an “Aide-de-Camp”. But masters, too, found roles among the processional characters. The role of Champion was assigned to small shop-owner William Ward, while small masters Messrs. Glass and Ryan were to act as Standard-Bearer and Aide-de-Camp respectively. Heading the procession as Marshall — in much the same style as Tarbox and his sewing machine employees — would be P. W. Day-foot, the city’s second largest boot and shoe manufacturer. Hopkins and Day-foot formed the committee charged with obtaining the necessary dresses and badges for the occasion. Also present at the second organizational meeting was Robert Nisbet, representing the interests of Hamilton’s largest boot and shoe manufactory.<sup>65</sup> The shoemakers’ contingent, then, saw large and small masters join their foremen and journeymen as fellow crafts workers paying homage to King Crispin. No simple connection can be drawn between this event and the unionization of journeymen shoemakers.<sup>66</sup>

63 Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict*, p. 46.

64 The committee is outlined in *Hamilton Spectator*, June 26, 1867. Occupations were determined by cross-referencing members of this group with listings in the 1867–1868 and 1868–1869 directories for the city of Hamilton. Occupation could not be identified for three members of this group.

65 *Hamilton Spectator*, June 26 and July 2, 1867.

66 Palmer argues that “[w]orkingmen’s parades, aside from their significance as moments of exhilaration and craft pride, also possess an inner history of importance. Two brief months after their participation in the Confederation procession, Hamilton’s shoemakers would play an important role in the creation of an Ontario-wide boot and shoemakers’ organization” (*A Culture in Conflict*, p. 60). See also Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond*, p. 40.

Craft pride and workplace harmony became the central image of the Confederation Day procession as a whole. At the centre of the butchers' procession was an ox "profusely ornamented with red and blue rosettes and artificial flowers" displayed atop a wagon. Alongside the ox rode the "sturdy butchers, all of them well-mounted and exceedingly 'old countrified' ". The iron moulders' procession was "not a showy looking; but an exceedingly respectable set of men, and they marched well and preserved good order". Putting their craft skills to work, the bakers impressed onlookers with an ongoing display of bread-making as the centrepiece of their contingent.

The bakers were evidently not the only group exhibiting craft pride that day. The contingent provided by the Wanzer Sewing Machine Company, one of the city's largest manufacturing establishments, for example, replicated a workplace order centred on craft pride and mutualism. Wanzer machinists could feel proud of their place in the procession. At the head was one of their own, company partner and trained machinist John Tarbox, mounted on horseback. Also ahead of them were their foremen, former journeymen themselves. Their ennobled place in the workplace pecking order was further confirmed by the rows of labourers and boys following at the rear. This arrangement spoke of a common craft pride embedded in a continued respect for the craft progression.<sup>67</sup>

Hamilton crafts workers used the Confederation Day parade to make strong statements about their craft pride and the continued shop-floor mutualism upon which it was based. This message was expressed by butchers, iron moulders, bakers, and shoemakers marching in the traditional trade procession, but also by Wanzer's machinists and other male employees keeping proud step in the company contingent. In all, the trade procession was another arena in which the continued shop-floor mutualism between master and man was put on display.

### **The Social Geography of Early Industrialization**

Another way of assessing the degree to which masters had extricated themselves from — and thereby disrupted — the craft culture they shared with their men is to consider their residential presence in the craft community outside the walls of their plants. A glimpse of the social geography of the late-nineteenth-century city is easily gleaned from the pages of *Hamilton: The Birmingham of Canada*, a city promotional of 1892. In lavish photographic collage this publication portrays both Hamilton's multitudinous factories and the opulent, ornate, even ostentatious homes of their owners.<sup>68</sup> Its message was unabashed: Hamilton's manufacturing success was tremendous and ongoing, the "princely mansions" of its captains of industry a visual testament to the wealth they had created. By this date, the residential and social segregation of the city had advanced markedly.

<sup>67</sup> *Hamilton Spectator*, July 2, 1867.

<sup>68</sup> *Hamilton: The Birmingham of Canada* (Hamilton: Times Printing Company, 1892).

In their study of residential patterns in the frontier city just 40 years previously, Ian Davey and Michael Doucet found Hamilton's social geography to be "surprisingly ambiguous", the city's class differentiation not yet readable in its residential structure. However, even at this early date, shades of things to come could be seen in the lavish stone houses and estates of Hamilton's wealthy merchants nestled in the city's south-central section on the rise close to the mountain.<sup>69</sup> They were the most telling indicator of a residential exclusivity that would come to mark the city in the coming decades. Many of the featured homes of Hamilton's manufacturers in *Hamilton: The Birmingham of Canada* occupied large lots in an elite district developed to the west of the arcadian estates established in the 1840s and 1850s by the city's early commercial elite. The new homes of the manufacturing elite were located largely in the up-and-coming exclusive southwest district.

This area was somewhat amorphous, fronted by the homes of such manufacturers as W. E. Sanford and George Tuckett, who resided on the high-and-dry "hogsback" of land extending south of King Street between Queen and Bay Streets, with the greatest development of exclusive homes taking place south of Charlton Avenue between James and Queen Streets.<sup>70</sup> These prosperous manufacturers bestowed on their homes monikers that bespoke their immensity and permanence: Alexander Gartshore's "Rabelston", George Rutherford's "Fernhill", and George Tuckett's "Myrtle Hall", to name but a few. Their style and scale contrasted to the earlier Georgian and Gothic stone homes built by the city's merchantocracy. In a word, they were new. This observation raises a number of important questions. If manufacturers had only recently moved into these homes and into the elite segregated district in which they were situated, then where had they lived before? More particularly, was the manufacturers' "retreat" into an upper-middle-class suburb a feature of the social geography of the city by the early 1870s? When did successful masters separate home from work?

In their study of Hamilton's "business class" between 1851 and 1871, Michael Katz and his associates do briefly examine the issue of residential separation from work. Their data were assembled, however, to examine the extent to which fathers had actually absented themselves from the home during early industrialization — a test of the validity of the "haven in a heartless world" paradigm. While some of Katz's numbers are suggestive of the broad residential trends practised by manufacturers, they are, unfortunately, not properly categorized or quantified to help answer the central questions raised

69 Ian Davey and Michael Doucet, "The Social Geography of a Commercial City", in Michael Katz, ed., *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-nineteenth-century City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 334, 341–342; Weaver, *Hamilton: An Illustrated History*, p. 64.

70 This was not the only place in the city where the elite was busy developing its particular versions of domestic splendour, but the area contained by far the highest concentration of well-heeled development.

here.<sup>71</sup> It is necessary to look elsewhere in the historiography to frame this methodological approach.

Social historians and social geographers have paid much attention and developed sophisticated methodologies for studying the generally increasing journey to work for members of the working class as a result of nineteenth- and twentieth-century industrialization.<sup>72</sup> The journey to work for industrial employers remains under-explored. The primary intention of those who have studied this phenomenon is to show that part of the process of nineteenth-century class differentiation was spatial, the withdrawal of the manufacturing class from more modest residences at or adjacent to their workplaces and from the same community as their workers to much more affluent, often suburban, surroundings where class convergence was achieved with other elements of the parvenu middle class. Some historians have cited simply the fact of manufacturers' residential separation from their workplaces and workers to support arguments for class cleavage,<sup>73</sup> but others have made more of an attempt to elucidate residential withdrawal as part of a larger social process.<sup>74</sup>

71 Michael B. Katz, Michael J. Doucet, and Mark J. Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). While the authors examine "masters/manufacturers" in their attempt to show that the "business class" did not necessarily lead the trend of fathers leaving the home to work (thus creating the quintessential "haven in a heartless world"), Katz and company quantify data into three broad categories: "home and workplace identical", "home and workplace different", and "unknown". The questions posed here require a more detailed methodology that allows assessment of factory owners' embeddedness in the communities surrounding their plants. My study also considers the residential location of only manufacturers with artisan origins, a distinction that Katz and his associates do not bring to their data set. Lastly, Katz looks at all masters and manufacturers, whereas the data herein are comprised only of large masters (defined as those industrial establishments reporting five or more hands employed).

72 For an introduction to this growing field of research, see Theodore Herschberg, D. Light, H. Cox, and R. Greenfield, "The 'Journey to Work': An Empirical Investigation of Work, Residence and Transportation, Philadelphia, 1850 and 1880", in Theodore Herschberg, ed., *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family and Group Experience in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 128–173; A. Victoria Bloomfield and Richard Harris, "The Journey to Work: A Historical Methodology", *Historical Methods*, vol. 30, no. 2 (Spring 1997), pp. 97–109. For a study of the journey to work in twentieth-century Hamilton, see Richard Harris and Matt Sendbueler, "The Making of a Working Class Suburb in Hamilton's East End, 1900–1945", *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 20 (1993), pp. 486–511. The seminal work in this field was K. Liepman, *The Journey to Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944).

73 In Troy, New York, manufacturers seem to have been financially well-off, and not necessarily artisans, before they started their factories, and this character of industrialization seems to have led to an immediate residential segmentation between industrialists and workers. See Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), p. 28.

74 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have outlined the process whereby Birmingham manufacturers, with some initial ambivalence, separated home from work between 1780 and 1850, removing themselves to villas on the outskirts of the city or to new "specialized middle class enclaves" such as the "exclusive suburb" of Edgbaston within the city limits. In mid-nineteenth-century Cincinnati, Steven Ross has noted that manufacturers' movement away from mixed residential neighbourhoods near the town centre to more exclusive neighbourhoods or to prominent locations atop hills surrounding the town created an "increasingly visible contrast between the modest homes of the working class and the

Where might we locate Hamilton manufacturers on this continuum of residential separation by the early 1870s? Answering this question can tell us much about the degree to which, as crafts workers, Hamilton's employers felt they could dissociate themselves from their workplaces at this stage of industrialization. An answer can speak directly to the primary identities of Hamilton's artisan-manufacturers, be these to the traditional craft shop and the community surrounding it, or detached and seeking some distance from that community through residential convergence with other sectors of the city's elite. In the eyes of their workers, too, their residential choices could have spoken volumes about employers' continued commitment to the craft world.

Hamilton's artisan-manufacturers did not enter the city in mid-century financially well endowed. Slow growth from small shop to manufactory often took place at work locations attached to or near the proprietor's residence. For example, by the late 1850s Benjamin Greening operated what would one day become a tremendously successful metal wire business from a makeshift shed behind his Peter Street home.<sup>75</sup> By the early 1870s Greening's situation still appears to have been typical for Hamilton's small artisan-proprietors (those employing fewer than five workers). A cross-reference of the business and personal listings of the 1871–1872 city directory with Hamilton manufactures reporting fewer than five workers on the 1871 Industrial Census shows that over 86 per cent still worked and lived in the same location (see Table 1). All but three of 76 of the small masters whose work and residential location could be identified still lived five blocks or less from their places of business. By this date, for example, Greening had only to walk next door to enter his newly constructed Victoria Wire Mills.

Residential detachment from workplace and workplace community would likely have occurred first among the city's more successful master-manufacturers. How far had this process come by the early 1870s? I cross-referenced manufacturers with artisanal origins who claimed five or more employees on the 1871 Industrial Census with the 1871–1872 city directory for Hamilton. This allowed for determination of the location of both home and work. Dis-

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ostentatious accommodations of the elite" that helped to fuel the growing flames of class discontent. Implicit in Joy Parr's study of Paris and Hanover, Ontario, is the interesting suggestion that different paths of industrial growth can lead to much different configurations of social geography: factory bosses in Paris lived in "separate precincts" from those they employed, whereas the residences of Hanover factory owners were "intermingled" with those of their workers. See Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men, Women and the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (London: Hutchison, 1987), pp. 364–368; Steven J. Ross, *Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati, 1788–1890* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 18, 144, 137–139, 196; Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners*, pp. 6, 141.

75 Jeff Merriman, "Autobiography and Merriman Family History: Horace Owen Merriman, 1888–1972" (typescript in possession of author).

**Table 1 Distance from Work to Home (Blocks): Hamilton Manufacturers with Fewer than Five Employees, 1871**

	n (76 total)	Percentage of total	Cumulative percentage
Same location <sup>1</sup>	66	86.8	86.8
Within 1 block <sup>2</sup>	5	6.6	93.4
5 blocks or fewer	2	2.6	96.0
10 blocks or fewer	1	1.3	97.3
More than 10 blocks	2	2.6	100.0

1 Home and work at same location.

2 Home on same block or within 1 block of work.

Source: 1871 Industrial Census; Hutchison's 1871–1872 *City Directory for Hamilton*. Of 149 industrial proprietors with fewer than five employees, the work and home addresses of 76 could be identified.

tance to work was calculated as number of blocks between home and workplace.<sup>76</sup>

Table 2 shows that Hamilton's large manufacturers had not, by 1871, severed their residential links to their workplaces or the communities that surrounded them. Over 70 per cent of Hamilton's large manufacturers still resided five or fewer blocks from their places of business. More than 45 per cent of large masters lived within one block of their shops. Eleven per cent of Hamilton's large manufacturers still resided where they worked. Only six members of the study group (approximately 10 per cent) lived further than ten blocks (approximately 0.6 km) from their shops.

While most artisan-manufacturers lived closer to their shops, those who resided within ten blocks of their businesses still lived within the bounds of the mixed residential city of the mid-century studied by Davey and Doucet. Some of the artisan-manufacturers who did have to walk up to ten blocks to get to work lived in the more socially exclusive south-central portion of the city, but they tended to reside on its more modest, less affluent streets, closer to the bustle of the city's core. That part of south-central Hamilton in which the city's most successful merchants had chosen to reside (more south than central) generally lay outside the ten-block radius. Most notably, the baronial mansions of the city's southwest district, featured so prominently in *Hamilton: The Birmingham of Canada*, had yet to be built.

Notable among the 45 large Hamilton artisan-manufacturers who had to travel five or fewer blocks to work were the number of proprietors who still lived at their places of business. A number were smaller concerns. George

<sup>76</sup> While journey-to-work methodology often calculates distances as a median straight-line commute, the simpler methodology of number of blocks is equally sound and allows for a similar comparative spatial appreciation. The average Hamilton block was roughly 60 metres in length.

**Table 2 Distance From Work to Home (Blocks): Hamilton Manufacturers with Artisanal Origins and Five or More Employees, 1871**

	n (64 total)	Percentage of total	Cumulative percentage
Same location <sup>1</sup>	7	10.9	10.9
Within 1 block <sup>2</sup>	22	34.4	45.3
5 blocks or fewer	16	26.6	70.3
10 blocks or fewer	13	20.3	90.6
More than 10 blocks	6	9.4	100.0

1 Home and work at same location.

2 Home on same block or within 1 block of work.

Source: 1871 Industrial Census; Hutchison's 1871–1872 *City Directory for Hamilton*. Of 74 industrial proprietors identified with artisanal origins and employing 5 or more workers, the work and home addresses for 64 could be identified.

Copeland's ropewalk employed eight and William Harris's bakery employed six. What is surprising, though, is that the size of the work forces at most of the establishments operated by men living so close to their manufacturing sites was beyond that of the small shop. Alfred Green's brush manufactory gave employment to 18 men and boys. Nineteen workers were on the payroll at John Semmen's planing mill. James Reid employed 24 skilled workmen at his furniture works. Most notable, though, was the sizeable brush manufactory of C. W. Meakins and Sons. After throwing aside cabinetmaking for brush manufacture eight years previously, Charles Meakins could boast gross annual sales of \$40,000 by 1871, paying his 36 employees a total of \$12,000 in wages that year. By this time the plant consisted of a number of buildings, which taken together comprised a "considerable floorage". Such technical improvements as a steam engine were also in evidence by this time. Meakins and his family resided in the top two floors of the three-story section that fronted this complex, the first floor and basement of which housed the firm's office, salesroom, and warerooms.<sup>77</sup>

Most numerous in the sample presented in Table 2 were the 22 manufacturers who had assembled quite sizeable work forces but still lived within a block of their plants. The 43 employees of Alexander Lawson's *Hamilton Spectator* toiled about a block from the home of that partner in the newspaper. Both Thomas and Frederick Northey resided on the same block as their Wellington Street machine works, employing 31. Both William Turnbull and Adam Laidlaw lived about a block from their successful Mary Street Foundry. William Burrow lived a block from the original Hamilton Malleable Iron Works at Caroline and York Streets. It took just a quick shuffle for his

<sup>77</sup> *Times*, July 11, 1871.

partner, Charles Stewart, from his Catherine Street home, to supervise construction of the firm's new Cannon Street foundry, still under construction in 1871. John Stewart, William C. Stewart, and Adam Cook all lived within a block of their McNab Street Foundry, employing 63. James Stewart, the firm's principal proprietor, perhaps as a sign of his inability to shake the journeyman habits of his younger days, lived in a hotel just a few blocks from the plant.<sup>78</sup> The home of agricultural implements manufacturer Samuel Sawyer would have been in common view of his 90 workers as they entered and exited that plant each day.

These manufacturers lived cheek-by-jowl with their workers in the blocks immediately surrounding their plants, a situation especially evident in the case of the city's numerous foundries, many of which were located on the outer northeastern periphery of the central business district. Not surprisingly, the blocks surrounding the homes of such prominent metal manufacturers as Charles Gurney Jr., Nelson Robbins, Charles Stewart, Peter Warren, Adam Laidlaw, and William Turnbull were crowded with the homes of moulders, stove mounters, blacksmiths, machinists, and the like.

Some manufacturers had removed themselves to more exclusive surroundings. The sizeable homes of iron founders Edward and Charles Gurney, for example, stood above the city on a rise of land nestled against the escarpment on the John Street Road, among the stone houses of well-heeled merchants and professionals. They seem to have followed their former partner, pattern-maker Alexander Carpenter, who had built his famed Picturesque Gothic "Rock Castle" as early as 1848.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, machinist John Nathaniel Tarbox, partner in the wildly successful R. M. Wanzer Sewing Machine Company, resided in a "magnificent residence" complete with an "extensive green" on eastern King Street outside the city limits.<sup>80</sup>

The decision to remove oneself and one's family to more well-to-do climes was evidently not made lightly. Davidoff and Hall found in Birmingham that the initial process of manufacturers' residential separation from their workplaces was achieved with unease. Where a manufacturer did move away, they noted, "often a son, younger partner or manager would move in" to maintain the equilibrium in the factory community.<sup>81</sup> Hamilton foundryman and tinsmith Dennis Moore lived on Hannah Street in the south-central section of the city, while his junior partner Peter Warren maintained a residence on Catherine Street across from the plant. Engine and boiler maker F. G. Beckett's absence from his Atlas Works was made up for by the presence of his younger brother and father within two blocks of the McNab Street plant and

78 *Hamilton Spectator*, December 24, 1890.

79 "Carpenter, Alexander", *DHB*, vol. 1, p. 42; A. G. McKay, *Victorian Architecture in Hamilton* (Hamilton: Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, 1967), p. 12.

80 *Hamilton Spectator*, September 2, 1872.

81 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 366.

another younger brother closer still. What is notable about his removal further than ten blocks from his plant was the fact that Beckett chose to live in the very centre of the city's metal manufacturing district. The Gurneys, perhaps the city's most successful industrialists, moved to an exclusive area, but installed Charles Gurney Jr. in a residence about one block from their John Street foundry. Boarding with young Charles was his cousin John Tilden, a future partner in the enterprise.

In all, it appears that the choice to separate oneself and one's family from proximity to the workplace had not been made by Hamilton's artisan-manufacturers by the early 1870s. The domestic society of most of these men was still firmly planted in the mixed residential neighbourhoods surrounding their plants. A few of the most successful industrialists had withdrawn, but they were exceptional. Those who withdrew also made sure that someone representing them still lived close to their plants. The masters who continued to reside near their plants likely lived in grander homes than those of their workers, but not in residences the scale and opulence of those featured in *Hamilton: The Birmingham of Canada* 20 years later. We must also remember that the better homes of masters were themselves a continuity; it was part of the craft progression for a master to live in a finer home than those of his journeymen.

### **Conclusion**

The craft world was still well intact in Hamilton by the early 1870s. Even in larger workplaces, journeymen still saw their bosses as fellow practitioners of the craft, both in reputation and practice. Outside the workplace crafts workers used occasions such as picnics, excursions, testimonials, and parades as forums in which to announce to the general public the continued integrity of the craft world and the maintenance of craft mutualism. The craft community, exhibiting integrated residential patterns of masters and men in proximity to their workplace, was similarly preserved. The evidence simply does not support the increased social differentiation that other historians have suggested characterized relations between masters and journeymen by this time. Rather, by the early 1870s crafts work was still characterized by the common identification by both masters and men of themselves and each other as craftsworkers. That the work routines and practices of the craft world had undergone a degree of change by this time cannot be disputed, but change had not yet been sufficient to shatter pre-existing identifications between master and men rooted in the craft workshops of previous decades.