FARM LEASES AND AGRICULTURE

ON THE ISLAND OF MONTREAL, 1780-1820

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by

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ABSTRACT

Based primarily on notarized farm leases, this thesis examines approaches to agriculture on the island of Montreal from 1780 to 1820. This source permits us to establish the crucial relationship between people and farms and to then link them to differences in capital investment, production and farming techniques. By understanding the common, day-to-day farming operations, we can address ourselves to the larger questions of what contributed to the state of Lower Canadian agriculture, a subject of contentious debate in Quebec historiography.

The island of Montreal, already favoured by the geographic circumstances of climate, soil and location, was also a crucible for two profound changes which were occurring in Quebec society during this period -- the beginning of a wave of English-speaking immigrants who would permanently alter the ethnic composition of the province's population, and the development of a significant urban market. In the 564 notarized farm leases passed in this forty-year period, half of the lessors were merchants and professionals, most of whom resided in the city and suburbs of Montreal. The farms of the urban bourgeoisie were on average larger and better-stocked than the farms of *habitants*, artisans and other proprietors. Most attempts at agricultural innovation and more intensive cultivation occurred on the farms of this élite, not on the lands owned by those with less capital resources: capital, not ethnicity, directed the approach taken to farming.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse examine les differentes types d'exploitation agricoles pratiqués sur l'île de Montréal entre 1780 et 1820, employant surtout les baux à ferme notariés comme source de données. Par l'analyse de cette source, on peut établir l'importante relation entre les propriétaires et leurs fermes afin de mieux évaluer les différences qui existent au niveau des capitaux investis, de la production et des techniques agricoles. La connaissance des activités agricoles quotidiennes, nous permet d'aborder de plus grandes questions, soient celles des facteurs qui ont contribués à l'état de l'agriculture au Bas-Canada, un sujet fort controversé dans l'historiographie du Québec.

A cet époque, l'île de Montréal, déjà choyé par sa situation géographique -- climat, sol et emplacement -- était également le lieu principal de deux changements majeurs qui ont transformés le Bas-Canada: les débuts d'une vague d'immigrants d'origine britannique, qui modifie la composition ethnique de sa population de façon permanente, et le développement d'un important marché urbain. Sur les 564 baux à fermes notariés pendant cette période de quarante ans, la moitié des bailleurs étaient des marchands et des professionels, dont la plupart habitaient la ville ou la banlieue de Montréal. En général, les fermes de la bourgeoisie urbaine étaient plus grandes et mieux équipées que les fermes des habitants, des artisans ou des autres propriétaires. Les tentatives d'innovation agricole et de culture plus intensive avaient surtout lieu sur les fermes de cette élite, et non pas sur les terres appartenant à ceux qui disposaient de moins de ressources financières: le capital, et non l'ethnie, a déterminé le mode d'exploitation agricole.

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CURRENCY AND UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

Between 1780 and 1820, several currencies were used concurrently in Quebec. For the purposes of this thesis, monetary values are expressed in *livres ancien cours* or, more simply, *livres* (1 *livre* = 20 *sols*, 1 *sol* = 12 *deniers*), and £ Halifax (£1 = 20 shillings, 1 shilling = 12 pence). The rates of exchange are indicated below:

1 Spanish dollar	=	5 shillings Halifax
	=	6 *livres*
	=	4 shillings 6 pence sterling
£1 Halifax	=	4 Spanish dollars
	=	24 *livres*
	=	0.9 £ sterling

Throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, linear and superficial units of measure for lands held under seigneurial tenure conformed to French usage; this usage also applied to volume measures. These measurements, together with their metric and British equivalents, are given below.

1 French foot	=	0.3248 metres
	=	1.0656 British feet
1 *arpent* (linear)	=	180 French feet
	=	58.464 metres
1 *arpent* (superficial)	=	32,400 square French feet
	=	0.3418 hectares
	=	.845 British acres
1 *minot*	=	39 litres
	=	1.107 bushels

ABBREVIATIONS

ANQM	Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal
AgHR	Agricultural History Review
CHR	Canadian Historical Review
CgQ	Cahiers de géographie du Québec
DCB	Dictionary of Canadian Biography
Hs/SH	Histoire sociale / Social History
JHALC	Journals of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada
n.m.	Notarial minute, Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal
RHAF	Revue d'histoire de l'amérique française

INTRODUCTION

The state of Lower Canadian agriculture has been a topic of debate for the better part of two centuries. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when travellers' accounts enjoyed a certain popularity among the reading population, visitors to Canada never failed to pass judgement on the farms of the region. Since that time, much of the controversy concerning agriculture in early Quebec has centred on production and techniques -- essentially the efficiency of the *canadien* farmer. According to John Lambert, an oft-quoted Englishman who at the start of the nineteenth century spent a year in Canada:

> ...the Canadians are miserable farmers. They seldom or never manure their land, and plough so very slight and careless, that they continue, year after year, to turn over the same clods which lie at the surface, without penetrating an inch deeper into the soil. Hence their grounds become exhausted, overrun with weeds, and yield but very scanty crops.[1]

Lambert was neither the first to condemn the agricultural practices of Quebec's early farmers, nor would he be the last. Indeed, in a variety of only slightly modified forms, this view has dominated much of the historiography up to the present. One of the most prolific writers on this period, Fernand Ouellet, has promoted the theory that rural Lower Canada was populated by 'backward' *habitants* who practised an

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[1] John Lambert, Travels through Canada and the United States of North America, in the years 1806,1807 and 1808, (London, 1814; 2nd edition, corrected and improved): 131. Of the year that Lambert passed in Canada, he resided in Quebec City for all but two months of that time.

inefficient and archaic form of agriculture due to their inherent laziness and cultural inability to adopt the so-called 'improved' methods of husbandry.[2] Ouellet believes that this failure of Quebec's agriculture, coupled with a perceived problem of overpopulation in many older parishes, eventually led to an 'agricultural crisis' in the first half of the nineteenth century -- an interpretation that has led to considerable debate in historical and related disciplines.[3]

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[2] The term 'agricultural improvements' is one that should be used with much more care than it is at present. In an excellent discussion of this concept, Hugh D. Clout writes that a "truly meaningful use of the term 'agricultural improvement' ... should involve investigating the assumptions and subjective decisions made by individuals in sections of society in the past. It might be argued that while such value judgements might be accepted for one place and for a specified period, they should not be transferred automatically to all spatial, social and economic contexts". See "Agricultural Change in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", in Hugh D. Clout (ed.), Themes in the Historical Geography of France, (London, 1977): 140-141.

[3] This debate over the existence and timing of an 'agricultural crisis' in the early nineteenth century has been very present in much of the writing on Quebec's agrarian society and economy for the past two decades. For Fernand Ouellet's explanation of an agricultural crisis that began in 1803, see especially his Histoire économique et sociale du Québec, 1760-1850: structures et conjoncture, (Montréal, 1966); and "L'agriculture bas-canadienne vue à travers les dîmes et la rente en nature", in his Eléments d'histoire sociale du Bas-Canada, (Montréal, 1972): 37-88. Robert L. Jones had earlier come to a similar conclusion in "French-Canadian Agriculture in the St. Lawrence Valley, 1815-1851", Agricultural History, XVI (1942): 137-148; and "Agriculture in Lower Canada, 1792-1815", CHR, XXVII:1 (March 1946): 33-51. Gilles Paquet and Jean-Pierre Wallot have argued that the decline in wheat production in the early nineteenth century was more the result of a 'rational' decision on the part of the *habitant* to abandon cultivation of this grain for unstable foreign markets in favour of a more diversified form of agriculture which would supply domestic markets. The first statement of this thesis, "Crise agricole et tensions socio-ethniques dans le Bas-Canada: éléments pour une ré-interpretation", RHAF, XXVI:2 (septembre 1972): 185-237 was followed by "The Agricultural Crisis in Lower Canada, 1802-12: *mise au point*. A Response to T.J.A. Le Goff", CHR, LVI:2 (June 1975): 133-168. In the article that prompted the reply from Paquet and Wallot, -- "The Agricultural Crisis in Lower Canada, 1802-1812: A Review of a Controversy", CHR, LV:1 (March 1974): 1-31 -- Le Goff hypothesized that the crisis was actually due to the failure of agricultural pro-

But even contemporary commentators were by no means agreed on the situation in the countryside. While there was little argument among those who wrote on the subject that the agricultural techniques of the French Canadian farmer were indeed less advanced than those of the wealthier landowners of Great Britain and Europe, not all placed the blame on a cultural deficiency on the part of the *canadien* population. Another Englishman, Hugh Gray, visited Lower Canada at the same time as John Lambert and wrote:

> The Canadians are but poor farmers. Indeed, they are generally so, in more senses of the word than one. They are accused of indolence, and an aversion to experiment, or the introduction of any changes in their ancient habits and customs, and probably with reason: it is the characteristic of the peasantry of all countries... Gentlemen, who farm their own grounds, or wealthy farmers, have generally been the inventors or promoters of useful improvements... It is true the land [in Lower Canada] is the property of those who cultivate it: but their capitals are generally so limited... that they cannot afford to make experiments....[4]

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ducers to meet the increasing demands of domestic consumption. Serge Courville in "La crise agricole du Bas-Canada: éléments d'une réflexion géographique", CgQ, XXIV:62 (septembre 1980): 193-224 and XXIV:63 (décembre 1980): 385-428, saw the problem as a crisis in the rural world that developed as the result of important social, demographic and economic changes which in turn led to a significant transformation in the system of agricultural production. In the best synthesis and analysis of this debate to date, R.M. McInnis has questioned the underlying premises of the whole controversy. See his "A Reconsideration of the State of Agriculture in Lower Canada in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century", in Donald H. Akenson (ed.), Canadian Papers in Rural History, Vol. III, (Gananoque, Ont., 1982): 7-49.

[4] Hugh Gray, Letters from Canada, written during a residence there in the years 1806, 1807 and 1808: showing the present state of Canada, its productions -- trade -- commercial importance and political relations, (London, 1809): 136-137.

Thus, even at the time, some astute observers recognized the primacy of capital in adopting new agricultural practices. Among his contemporaries, Gray was one of the few to argue that the principal obstacle to agricultural change was a lack of capital, and not primarily ignorance or cultural resistance to innovation. More recently, historians have stressed the importance of situating the state of early Quebec's agriculture within its precise historical context, eliminating ultimately useless comparisons of the farms of Lower Canada with those of Europe, and avoiding analyses based on ethnic stereotypes.[5]

This thesis falls within this approach to studying agriculture in Lower Canada. It seeks to examine some of the structures of farming within a small region -- the island of Montreal -- between 1780 and 1820. Within the bounds of a small study it is possible to investigate the particularities of farm production and those who engaged in this activity; what is crucial here is that those who owned or farmed the land can be directly linked to specific, observed patterns and methods of production. It is only by understanding the common, day-to-day farming operations, that we can address ourselves to the larger questions of what contributed to the state of Lower Canadian agriculture.

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[5] For examples see Serge Courville, "La crise agricole du Bas-Canada..."; Louise Dechêne, "Observations sur l'agriculture du Bas-Canada au début du XIX^{e} siècle", in Joseph Goy et Jean-Pierre Wallot (dir.), Evolution et éclatement du monde rurale: Structures, fonctionnement et évolution différentielle des sociétés rurales françaises et québécois XVII^{e} -- XX^{e} siècles, Actes du colloque franco-québécois d'histoire rurale comparée, (1982; published 1986): 189-202; and R.M. McInnis, "A Reconsideration of the State of Agriculture...".

By virtue of its climate, soil, location and urban market, the island of Montreal serves as an important case study. Both contemporary observers and present-day historians have recognized that the Montreal region -- with its longer growing season than the lands downriver and a richer, more fertile soil -- has had a much greater capacity for agricultural production than most other areas in the province.[6] Aside from the advantages provided by nature, the countryside around Montreal was also favoured by its close proximity to the rapidly expanding urban market. How effectively did those farming the land exploit this potential provided by climate, geography, and the growing city population? The answer to this question is significant not only on its own merits, but also as a solid base for future comparative studies with agriculture in other regions of the province.

Over the forty years studied, both the composition and size of Montreal's population changed dramatically. Montreal grew from a small, relatively self-contained town of about 6,000 people in 1780 to a city of nearly 20,000 in 1820. Migrants from rural areas of the province and emigrants from the British Isles and the United States contributed in increasing numbers to this rapid expansion. How did these changes affect the surrounding countryside both by promoting outlets for agricultural produce, and by introducing sources of new ideas and capital?

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[6] John Lambert eloquently captured this fact during his travels in Lower Canada: "the Island of Montreal ... for its fertility in every production, may justly be called the garden of Lower Canada", Travels through Canada and the United States of North America, in the years 1806, 1807 and 1808, p.132.

Within historiographical debates, this period has acquired special prominence. Historians, by singlemindedly concentrating on the first half of the nineteenth century as the period of significant transformation in the agricultural economy of Lower Canada, have distorted the complex process of change and created a static image of farming before this time. The most significant development in the agrarian history of the province from the eighteenth through to the mid-nineteenth century was the movement from a subsistence agriculture -- defined as farm production intended primarily for the consumption of the farm family and secondarily for the market -- plagued with frequent crop failures, towards a more diversified style of farming, well-integrated with the marketing structure of the area and no longer under the threat of serious shortages. Although the period under study admittedly is of comparatively short duration, a sounder knowledge of these earlier decades will improve our understanding of the changes identified later in the nineteenth century.

Notarized farm leases, the major source to be explored in this thesis, provide a rare opportunity to view Lower Canadian farming through the eyes of those actually engaged in this activity. Although the cross-section of farms considered is naturally restricted to lands leased, and therefore excludes the majority of farms which were worked by the proprietor, the richness of the documentation enables us to pose those questions integral to a basic understanding of farming on the island of Montreal from 1780 to 1820. What is central to the value of this source is that it permits us to establish the crucial relationships

between people, farms and approaches to agriculture, this last taken broadly to include differences in capital investment, production and farming techniques. This information on farm operations allows us to consider the influence of urban development on rural production, the direct presence of the bourgeoisie in the countryside, and the supposed dichotomy between English-Canadian and French-Canadian methods of farming.

All farm leases, or *baux à ferme*, passed before a Montreal notary from January 1780 to December 1819 form the main documentation of this thesis.[7] The completed series consists of 564 contracts of which 7.3% were made between 1780 and 1789, 20.6% from 1790 to 1799, 28.9% in 1800-1809, and an overwhelming 43.3% between 1810 and 1819. Although the reasons for this substantial increase over time will be taken up more fully in Chapter 1, two major factors likely accounted for this trend: the overall population growth, and the influx of new immigrants who either chose or were forced to resort to a contract more binding than a verbal agreement.

To what extent do these farm leases offer us a representative picture of farming on the island of Montreal? On one level, the deeds are decidedly atypical reflections of what was happening on the island, because no more than 400 agricultural properties -- from small orchards to large farms -- are considered during the forty years, a time when

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[7] These leases can be found in the notarial files housed at the Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal.

most of the island's farms were worked by their owners.[8] However, more significant than sheer numbers are the distinctive characteristics of the properties leased. Overwhelmingly clustered in the Parish of Montreal, half of these lands were owned by the bourgeoisie, most of whom claimed residence in the city. By comparing these farms of the merchants and professionals with those of other proprietors, we can address directly the important question of who invested capital in agriculture.

The structure of this thesis follows the logic established by considering the relationships between people, farms, and approaches to agriculture. The prosopographical examination of lessors and tenants in Chapter 1 is followed in Chapter 2 by a discussion of the basic form and terms of the notarized agreement which mutually bound the contracting parties. Chapters 3 and 4 consider the fixed and moveable capital -- the land, buildings, livestock and farm implements -- of the leased properties. Finally, Chapter 5 investigates the agricultural production and techniques observed on those lands.

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[8] To address the question of the proportion of all leasing represented by notarized deeds, would go well beyond the limits of this thesis. The answer would necessarily rely on a systematic examination of family farm-holdings. For the region of Montreal, only Sylvie Dépatie's study of eighteenth-century île Jésus attempts such a reconstitution, and she concludes that "le faire-valoir indirect ... ne touche de façon permanente que les quelques exploitations appartenant à des non-paysans. La terre paysanne quant à elle n'est louée que de façon temporaire lorsque les circonstances familiales l'exigent." See her "L'évolution d'une société rurale: l'île Jésus au XVIII^{e} siécle", (Phd dissertation, McGill University, 1988): p.192.

CHAPTER 1
LESSORS AND TENANTS

By 1780, the island of Montreal was already a settled agricultural district. Lands along the shore and in the central part of the island around the town had been ceded in the latter half of the seventeenth century, while those inland to the east[1], west and north had largely been granted by the 1730's.[2] Although the occupied farms would be cleared and cultivated at different rates, the physical structure of rural settlement was by then fixed.

The *aveu et dénombrement*, or land roll, prepared by the Sulpicians in the late 1770's and submitted to the crown in 1781, provides a detailed listing of the people, buildings and land holdings in the seigneurie of Montreal.[3] Distributed along the shoreline and in a patchwork of *côtes* covering the interior of the island of Montreal were a total of 1214 farms. A small number of these individual grants, just over 7%, were still used only as woodlots by the families who possessed the land. As we can see from Table 1.1, the majority of the island's 13,166

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[1] In order to simplify descriptions, compass directions follow the Montreal convention of referring to the north-eastern part of the island as the east, the north-west as the north and the south-west as the west.

[2] This rough outline of the pattern of settlement for the island of Montreal was drawn from the dates of farm concessions for each *côte* in the seigneurie found in "Terres de l'île de Montréal", Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice de Montréal, Université de Montréal, Service des Archives, P25, bobines 282-289. See also Louise Dechêne, Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle, (Paris & Montréal, 1974): 259-263, and Ludger Beauregrand, "Géographie historique des côtes de l'île de Montréal", CgQ, XXVIII:73-74 (avril-septembre): 47-62.

[3] A transcription of this *aveu* has been published by Claude Perrault, Montréal en 1781, (Montréal, 1969).

TABLE 1.1
Settlement on the Island of Montreal,
1781 and 1825

	# of Farms	# of Rural Houses	Population Rural	Population Town & Suburbs	Total
1781	1,214	1,140	7,216[1]	5,950[2]	13,166
1825	1,302	2,330	14,739	22,540	37,279

[1] This figure is based on the number of rural houses multiplied by 6.33 -- a ratio of persons per house derived from the 1825 census.
[2] This number, also an estimation from the number of houses, was calculated and adjusted by Alan M. Stewart, "Settling an 18th-Century *Faubourg*: Property and Family in the Saint-Laurent Suburb, 1735-1810", (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1988): 48.

Sources: Claude Perrault, Montréal en 1781, (Montréal, 1969) and Montréal en 1825, (Montréal, 1977).

inhabitants lived in the rural areas outside of the town and suburbs, the countryside accounting for 55% of the total.

During the four decades that followed, the island of Montreal experienced a threefold increase in population. According to the census of 1825, the rate of growth was greatest in the town and suburbs while in the countryside the number of rural inhabitants only doubled.[4] Despite the pronounced increase in population, the structure of land holdings established by 1780 had changed little. The number of farms had grown by less than 10%, indicating a general stability in the size

[4] The census of 1825 was also published by Claude Perrault in Montréal en 1825, (Montréal, 1977).

of holdings.[5] Although the census is silent on this matter, the amount of land cleared and brought into cultivation on most farms had undoubtedly increased since the latter decades of the eighteenth century. Indeed, by the 1820's, firewood for the town and suburbs did not come from the island itself, but was brought downriver from the newly settled seigneuries to the west.[6]

Throughout this span of forty years, one of the most important structures in the countryside maintained its dominance. Although the primary unit of production remained the family, not all farms were owned by the people who worked them. Notarial contracts identify several hundred individuals who as either a lessor, a tenant, or in some supporting role were active in the leasing of agricultural lands from 1780 to 1820. While the majority of rural inhabitants were not involved in this practice, the content of these documents suggest some fundamental ways in which the countryside was changing, particularly in the vicinity of the city.

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[5] The figures for the number of farms in 1781 and 1825 given in Table 1.1 are further supported by Joseph Bouchette's assertion in 1815 that there were "altogether 1376 concessions, formed into...*côtes*" on the island of Montreal. Although no source is provided for this number, Bouchette, the surveyor-general of Lower Canada, quite probably obtained it from the seigneurial *terrier* which identifies precisely that number of farm grants. See Bouchette's Topographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada, (London, 1815; reprint Saint-Lambert, 1973): 131-135, 139-164 for his description of the general lay out of the island of Montreal at the start of the nineteenth century. For the *terrier* see "Terres de l'île de Montréal", Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice de Montréal, Université de Montréal, Service des Archives, P25, bobines 282-289.

[6] See Robert Sweeny, Grace Laing Hogg and Richard Rice, Les relations ville/campagne: le cas de bois du chauffage, (Montréal, 1988) for a discussion of this trade in Montreal during the 1820's.

To build a foundation for a subsequent analysis of agriculture on the island of Montreal, it is important first to study the people who participated in farm leasing. Drawing upon the series of notarized leases, this chapter examines the socio-economic status, ethnic background, country of origin and residence of the lessors and tenants. This information permits an analysis of both the internal distinctions among the leasing population and of the contrasts between this group and the mass of farmers who possessed and worked their own land.

1.1 THE LESSORS

Notarized farm leases offer one of the best sources to study agrarian structures and farming practices in Quebec before 1850.[7] The strength of these particular documents lies not only in their description of the major parties to the act by name, occupation, and place of residence, but also in the identification of those individuals -- landless labourers, widows, recent immigrants -- who commonly are absent from the historical record. Notarial documents allow us to follow the lines of continuity and change between the occasional glimpses of a

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[7] Louise Dechêne, Habitants et marchands, and Marcel Trudel, Montréal, La formation d'une société 1642-1663, (Montréal, 1976) both examined farm leases for the island of Montreal in the seventeenth century, while Allan Greer looked at a small sampling of agricultural leases in the Lower Richelieu valley in his Peasant, Lord and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840, (Toronto, 1985), and Sylvie Dépatie includes a discussion of 99 farm leases in her study of eighteenth-century île-Jésus, "L'évolution d'une société rurale: l'île-Jésus au XVIII^{e} siècle", (PhD dissertation, McGill University, September 1988).

society offered by the static analyses of censuses, land rolls and other similar sources.

While the clear majority of leases indicate the occupation and residence of the lessors, a small portion of the notaries active in this period, in contrast to the prevailing practice, consistently passed over any mention of the profession or domicile of some or all parties to the act. Without this information, it was difficult in a few cases to positively identify and connect lessors of the same name. For the most part, however, by relying on a combination of variables such as the lessor's occupation and residence, the location, size and neighbouring properties of the farm, and the occasional mention of a spouse, it has been possible to trace precisely lessors who appeared more than once in the series. Furthermore, where clear identifications have been established, missing information on various lessors has been recovered from other sources such as listings of marriages for the parish and of residents living in the town.[8]

A total of 310 lessors and 26 alliances of lessors were found in the 564 acts collected. For the purposes of any subsequent analyses of lessors, however, each of the 26 groupings of lessors will be counted as a single lessor. Because almost all farm leases with two or more co-

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[8] Daniel Bergeron, Lise Brosseau and Rosario Gauthier, Mariages de la Paroisse Notre-Dame de Montréal (1642-1850), 2 Vols. (Montréal, 1974); "Alphabetical Listing of Proprietors and Tenants in the Town of Montreal", unpublished typescript prepared from reconstituted lot titles, Groupe de recherche sur les bâtiments en pierre grise de Montréal, Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1984. (I would like to thank Alan Stewart for having made this document available to me.)

TABLE 1.2
Frequency of Appearance of Lessors in Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal, 1780-1820

Number of Appearances in Contracts as Lessor	Number of Lessors	
1	225	67.0%
2	52	15.5%
3	36	10.7%
4	8	2.4%
5	7	2.1%
6	3	0.9%
7	1	0.3%
8	2	0.6%
9	1	0.3%
10	1	0.3%
	336	100.0%

Source: 564 notarized farm leases.

lessors pertain to land owned by the heirs of an estate or by merchants in partnership, to count each of these people would result in an over-representation of certain occupations, residences and ethnic backgrounds in the final tally. As shown in Table 1.2, two-thirds of all lessors were involved in a farm lease only once, while the remaining one-third appeared in anywhere from two to ten acts.

Several factors might account for the high percentage of non-repeating lessors. One straightforward explanation is that in the case of widows and curators of estates, a single lease was often made for a length of time determined by when the children or heirs would reach the age of majority. The majority of cases, however, are not explained so easily. Perhaps the most compelling argument can be built around the supposition that two strangers would be more likely to seek a formal,

notarized contract than would two acquaintances or relatives. If this were the situation, the growing numbers of immigrants to the island of Montreal, especially in the last decade of our period, would be more inclined, or even required, to use the services of a notary in their first transactions in the colony. Another possibility is that some lessors and tenants made an initial notarized lease and then made subsequent renewals by oral or informal written agreement. Ultimately, because the incidence of informal farm leases is unknown, this question has no definitive answer.[9]

Occupational Profile of Lessors

The 336 lessors identified in the series of leases represented a cross section of the population, but one which was disproportionately weighted to the élites of the society. In Table 1.3, two-fifths of all lessors fall into the occupational category of merchants, professionals, or military officers established in Montreal.[10] If the widows of men who were involved in these pursuits were added to this total, the proportion of 'élite' lessors would rise to 45%. Furthermore, a tabulation of the lessors' occupations in all 564 acts reveals that almost half of all notarized agricultural leases between 1780 and 1820 were made by

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[9] A transaction between François Jarry and Louis Belanger, both resident at Côte-Vertu in the Parish of Saint-Laurent, records that Belanger "à titre de bail verbal et dont les conditions n'ont jamais été redigées par écrit" had occupied the farm of Jarry for the past year. n.m. Delisle 14/09/1796 #2281.

[10] Although a further breakdown of this category would have been preferable, the distinctions between commerce, a profession or the military would have been arbitrary owing to the multiple interests and involvements of many lessors.

TABLE 1.3
Occupational Classification of Lessors for Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal, 1780-1820

Occupational Group	Number of Lessors		Number of Leases	
Elites	134	39.9%	267	47.3%
Artisans	48	14.3%	75	13.3%
Farmers	70	20.8%	105	18.6%
Women	46	13.7%	62	11.0%
Religious Inst^{ns}	3	0.9%	16	2.8%
Unknown	35	10.4%	39	6.9%
	336	100.0%	564	100.0%

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

bourgeois lessors. Once again, if the widows of this group were added, the final tally would increase to 52.5%.

The concentration of merchant and professional lessors can be explained by a number of factors. Enjoying the greatest affluence, members of the upper class were generally alone in possessing sufficient capital to invest in land that they themselves did not farm. In addition, it was these same people who would have had both the money to use a notary and probably also the desire to protect their capital investment through a formal, legal agreement. A final explanation for the seemingly disproportionate number of merchants and professionals found in farm leases might be attributed to methodology. As only notaries practising in Montreal were consulted, it is logical to assume that there was less chance of picking up acts between two rural inhabitants. However, the aforementioned reason of insufficient capital, and the fact that there were only a handful of rural notaries on the island of Mon-

treal at this time, would indicate that the number of leases not included could not substantially alter these figures.

The remaining three-fifths of all lessors were primarily artisans and farmers, although women, religious institutions and unknowns together accounted for one-fourth of the total. Among the artisans, tanners represented the only significant concentration of lessors within a trade, as their numbers equalled almost 20% of this category. Both the location of Montreal's tanneries, on Côteau Saint-Pierre and Côte des Neiges, and the nature of the craft itself -- dependant on cattle hides and sheep skins -- would account for the relatively strong presence of tanners.[11] Skilled workmen from a broad range of trades constituted the remaining artisanal landowners. Over half of the rural inhabitants leasing agricultural lands were described as *cultivateur* in the notarial contract, with the balance spread among other classifications which also might be loosely translated as farmer. Three of every four female lessors were widows, often of men who had been involved in commerce or a profession. Notaries were used to prepare the farm leases of three religious institutions -- the Soeurs Religieuses de Saint-Joseph (Hôtel-Dieu), the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice and the Collège de Montréal -- although the personal archives of these and other organizations might reveal other formalized contracts.

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[11] See Joanne Burgess, "Work, Family and Community: Montreal Leather Craftsmen, 1790-1831", (thèse du doctorat, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1986) for a discussion of tanners in Montreal during this time.

When the information on the occupation of lessors in all 564 acts is further broken down by decade according to the date the lease was notarized, several significant trends emerge as demonstrated in Table 1.4. In particular, over forty years, while absolute numbers rose, the relative importance of the merchant and professional classes decreased substantially in contrast to the proportional increases made by the artisanal and rural groupings.

As there is a general paucity of literature dealing with Montreal and its environs during this time, it is not possible to do more than speculate as to the reasons for this pattern. One possible explanation for this relative rise over forty years in the percentage of artisans and farmers who appeared as lessors in the series of leases is linked to social and economic differentiation within this population.[12] A small but expanding number of urban workers and rural inhabitants may have possessed land, through either some form of inheritance or accumulation,

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[12] For a study of the economic basis of social differentiation among the peasants of the seigneurie of Saint-Hyacinthe see Christian Dessureault, "Les fondements de la hierarchie sociale au sein de la paysannerie: le cas de Saint-Hyacinthe, 1760-1815", (thèse du doctorat, Université de Montréal, 1985) and "L'égalitarisme paysan dans l'ancienne société rurale de la vallée du Saint-Laurent: éléments pour une réinterprétation", RHAF, XXXX:3 (hiver 1987): 373-407. Although he argues that peasants in the Lower Richelieu were an homogeneous class, much of the evidence in Allan Greer's Peasant, Lord and Merchant... also points to a definite hierarchy among the *habitant* of this region in the century following 1740 (see for example pages 136-138). In an urban context, some work demonstrating social differentiation among artisans in Montreal has been done by Robert Sweeny, "Internal Dynamics and the International Cycle: Questions of the Transition in Montréal, 1821-1828", (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 1985); Gilles Lauzon and Alan Stewart, "Stratégies d'accumulation du capital: le cas des métiers de la construction", Unpublished paper presented to l'Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française, Compton, Quebec, 1983.

TABLE 1.4
Occupational Classification of Lessors
in Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal, by Decade,
1780-1820

Occupational Group	1780-89		1790-99		1800-09		1810-19		Total	
	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
Elites	29	70.7	63	54.3	65	39.9	110	45.1	267	47.3
Artisans	2	4.9	13	11.2	30	18.4	30	12.3	75	13.3
Farmers	1	2.4	11	9.5	29	17.8	64	26.2	105	18.6
Women	5	12.2	6	5.2	23	14.1	28	11.5	62	11.0
Rel. Inst^{ns}	4	9.8	10	8.6	2	1.2	0	0	16	2.8
Unknown	0	0	13	11.2	14	8.6	12	4.9	39	6.9
TOTALS	41	100	116	100	163	100	244	100	564	100

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

that they could lease. Furthermore, some artisans may have relocated to one of the suburbs to learn and practice a trade, and upon the death of a relative found that they were the proprietors of a piece of land that they had no intention of farming themselves. Another hypothesis of a totally different order is that these people simply sought the services of a notary with increasing frequency during this period.

The decline and eventual absence of religious institutions as lessors, from nearly 10% of all leases in the last two decades of the eighteenth century to none in 1810-1819, can be explained more easily. Around the turn of the century, both the Seminary and the Hôtel-Dieu made several emphyteutic leases for their estates close to the city.[13]

[13] See ANQM, n.m. Chaboillez 21/07/1806 #7532 and 19/01/1807 #7532 for two 17-year leases made by the Seminary on lands near Rivière Saint-Pierre and n.m. Chaboillez 7/11/1791 #437, 14/07/1792 #575, 23/07/1792 #579, 21/12/1792 #635 and 14/10/1794 #1237 for leases ranging from 30 to 99 years on Fief Saint-Joseph and La Providence, properties held by

In effect, the length of these leases removed them from further consideration during the next forty years. Along with longer leases, the early nineteenth century also saw the conversion of some demesne and institutional lands from agricultural to urban uses, a process that would accelerate markedly in the following decades.[14] A final possible explanation for the complete absence of notarized leases by the religious institutions after 1807 is that the business affairs of the two orders and the secular priests increasingly were managed within their own walls. While no concrete proof of this supposition exists, one example provides some support. A notarized farm lease for the Mountain demesne passed by the Seminary in 1796 for an initial term of five years was subsequently renewed for nine more years. This extension of the lease, however, was not noted on the act deposited with the notary, but was appended to the copy in the possession of the Seminary.[15]

Hôtel-Dieu.

[14] See for example the series of emphyteutic leases made on small plots (2 x 4 arp.) of the Hôtel-Dieu's terres des pauvres (fief Saint-Augustin) by John McKindlay (the lessee of this land for 99 years, n.m. Chaboillez 14/10/1794 #1237) and Donald McKercher between 1801 and 1803 (n.m. Chaboillez). For a discussion of the eventual subdivision of the Seminary's Saint-Gabriel demesne after 1840 and the development of the mountain demesne twenty years later, see Brian Young, In Its Corporate Capacity: The Seminary of Montreal as a Business Institution, 1816-1876, (Montreal, 1986); especially Chapter 6 -- "Land Developers: Subdivision on Two Seigneurial Domaines" pp.131-149.

[15] See n.m. Chaboillez 1/10/1796 #2119 and "Tableau des baux à ferme du Domaine du Fort de la Montagne" pp.36-37 in J.-Bruno Harel, "Le Domaine du Fort de la Montagne (1666-1860)", Montréal: artisans, histoire, patrimoine, (Montréal, 1979).

Residence

In addition to occupation, notaries commonly recorded the current residence of all parties to an act. Indeed, it would appear that overall, notaries were much more assiduous in their collection of this information, as only 6.9% of all leases do not mention the lessor's domicile. The residence of the 336 lessors, shown in Table 1.5, demonstrates clearly the links between Montreal and the surrounding countryside at this time. A third of all lessors resided within the walls of the old town while a further 14.3% lived just outside in the encircling *faubourgs*. Thus, urban inhabitants, accounting for half of all landowners involved in the formal leasing of farm land on the island of Montreal, definitely had demonstrated an interest and established a presence in the nearby rural areas. How and to what degree did these townspeople, half of whom were merchants and professionals, directly influence agricultural production?

Outside of Montreal and its *faubourgs*, the remaining half of the lessors were spread along the *côtes* of the countryside, concentrated mainly in the parishes of Montreal, Saint-Laurent and Lachine. Not surprisingly, farmers and their widows constituted the majority among lessors who did not dwell in the Parish of Montreal. In contrast to the townspeople who generally lived some distance from their rural holdings, many of these people actually resided in reserved lodgings on or very near to their land.

TABLE 1.5
Declared Residence of Lessors
in Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

	Elite	Art	Farm	Wom	Rel	?	Tot	
Parish of Montreal								
Town	75	13	1	16	3	-	108	
Suburbs	12	20	5	7	-	4	48	
Remainder of Parish	18	13	24	8	-	11	75	
Absent from Montreal	5	-	-	-	-	1	6	
								237
Parish of Saint-Laurent	-	-	13	5	-	8	26	
Lachine	7	-	8	4	-	3	22	
Sault-au-Recollet	1	-	6	-	-	1	8	
Longue-Pointe	-	-	7	-	-	-	7	
Sainte-Anne	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	
Pointe-aux-Trembles	1	-	3	1	-	-	5	
Pointe-Claire	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	
Rivière-des-Prairies	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	
Sainte-Geneviève	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
								72
Off Island	10	-	1	-	-	1	12	
								12
Unknown	4	2	-	5	-	4	15	
								15
TOTALS	134	48	70	46	3	34	336	

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

Place of Origin and Ethnicity

Although an examination of residence serves to support the general profile of farm lessors already gained from the analysis of occupations, it yields few insights into the background or origins of these people. While it can be safely assumed that a good number of these landowners were natives of the area, both the growth and the changing ethnic composition of the island's population during this period (see Table 1.7) indicates that increasing numbers of immigrants were settling in the district. Unfortunately, farm leases contain few direct answers to the

question of the lessors' country of birth. The time-consuming task of family reconstitution through parish records was beyond the scope of this study and would probably have resulted in limited success -- due in part to the difficulties inherent in attempting linkages without the spouse's name and also complicated by the fragmentary nature of the Protestant registers.

Nevertheless, for twenty-five of the more prominent lessors, place of origin could be easily determined. This group, all involved in commerce or the military with the exception of a Presbyterian minister, consisted of nine natives of Scotland, five of United States (one born of French-Canadian parents at Michilimackinac and another of a French father and an American mother), four of Lower Canada, three of England, two of Ireland, one of France and one of Germany.[16] By no means, however, do these men represent an accurate sample of all lessors, or even of only the merchant and professional landowners. Perhaps the only firm conclusion that can be drawn from these figures is that a number of immigrants clearly were involved in acquiring and renting land.

Despite the lack of information concerning the birthplace of most lessors, it is still possible to take a crude measure of ethnicity. On

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[16] The biographies of John Campbell, Gabriel Cotté, Joseph Howard and Normand MacLeod can be found in the DCB, Volume IV, (Toronto, 1979); those of Charles Blake, François Cazeau, Charles Chaboillez, Jean-Guillaume Delisle, Pierre Foretier, Pierre Guy, Simon McTavish, John Ogilvy, Daniel Robertson and Isaac Todd in DCB, Volume V, (Toronto, 1983); and finally in DCB, Volume VI, (Toronto, 1987) those of Pierre Berthelet, Robert Easton, Horatio Gates (Abel Bellow), John Gray, John Johnson, Henry Loedel, Thomas McCord, William McGillivray, Alexander McKenzie and John McKindlay.

the basis of an individual's name, each lessor can be classified as either *canadien* or non-*canadien*. Obviously, name alone is not a foolproof indicator of ethnicity, especially in cases where parents were of different backgrounds or where the notary distorted a non-French name, but overall it is a reasonably accurate indice.

During the forty years studied, 68.5% (230 of 336) of all lessors were of *canadien* origin while the remainder appear to have been mostly Scottish, English, Irish and American with a small number of Germans. While this breakdown is not particularly surprising in consideration of the evolving ethnic composition of Montreal and its environs, some interesting trends are revealed by two analyses -- change over time and ethnic composition within each occupational group.

As demonstrated in Table 1.6, the number of non-*canadien* lessors steadily increased over time, both in real terms and in proportion to *canadien* lessors. In the first decade, 1780 to 1789, non-*canadien* lessors accounted for only one out of every six lessors, but by the final decade, 1810 to 1819, their numbers had risen to two out of every five. This increase might logically be attributed in some degree to the influx of immigrants to the Montreal area which gathered momentum in this period, but to what extent was it reflective of changes in the ethnic composition of the entire population?

To answer this question, we turn once more to the *aveu* of 1781 and the census of 1825. The different nature and function of these two

TABLE 1.6
Ethnicity of Lessors and Tenants
in Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

	Lessors			Tenants		
Decade	Total no.	*cdn.*(%)	non-*cdn.*(%)	Total no.	*cdn.*(%)	non-*cdn.*(%)
1780-89	41	85.4	14.6	41	73.2	26.8
1790-99	116	71.6	28.4	116	50.0	50.0
1800-09	163	71.8	28.2	163	46.0	56.0
1810-19	244	60.7	39.3	244	30.7	69.3

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

sources makes a direct comparison impossible on the issue of ethnicity, yet it is feasible to gain some idea of how important immigration was to the population of the island of Montreal between 1781 and 1825. Because the *aveu* is essentially a listing of all proprietors, land and buildings for the seigneurie, a methodological problem is encountered in enumerating *canadien* and non-*canadien* names. The ethnicity of all other occupants of the house cannot be determined nor can that of those people who did not own property on the island. Despite this serious difficulty, there are no other sources for this period that can be used to examine this question, thus leaving the figures from the *aveu* as the only available indicators.

If the population is split into urban, suburban and rural groupings, an urban emphasis is revealed in the non-*canadien* pattern of settlement in 1781. In the town, 14.7% (45 of 307) of all proprietors were of non-*canadien* origin. Once outside the walls this proportion

dropped dramatically, as only 4.8% (17 of 352) of lot owners in the *faubourgs* and a mere 0.3% (3 of 1,140) of farm owners carried a British or German surname.[17] Although these figures almost certainly underestimate the non-*canadien* element of the population, they do indicate that early immigrants to the area established themselves predominantly in the town.

Forty-four years later, this concentration of the non-*canadien* population in and around Montreal is revealed once again. As shown in Table 1.7, the census of 1825 provides a much more accurate representation of the ethnic composition of the population, based on an enumeration of the birthplace of all residents of the island. While the non-*canadiens* now made up 45.6% of the residents in the town and *faubourgs*, they still had not settled in substantial numbers in the countryside, except for the parishes of Montreal (minus the urban area) and Lachine where they accounted for 30% of the population.

To what extent, then, was the increase in the number of non-*canadien* lessors merely a reflection of the changing ethnic composition of the island's population? Taking into account the residential profile of these landowners, and the fact that the size of the immigrant population between 1810 and 1819 would undoubtedly have been less than in 1825, it appears that the proportion of non-*canadien* lessors remained

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[17] The numbers for the town are from Louise Dechêne, "La croissance de Montréal au XVIII^{e} siècle", RHAF, XXVII:2 (septembre 1973): 169-170.

TABLE 1.7
Ethnic Composition of the Population on the Island of Montreal, 1825

Parish	Country of Origin							
	Cdn.	Eng. Cdn.	Eng.	Irl.	Scot.	Amer.	Other	Total
Montreal (town & sub.)	12,273 (54.4%)	2847	1249	3641	1380	730	420	22,540
Montreal (rural area)	2,557 (70.8%)	281	132	374	162	90	18	3,614
Lachine	982 (69.7%)	171	21	119	101	11	3	1,408
St-Laurent	2,175 (95.6%)	45	3	13	32	5	1	2,274
Longue Pointe	666 (84.2%)	28	17	28	43	4	5	791
Sault-au-Recollet	1,534 (96.6%)	26	2	8	10	8	-	1,588
Pointe-Claire	1,327 (96.3%)	22	5	2	12	10	-	1,378
Riv-des-Prairies	698 (99.6%)	1	-	-	2	-	-	701
Pte-aux-Trembles	985 (98.1%)	13	2	-	1	1	2	1,004
Ste-Geneviève	1,397 (99.2%)	2	-	-	9	-	-	1,408
Ste-Anne	538 (93.9%)	16	2	8	5	2	2	573
TOTALS	25,132	3452	1433	4193	1757	861	451	37,279

Sources: Claude Perrault, Montréal en 1825, (Montréal, 1977) and corrected totals for the city and suburbs from Jean-Paul Bernard, Paul-André Linteau and Jean-Claude Robert, "Les tablettes statistiques de Jacques Viger (1825)", Groupe de recherche sur la société montréalaise au 19e siècle, Rapport 1972-1973, 14 and Appendices.

roughly consistent with their presence in the overall population throughout the forty years. Nonetheless, there were some significant differences between the two ethnic groups of proprietors.

The occupational classification presented in Table 1.8 reveals a definite dissimilarity in the socio-economic composition of the two groups. Although the non-*canadien* landlords represented less than one-third of all lessors, they accounted for over half of the people in the merchant and professional grouping. Indeed, in contrast to less than one of every three *canadiens*, almost two of every three non-*canadien* lessors made a living from either business or a profession.

The economic resources of the immigrant population probably accounted in part for the disproportionate number of bourgeois English-speaking lessors. Unfortunately, little is known about the early immigrants to the province, especially those who came before the large-scale emigration from the British Isles that began after 1815. These first newcomers were likely to have been better off, in terms of education, motivation and assets, than their compatriots who followed during the economic dislocations of the post-Napoleonic era.[18] At the least, those who left their native country to come to Lower Canada during this period had to possess sufficient capital resources to both pay their passage over and to establish themselves in the new country. As a

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[18] Donald H. Akenson in his work on Irish immigration to Ontario makes a similar comparison between the emigrants who left before the Famine and those who followed during the years of destitution. See The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History, (Kingston & Montreal, 1984): 21-23.

TABLE 1.8
Occupations of *Canadien* and Non-*Canadien* Lessors for Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal, 1780-1820

Occupational Group	*Canadien* Lessors		Non-*Canadien* Lessors	
Merchants & Professionals	66	28.7%	68	64.2%
Artisans	41	17.8%	7	6.6%
Farmers	57	24.8%	13	12.3%
Women	32	13.9%	14	13.2%
Religious Institutions	3	1.3%	0	--
Unknown	31	13.5%	4	3.8%
Total	230	100.0%	106	100.0%

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

result, a preselection process occurred in the homeland that generally eliminated the poorer members of society from emigration.[19]

A second possible reason for the large numbers of non-*canadien* merchant and professional lessors might be found in the attitudes to property prevalent in Great Britain in the eighteenth and early nine-

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[19] For a discussion of the relative cost of emigration from England to New England in the seventeenth century and of those who could afford it see David Cressy, Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century. (Cambridge, 1987): 107-129. The cost of establishing oneself as a farmer in Lower Canada during the early nineteenth century is partially outlined by Charles Frederick Grece, a gentleman-farmer living in the Parish of Longue-Pointe, in his treatise Essays on Practical Husbandry Addressed to the Canadian Farmers, (Montreal, 1817): 113-119; and by Fernand Ouellet, Lower Canada 1791-1840: Social Change and Nationalism, (Toronto, 1980): 140-141.

teenth century. Land ownership formed the basis for wealth and power in this society, and as such provided a measure of a person's social and economic status.[20] Because the availability and acquisition of land was much easier in Canada than overseas, it would undoubtedly have seemed an attractive investment for immigrants with some capital.

Motivations of Lessors

While an analysis of occupation, residence and ethnicity identifies some important characteristics of the leasing population, it reveals little of what prompted landowners to let their properties. Admittedly, the question of motivation is not one which lends itself to ready or easy answers, yet it does need to be addressed. Information provided in some leases produces tantalizing if incomplete glimpses into the varied reasons why these lessors may have resorted to a notarized lease. These clues to the motivations of the proprietors are generally found in an examination of the identity and personal circumstances of a lessor, the specific terms of the lease itself, or the prevailing economic climate.

One of the most plausible and easily supported explanations is that the land was in the possession of a person or persons who were clearly unable to cultivate the soil themselves. In the cases of Joseph Berlinquet and Jean-Baptiste Martin dit Ladouceur, proprietors of farms

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[20] For Scotland see L. Timperley, "The Pattern of Landholding in Eighteenth-Century Scotland", in The Making of the Scottish Countryside, eds. M.L. Parry and T.R. Slater (London and Montreal, 1980): 137-139; and for England the two classic studies, G.E. Mingay, English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century, (London and Toronto, 1963) and F.M.L. Thompson, English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century, (London and Toronto, 1963).

in Côte Sainte-Catherine and Côte de Liesse respectively, their incapacities were explicitly stated. Berlinquet was "interdicted by reason of his mental imbecility" and Martin dit Ladouceur suffered from "dérangement d'ésprit".[21]

Female lessors would also fall into this category of owners who were not expected to labour on the land. As three-quarters of these women were widows, the rental of their agricultural property was necessary in order to provide an annual income, in either money or produce. Thus, when Hypolite Rouselle dit Sansoucy, the widow of an *habitant cultivateur*, married a man of the same occupation in 1810, she terminated her eleven-year lease after only three and a half years.[22] It is probable that her new husband then took up the work of the farm. Similarly, when Narcisse Roy, guardian of Marie-Julie Roy leased a farm for nine years in 1801, a stipulation was included that if Marie-Julie married before the end of the lease, the tenant was to deliver the land to her spouse on the September 29th before her marriage.[23] But it was not only widowed women who found a need to let their land. After her husband departed for the *pays d'en haut* in 1801, Charlotte Verdon leased their farm of 66 *arpents* to a *cultivateur* also resident in the Parish of

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[21] n.m. Mondelet 01/04/1806 #3023 and Cadieux 03/05/1819 #242

[22] n.m. Lukin 17/02/1807 #3964.

[23] n.m. Chaboillez 21/09/1801 #4876.

Saint-Laurent.[24] Seven other women, unmarried with two exceptions, also rented their property in exchange for money or produce.[25]

In addition to gender and health, age was also an important factor in determining the ability of a person to farm. Twenty-five of the leases made involved lands inherited by children who had not yet reached the age of majority. These farms were rented out by the minors' guardian who was responsible for maintaining the family property and managing the resultant income in order to pay for the education, room and board of the heirs.

Not only were some land owners too young to care for their property, but others appear to have been too old. In at least nine cases, a farmer leased land to his grown son, which possibly indicated infirmity on the part of the father. This particular situation, however, raises more questions than it answers. While aging parents may have felt the need to lease their land, it remains unclear why they felt it necessary to formalize the agreement in a notarized contract.

All of the above arguments are based on the supposition that the lessor was unable to work, but what of those who were unwilling? Mon-

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[24] n.m. Barron 27/04/1801 #145.

[25] The two married women were Lydia Dutton who had her husband's authorization to act alone (n.m. Lukin 23/06/1803), and Catherine Hubert who was "separée de corps et de biens" from her husband Thomas Barron (n.m. Sanguinet 28/11/1780 #1713, n.m. Sanguinet 1/10/1782 #2065, and n.m. Papineau 22/03/1782 #232). The marital status of the remaining six women is unknown.

treal in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a rapidly expanding city, due in part to the migration from the surrounding countryside.[26] While difficult to prove, it is nevertheless highly likely that some people who possessed or eventually inherited land moved to the town and suburbs, took up work in one of the trades, and leased their agricultural property. The large number of artisans resident in the suburbs who appear as lessors in the series of notarized acts lends some support to this hypothesis.

While this brief discussion of motivations may explain the actions of many of the women, farmers and artisans who let their lands, it does not reveal the incentives of the merchant and professional lessors. The extent of the urban bourgeoisie's involvement in agricultural land -- this group, it will be recalled, accounted for half of all lessors -- is significant as an indicator of important changes in the social and economic structures of Lower Canada. A complex interweaving of certain preconditions, opportunities and interests reveals a diversity of possible explanations of the urban elites' involvement in the countryside.

Historically, commercial investment in the land has been inextricably linked to the development of good markets and transportation systems. The island of Montreal, with a network of roads connecting the *côtes*, and its situation in a major river, was well served by both land and water routes. Agricultural production for export does not appear to

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[26] For evidence of migration to one of Montreal's suburbs see Alan M. Stewart, "Settling an 18th-Century *Faubourg*", 150-159, especially Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6.

have interested the majority of bourgeois landowners, however, several factors made the domestic market increasingly attractive. Most significantly, the population of the town and suburbs nearly quadrupled in the four decades under study, thereby ensuring a steadily growing demand for farm produce.[27] In addition, various opportunities arose or were created for the marketing of specialized crops, such as hops and fruit and vegetables, a development that will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

Aside from the inducements offered by the diversity and accessibility of the local market, the merchant and professional classes may have possessed far more pragmatic reasons for owning agricultural property. A relative dearth of investment opportunities coupled with the security and potential income derived from the placement of capital in land may have encouraged some members of the urban elite to look to the countryside.[28] In fact, in addition to farms near to the city, several prominent Montreal residents owned considerable tracts of land off the island of Montreal, especially in the Eastern Townships and Upper

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[27] See Table 1.1.

[28] The advantages of land as an investment are discussed in Louise Dechêne, "La rente du faubourg Saint-Roch à Québec -- 1750-1850", RHAF, XXXIV:4 (mars, 1981): 571, 595-596. Merchants and professionals in 17th-century France found farms an attractive investment, especially in the Paris region. Jean Jacquart has noted that farming on holdings between 100 and 150 *arpents* required "only limited investment, could be managed by one tenant-farmer or sharecropper with relatively little capital equipment, and yet it yielded products sufficiently varied and plentiful to afford a profit". "French Agriculture in the Seventeenth Century", in P. Earle (ed.), Essays in European Economic History, 1500-1800, (Oxford, 1974; trans. of "La Production agricole dans la France du XVII^{e} siècle", XVII^{e} siècle, (1966)): 167.

Canada.[29] Also, the growth of Montreal's suburbs undoubtedly led to some land speculation. A number of individuals bought garden-orchard plots on the urban fringe and exploited the agricultural potential of the soil, waiting until the demand for land was high enough to subdivide the holding into house lots.[30]

The interests of the lessors and their different approaches to land use can be explored more directly through the farm leases themselves. In each act, the owner explicitly stipulated what property, either moveable or immoveable, was to be reserved for himself or his family. Consequently, any combination of buildings, land, resources, produce and rights of access might be specifically set aside by the landowner. At least one item was mentioned in 60% of the leases, while the other 40% of all contracts contained a clause stating that the farm was let 'without reserve'. As can be seen in Table 1.9, a tabulation of the number of leases in which a certain item was protected yields several significant trends.

Judging from the large number of reserves that the urban bourgeoisie placed on their properties, ownership of agricultural lands was

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[29] James Cuthbert, Charles Blake, Simon McTavish, Daniel Robertson, John Gray, John Johnson, Henry Loedel, William McGillivray, and John McKindlay all owned large expanses of land off the island of Montreal in addition to the agricultural properties close to Montreal which they let through notarized contract. Information on their landholdings can be found in the individual biographies of each man in the DCB, Volumes IV, V and VI.

[30] See Alan Stewart, "Settling an 18th-century *Faubourg*"... Chapters 1-3; in addition, the motive behind many of the emphyteutic leases was clearly speculation.

TABLE 1.9
Reserves Placed on Property as Specified by Lessors in Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal, 1780-1820

RESERVES	Elites	Artisans	Rural	Women	Rel. Inst.	?	TOTAL
Buildings							
House	34	3	8	6	-	5	56
Barn	10	4	-	-	-	-	14
Stable	10	2	1	-	-	1	14
Other Buildings	10	2	2	1	-	1	16
Workshop/Manufactory	3	2	-	-	-	-	5
Lime Kiln(s)	-	2	1	-	-	-	3
Windmill	3	-	1	-	-	-	4
Sawmill	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lodgings for self/family - portion of house	36	9	9	2	1	5	62
Place in Stable for horse(s)/cattle	9	2	7	2	1	3	24
Place in Barn to store hay/grain	13	5	9	6	-	2	35
Place in cellar or loft	-	-	-	2	-	3	5
Lodgings in summer	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Lodgings up to specified date	3	2	5	-	-	1	11
Land Use							
Land for cultivation	21	3	11	3	-	2	40
Land for subdivision, sell lots	8	1	2	-	-	-	11
Land for building for personal use	6	1	4	-	-	-	11
Pasture	18	4	4	-	-	3	29
Garden	29	5	6	8	-	7	55
Orchard	21	3	2	4	3	3	36
-specific trees or fruit	12	6	1	-	-	1	20
Resources							
Wood, Timber	19	2	9	3	-	1	34
Stone	7	9	3	2	2	-	23
Sand/Gravel	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
Water	1	1	2	-	-	-	4
Chalk (for bricks)	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Rights							
Pasture rights for livestock	21	4	10	5	1	5	46
Access/Passage	41	9	23	7	2	5	87
Right to care for trees in orchard	11	4	-	1	-	-	16
Right to use oven	1	-	1	1	-	1	4
Right to sell property	2	1	-	-	-	-	3
Right to fish	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Produce							
Hay	6	1	-	-	-	3	10
Fruit	4	2	1	-	-	1	8
Hops	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
Animals	3	-	1	1	-	-	5
Number of leases without reserves	97	30	46	31	7	9	220
% of leases without reserves	37.5%	40%	44.2%	52.5%	43.8%	25%	40.1%
Total number of leases	259	75	104	59	16	36	549

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

not merely a straight capital investment for many of those involved. Close to half (46.9%) of all élites who did set aside a part of their property specified that they were to have some form of lodging, be it in a separate house or in a portion of the house occupied by the tenant. Further evidence found in the leases suggests that several merchants and professionals who lived in the town saw their farm as a country estate. In these instances, a substantial stone house, stables and pasturage for horses, an orchard and a garden were set aside for the exclusive use of the lessor and his family. Moreover, in some cases the tenant was obliged to supply fresh milk, cream, butter, eggs and garden produce during the summer months when the owner's family was in residence.[31] In addition to viewing their rural holdings as a second residence, a significant proportion of Montreal's bourgeoisie demonstrated a direct interest in using the land -- for cultivation, pastures, orchards and gardens -- and in exploiting the timber and stone resources. Plans to eventually subdivide all or part of their holdings were held by at least eight of these lessors.

Not only the élites were concerned with securing personal shelter on their land; one third of all other lessors with some reserves also set aside lodgings for themselves. A number of rural landholders not surprisingly protected their wood lots and kept some land for their private use. Nine artisans involved in the building trades retained the right to quarry the stone on the premises. In sum, the land use pat-

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[31] n.m. Delisle 19/03/1792 #480, n.m. Beek 19/01/1795 #943, 26/07/1793 #838, n.m. Chaboillez 15/04/1795 #1384, 25/03/1807 #7852.

terns suggested by the figures in this table point to certain distinct differences between occupational groups, and indicate varying degrees of involvement in the affairs of the farm.

1.2 THE TENANTS

In contrast to what we know of the landowners involved in farm leasing, less is known about the tenants who occupied and tilled the soil. This pattern is common in historical research, however, as most of the surviving documentation deals with the lives of those with wealth and influence, not the poorer, landless population. Details concerning the occupation and residence of each tenant were not recorded as assiduously in notarial acts as those of the lessors, and it was not possible to identify and trace these people through other sources. Despite these problems, the information contained in the leases does give us an idea of the background and activities of the farm lessees. On the surface, while these tenants appeared to be a relatively homogeneous group, a closer examination reveals some definite internal differences.

In sum, 626 people were identified as tenants in the series of 564 notarized farm leases. As with the lessors, any combination of two or more lessees was counted as a single tenant for the purposes of enumerating the number of times that a particular person or grouping appeared in the series. This method was also applied to subsequent calculations concerning the occupation, ethnicity, residence and place of origin of the tenants. Many of the cases of multiple lessees involved members of

the same family. At least ten father and son combinations were found in addition to 16 sets of siblings.[32] Several other partnerships of tenants were clearly emigrants from the same place who had recently arrived together in the province.[33]

The number of repeating tenants, displayed in Table 1.10, was less than 20% -- a figure that initially appears low until we consider the structure of property ownership in Upper and Lower Canada at this time. While the figures given earlier in this chapter indicate that farms on the island of Montreal already had been ceded by the late eighteenth century, there was still land available, especially in the Eastern Townships, to the west in Upper Canada and in various parts of the United States. Those who possessed the necessary capital would have been forced to rent a farm only if they wanted to settle in an area with no open land. For those without sufficient capital resources, leasing would have presented a farmer with the opportunity to provide for his family or even to save enough cash to settle on his own land. A more detailed examination of the reasons for leasing land will follow in this chapter.

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[32] In his discussion of joint and multiple tenant farms in seventeenth-century Scotland, Ian Whyte found that over 40% of the tenants involved were clearly related (p.139). See his Agriculture and Society in Seventeenth-Century Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1979), for an excellent and comprehensive study based largely on farm leases preserved in estate records.

[33] In five separate cases, the co-tenants, always either farmers or yeomen, gave the same location (in either the United States, Great Britain or the Eastern Townships) as their present or past residence. It is highly likely that a number of other lessee alliances were formed prior to emigration, but as place of origin was not noted for the majority of the non-native tenants, this must remain an hypothesis.

TABLE 1.10
Frequency of Appearance of Tenants in
Notarized Farm Leases in the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

Number of Appearances in Contracts as Tenant	Number of Tenants	
1	375	81.9%
2	65	14.2%
3	14	3.1%
4	3	0.7%
5	1	0.2%
	458	100.0%

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

Occupational Profile of Tenants

As would be expected, the majority of lessees identified themselves as some sort of agricultural worker. Although the number of farmers shown in Table 1.11 represents only half of all tenants, the ratio rises to three of every four tenants if only those with a recorded occupation are considered. The balance of the lessees, discounting those with no known occupation, were merchants, professionals and artisans. It is perhaps surprising that men with urban professions would be involved in renting agricultural land, but it was not an uncommon occurrence, particularly in a closed, or relatively inactive, land market.

Within the category broadly labelled 'farmer', a variety of French and English terms were used to specify the tenants' occupation. According to contemporary definitions of these terms, distinctions in status, function and personal means existed between each of these agrarian professions. But the task of evaluating these differences is made

TABLE 1.11
Occupational Classification of Tenants for
Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

Occupational Group	Number of Tenants		Number of Leases	
Elites	48	10.5%	57	10.1%
Artisans	34	7.4%	46	8.2%
Farmers	232	50.7%	300	53.2%
farmer/*fermier*	(87)	(19.0%)	(120)	(21.3%)
cultivateur	(66)	(14.4%)	(81)	(14.4%)
gardener/*jardinier*	(27)	(5.9%)	(35)	(6.2%)
yeoman	(25)	(5.5%)	(34)	(6.0%)
laboureur	(16)	(3.5%)	(18)	(3.2%)
habitant	(11)	(2.4%)	(12)	(2.1%)
Women	3	0.7%	4	0.7%
Unknown	141	30.8%	157	27.8%
	458	100.0%	564	100.0%

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

difficult by the co-existence and merging of divergent cultural traditions and language in Lower Canada at this time. For example, although the French '*laboureur*' seems to be a literal translation of the English 'labourer', the apparent similarity is misleading for the two words had very different meanings in each country. Thus the lowly agricultural labourer in Britain, a man hired to work on the land of others in return for a wage, bore little resemblance to the French *laboureur*, a wealthy peasant who owned draught-animals.[34] Yet the problem is further compli-

[34] Marc Bloch, French Rural History: An Essay on Its Basic Characteristics, trans. Janet Sondheimer, (Berkeley, 1966): 193-196; J.L. and Barbara Hammond, The Village Labourer, (London, 1911; 1966 edition): 21-25; Ann Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England, (Cambridge, 1981): 6-10. Translations that come closer to honouring the correct usage of these two terms in eighteenth and nineteenth century France and England might be *journalier* for labourer and farmer for *laboureur*.

cated -- these definitions, after being formed in the separate contexts of the rural hierarchies of France and England, were grafted onto the different social, economic and landholding structures of Lower Canada.[35]

The complexity involved in evaluating each of these terms undoubtedly was also present during our period. Notaries were responsible for the exact occupational title finally recorded, yet there is no way of knowing if they faithfully reproduced what the tenant said, or changed it for reasons of language or perceived clarity. Also, precisely how the lessee defined or understood the occupational label he used is a matter of conjecture. Ultimately, the most accurate way to evaluate the social structure and economic differences among the tenantry would be in an analysis of their capital resources.

Ethnicity, Place of Origin and Residence

Between 1780 and 1819, the number of non-*canadien* tenants involved in notarized farm leases rose dramatically. This increase, shown in Table 1.6, is most striking for the last decade of this period, although substantial gains, both in real terms and proportionally, were made throughout the forty years. From a mere 11 tenants representing a quarter of all lessees from 1780 to 1789, the non-*canadiens* active between 1810 and 1819 numbered 169, or close to three-quarters of all

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[35] The only term indigenous to French Canada was *habitant*, a word that, although once common, had decreased in usage on the island of Montreal by this time, due to the increasingly negative connotation associated with this title. For a discussion of the early terminology of farm occupations see Louise Dechêne, Habitants et marchands, 403-404.

tenants. These figures, when compared against those for the ethnic composition of the island of Montreal in 1781 and 1825 presented earlier, clearly demonstrate that the proportion of non-*canadiens* leasing farms was in excess of their presence in the overall population. While this rapid increase in the non-*canadien* tenantry looks sudden, it is easily understood in the context of the availability of land in the Montreal region and in the size and composition of the growing immigrant population.

Not only were immigrants overrepresented in the tenant population, but they also constituted a disproportionate majority within a key occupational grouping. As seen in Table 1.12, 91.7% of all lessees in the merchant and professional class were non-*canadiens*. This finding lends greater support to the assertion that there was limited accessibility to land near to the city, forcing even those immigrants of considerable means to initially lease instead of buy land. Of course, renting also gave a new arrival the time to become familiar both with the structure and customs of Lower Canadian society and with the quality of local agricultural lands before making a capital investment.

Outside of the concentration of non-*canadien* merchant and professional tenants, the distribution of the two ethnic groups between occupational categories was fairly even, except for the high percentage of *canadien* lessees with no recorded occupation. Although it is a logical

TABLE 1.12
Occupations of *Canadien* and Non-*Canadien* Tenants
for Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

Occupational Group	*Canadien* Tenants		Non-*Canadien* Tenants	
Elites	4	2.0%	44	17.2%
Artisans	14	6.9%	20	7.8%
Farmers	92	45.5%	140	54.7%
farmer/*fermier*	(5)	(2.5%)	(82)	(32.0%)
cultivateur	(48)	(23.8%)	(18)	(7.0%)
gardener/*jardinier*	(16)	(7.9%)	(11)	(4.3%)
yeoman	(2)	(1.0%)	(23)	(9.0%)
laboureur	(11)	(5.4%)	(5)	(2.0%)
habitant	(10)	(5.0%)	(1)	(0.4%)
Women	1	0.5%	2	0.8%
Unknown	91	45.0%	50	19.5%
TOTAL	202	100.0%	256	100.0%

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

assumption that a large number of these people made a living from agriculture, it is not possible to prove this hypothesis. Nevertheless, the absence of occupational data is clearly not linked to ethnicity or an unknown trait shared by these tenants, but to differences in notarial practice and form.[36]

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[36] Of the 141 tenants with no recorded occupation, 61 (42.3%) were found in the minutes of Louis Chaboillez, another 22 (15.6%) in those of Jean-Guillaume Delisle, and a further 33 (23.4%) were spread among the deeds of only four notaries. Evidently, these six notaries, accounting for 82.3% of all lessees with an unknown occupation, routinely omitted to record this information -- a practice not followed by the majority of their professional counterparts.

As with the lessors, in a limited number of cases reference to a former residence provided a more accurate indicator of a tenant's ethnic background. For 19 individual tenants and eight pairings of tenants, this information gave some suggestion of precisely where many immigrants were coming from. Only six lessees were from overseas -- four farmers were 'late of Scotland', while in England a father and son team had resided in Nottingham and a botanist gave his domicile as London. A further seven tenants had lived in the New England States prior to taking up residence in the Montreal region, while the eastern part of Upper Canada had been home to six others. The final eight lessees were not new to Lower Canada, but had moved to the island of Montreal from elsewhere in the province. All 27 of these tenants carried non-*canadien* names and in some cases may have come originally from Great Britain to the United States or the Canadas and temporarily settled before moving to the area around Montreal. Thus, no conclusions can be drawn because this group of tenants cannot be taken as a representative sample, nor can their native country be verified in all cases. What is suggested, however, is that the early immigrants from the British Isles were a mobile population, moving about the new land in search of opportunities.

The movement and subsequent settlement of immigrants on the island of Montreal followed a definite pattern. From Table 1.13 it would appear that the majority of non-*canadien* tenants were initially chanelled through Montreal prior to securing a farm lease. Of the 112 non-*canadien* lessees who gave the town as their residence, only 31 were merchants or professionals. It is highly unlikely that many of the

TABLE 1.13
Declared Residence and Proximity to Leased Land
of *Canadien* and Non-*Canadien* Tenants
in Notarized Farm Leases on the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

Residence	*Cdn.*	Non-*Cdn.*	Total	Tenants Leasing in Par. of Residence	
Parish of Montreal					
Town	9	112	121	95	78.5%
Suburbs	20	25	45	36	80.0%
Remainder of Parish	51	39	90	72	80.0%
Parish of Saint-Laurent	26	2	28	26	92.9%
Lachine	23	18	41	37	90.2%
Sault-au-Recollet	8	5	13	11	84.6%
Longue-Pointe	8	8	16	15	93.8%
Sainte-Anne	3	-	3	2	66.7%
Pointe-aux-Trembles	11	-	11	9	81.8%
Pointe-Claire	3	1	4	4	100.0%
Sainte-Geneviève	1	-	1	1	100.0%
Rivière-des-Prairies	-	-	-	-	
Off Island	1	15	16	-	-
Unknown	38	31	69	-	-
TOTAL	202	256	458	308	67.2%

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

remaining 81 tenants, most of them farmers, permanently resided within the walls of the town. Whether these lessees were new immigrants or had resided in the area for a while, they followed the non-*canadien* pattern of settlement in taking up land mainly in the Parish of Montreal and occasionally in the Parishes of Lachine or Longue-Pointe.

The French-Canadian composition of the population of the parishes more removed from the city was not perceptibly altered by farm leasing during this period. With few exceptions, only *canadien* tenants lived and rented in these parishes, confirming the geographic concentration of

ethnic groups found in the information collected for the census of 1825. *Canadien* lessees were also situated close to Montreal, although as would be expected, very few of them declared the town itself as their residence.

The percentage of tenants who leased a farm in the same parish as their declared residence was probably lower than indicated by the figures in Table 1.13. As has been discussed, many lessees who did not actually live in Montreal gave the town as their address. These people may have been recent immigrants, migrants or possibly natives to the area who owned no land and therefore had no permanent dwelling. In addition, there are some explicit examples of a tenant giving the newly leased premises as his residence. Yet, even if allowances are made for these two situations, the number of tenants who remained in their parish of residence was still high, especially outside the Parish of Montreal. Thus, with the obvious exception of immigrants, the majority of tenants still were able to find agricultural land for hire within their own parish.

Motivations of Tenants

The motivations of tenants renting agricultural properties are not as clear as those of the lessors. Less is known of their personal circumstances -- of the financial, familial or other diverse reasons that contributed to the decision to rent land. What is apparent, however, are a number of different approaches to farm leasing taken by various lessees.

For tenants like Jean-Baptiste Lecuyer and Pierre Bayard, renting land was not an unstable situation. Both men remained in possession of the same property for 12 years -- Bayard rented a large, relatively well-stocked farm on Côte-Vertu from the master carpenter Pierre Barsalou for three successive terms, while Lecuyer made three separate leases for master tanner Joseph Lenoir *dit* Rolland's farm on Côte Saint-Luc.[37] Such stability, however, was the exception and not the rule, especially among the non-*canadien* tenant population. Very few of these lessees appeared in the series more than once, and of those who appeared two or more times the majority did not retain the same land.

In a few select cases it was possible to ascertain a tenant's precise interest in renting a given piece of land. John Clark, a master butcher who came to Montreal from Britain sometime in the late 1790's, appeared as a lessee in four contracts at the same time that he was a prominent property holder in the Saint-Laurent suburb.[38] The property that Clark rented, however, was clearly intended for pasture, indicating that he most probably planned to use the land to raise, fatten or hold livestock that was eventually to be slaughtered. Another example of obvious motives involved two farmers in formal partnership, Herman Seaver and Thomas Barlow. In 1802 Seaver and Barlow rented a farm at

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[37] For Pierre Bayard see n.m. Desautels 19/09/1811 #237, n.m. Mondelet 02/08/1803 #2487, 07/01/1807 #3126 and for Jean-Baptiste Lecuyer see n.m. Lukin 11/07/1807 #3822, 14/06/1811 #4760, n.m. Desautels 04/10/1816 #2836.

[38] Alan Stewart, "Property and Family in the Saint-Laurent Suburb, 1735-1810", pp. 91-92. For Clark's agricultural leases see n.m. Chaboillez 20/10/1804 #6677, n.m. Delisle 23/03/1807 #5804, n.m. Cadieux 05/05/1808 #80, and n.m. Griffin 15/04/1815 #931.

the lower end of the Sainte-Marie suburb from Montreal surgeons Charles Blake and Henry Loedel. By agreement between the two farmers, 8,000 hills of hops were planted and the produce of these plants was contracted to brewer John Molson for the following five years.[39]

Of the many lessees who appeared only once in the series, it is possible only to speculate as to their strategies. Numerous immigrants undoubtedly were first introduced to Lower Canadian agriculture through their labours on leased property. After one appearance in notarized farm leases, some may have purchased land in the area while others may have moved elsewhere in the province or beyond. For those tenants who lived permanently on the island of Montreal, renting land possibly presented a farmer who already possessed some land with the opportunity to temporarily increase his acreage. Or, for those who did not own a farm, leasing was a method to gain access to some land, in this case property advantageously situated close to the urban market -- a necessity for survival in the rural world of pre-industrial societies.

These, then, were the people involved in farm leasing on the island of Montreal in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The portrait that has emerged is not one of a homogeneous group of lessors or tenants, but of a relatively disparate collection of people who through a variety of circumstances and ambitions were involved in this

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[39] The farm lease is n.m. Beek 29/05/1802 #1657 and a two-year extension 14/11/1808; the agreements n.m. Beek 01/06/1802 #1658, n.m. Gray 23/06/1802 #782; and the hops contract n.m. Gray 19/07/1802 #791.

practice. In the following chapters we will trace how the different backgrounds and resources of these lessors and tenants in turn may have been reflected in their farms and agricultural production and techniques.

CHAPTER 2
THE LEASE: FORM AND BASIC TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT

When they arrived at the notary's office, most lessors and tenants had undoubtedly agreed upon the fundamental terms of their contract. By the time the two parties left, a formal version of this agreement had been penned, signed and deposited in the notary's minutes. It is this copy of the lease, initially held by a notary for the duration of his professional practice, that remains as the sole surviving evidence of this meeting. Together these contracts constitute one of the few serial sources which allow historians to study farms and farming.

Notarized farm leases represent a legal rendering of an agreement made between a landowner and a prospective tenant. The central purpose of these documents was to create a lawful contract that bound the parties to one another in the execution of mutual obligations, thereby providing protection in the form of judicial recourse if specified conditions were not met. It is in the itemizing of what each party expected, or was entitled to expect of the other, that this document becomes most useful for students of agricultural history. Nevertheless, in order to interpret this information it must be understood first within the legal context in which it was written.

Thus, this chapter serves two distinct but closely related purposes. In the first section we will examine the lease itself -- what it was and how it was drawn up. Following this discussion, three elements that formed the nucleus of the legal and financial framework common to

all leases will be explored, specifically length of tenure, rent and security. Together, and in combination with the identification of the parties in Chapter 1, this information provides the essential foundation for the examination of farms, agricultural production and techniques that follows in the next three chapters.

2.1 THE LEASE: FORM AND CONTENT

According to the definition provided in a French legal dictionary widely used in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a *bail à ferme* was "celui qui se fait d'un fonds qui de sa nature produit des fruits, soit par le moyen de la culture, comme les terres, les vignes; ou sans culture, comme un bois taillis, un étang, un pâturage."[1] In many instances, however, notaries simply referred to the letting of agricultural lands as a *bail d'une terre*. If the lease included unproductive immoveable properties, such as a house and farm buildings, it might also be called a *bail à loyer*. For a term longer than ten years, a lease of this type was properly titled a *bail emphytéotique*[2], although the common practice, as indicated by the contracts consulted, was to use this term only for leases that extended well past ten years.

To evaluate the content of the leases, we must first examine their form and structure. All leases began with an identification of the

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[1] Claude-Joseph de Ferrière, Dictionnaire de Droit et de Pratique, contenant l'explication des Termes de Droit, d'Ordonnances, de Coutumes & de Pratique, (Paris, 1771): 162.

[2] Claude-Joseph de Ferrière, La Science Parfaite des Notaires, (Paris, 1778): 543.

parties involved, followed somewhere in the document by an account of the length of the lease, the amount and terms of payment and a description of the property, be it land, buildings, tools or livestock. Sometimes these descriptions were very precise, providing for example the exact type, value and materials of construction of a plough or harrow. Often, however, this detail was lacking. The largest and arguably most important or interesting part of each lease was taken up by the reciprocal obligations, concerning the actual management of the farm, of the two parties to the contract. It is this section that ultimately poses the greatest methodological problems for analysis.

Within this general format, discrepancies in style and content existed between notaries and even between individual acts themselves. While some of these differences are inconsequential and do not affect the results of any subsequent analysis, others involving the possible omission of significant details must be considered with care. The lease cannot be rigidly interpreted as a comprehensive account of the agreement made between a lessor and tenant. Certain details may have been omitted from, or added to, the written contract for reasons beyond the control, or perhaps even the comprehension of the two involved parties.

The rôle played by the notary in formalizing this agreement was not a passive one. Either indirectly, by virtue of his training and background, or directly through suggestions and actions, the notary exercised considerable influence over the formal written version of the lease. A few notaries consistently wrote relatively short and concise

contracts, while others invariably made their leases quite lengthy.[3] Not all notaries fall into either of these two categories, however; many produced documents of varying length, perhaps indicating a greater willingness to allow the specific terms agreed upon by the parties in attendance to dictate the length and ultimately the actual content of the lease.

Some of the differences in notarial form might be explained by the background and training of these men. To be eligible for a commission in the profession, a candidate was required to serve "a regular and continued clerkship, for and during the space of five years, under a contract, in writing, for that purpose made and entered into, with some notary; duly commissioned and appointed, and practising as such."[4] Upon completing this apprenticeship, he was examined by a panel consisting of "the eldest notaries" and judges of the district court. The absence of a standard training program for notaries -- indeed, one was not established until the mid-nineteenth century -- left students dependent on the skills and knowledge of their masters. What helped to offset this lack of standardization, and potential variations in the quality of training, was the widespread use of notarial manuals imported from France.

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[3] Indeed, a few notaries, for example Doucet and Jobin, sometimes used printed urban leasing forms for farm leases, thereby ensuring an extremely truncated version of the contract.

[4] "An Ordinance Concerning Advocates, Attornies, Solicitors and Notaries, and for the more easy collection of his Majesty's Revenues", 30th April 1785, "Ordinances Made for the Province of Quebec by the Governor and Council, 1768-1791", Appendix C, Report of the Public Archives of Canada, (1914-1915): 165-169.

The manuals written by Ferrière, Blondela and Massé, among others, provided practioners with concise explanations of the law, and sample clauses and acts with which they could phrase their contracts so as to conform to time-tested interpretations of the law.[5] It must be noted, however, that these model clauses existed only for information that might regularly appear in leases. Instructions concerning certain crops or specialized care fell outside of the realm of common practice, and thus relied on no particular format.

A comparison of the phrasing and structure found in farm leases with that set out by the notarial manuals clearly shows that these books were used, to varying degrees, by the majority of notaries practising at this time. Notaries of non-*canadien* background who served their clientele in English proved an important exception to this rule.[6] English volumes comparable to the French manuals do not appear in inventories taken of contemporary notaries' librairies, nor in the most comprehensive bibliography of legal sources for Quebec history during this

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[5] See Claude-Joseph de Ferrière, La Science Parfaite des Notaires; Blondela, Traité des connaissances nécessaires à un notaire, (Paris, 1781); and A.-J. Massé, Le parfaite notaire, ou la science des notaires, 4th ed., (Paris, 1813).

[6] Of the 28 notaries who were active in Montreal between 1780 and 1820, nine notaries accounted for all but 9 of the 201 acts written in English. Three notaries -- Beek, Gray and Griffin -- drew up their contracts exclusively in English, while another six notaries left a fair percentage of acts in both languages. Most of the leases written in English by a French notary are literal translations of the standard French phrasing and format.

period.[7] Evidence of the absence of such a notarial guide also can be found in the distinctive phrasing of the English leases. Consequently, these variations between English and French notaries in the format and phrasing of their acts are most probably the result of differences in their professional training and traditions.

How then was the actual content of farm leases affected by notarial training and resources? What was the notary's own perception of his rôle in the making of this contract? While much of the content and specific instructions relating to farming were undoubtedly expressions of the objectives and concerns of the lessor, and in some instances the tenant, one must not discount the input of the notary. Occasionally, certain uncommon clauses or directions consistently appear in all acts prepared by a particular notary. The most plausible explanation for this occurrence is that the notary in some cases did contribute -- with reference to instructions regarding farm management -- to the actual content of the lease, as opposed only to the form. Thus, he was clearly functioning as more than an impartial recorder of the agreement.

But it is not only the content of these leases that must be assessed by historians, it is also the 'silences' -- ç ions on which the source is mute. For example, although it was not the purpose of these contracts to make an account of all agricultural produce on each

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[7] See G. Blaine Baker, Kathleen E. Fisher, Vince Masciotra and Brian Young. Sources in the Law Library of McGill University for a Reconstruction of the Legal Culture of Quebec, 1760-1890. (Montreal, 1987): especially 193-196.

farm, many leases, especially when the rent was paid in kind, provide a thorough listing of the crops and livestock raised on a farm. From this information it is possible to draw some general conclusions concerning the types of farm production on the island of Montreal. Yet for leases that do not contain this information, one must not make the assumption that because a crop was not mentioned, it was therefore not grown. Although this example is straightforward, the possible 'silences' of farm leases can be much more subtle on questions of farm production and techniques.

Perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from this discussion of the purpose, content and form of farm leases is that these documents were first and foremost legal contracts, each bearing the distinctive stamp of their author. As such, these deeds are the most informative and precise on subjects concerning the legal essence of the agreement: who the contracting parties were, the period for which they undertook mutual obligations, and the financial terms of the contract. And yet, despite the primarily legal purpose of these documents, farm leases remain a valuable source for the study of agricultural production and techniques. The detailed information, found for instance in the instructions given to the tenant, is unique to this source. Another example, enumerations of tools and animals, although similar to listings found in inventories after death, differ from the latter in that they are concerned solely with the implements and animals actually involved in the daily work of the farm, eliminating for instance any obsolete tools still found in the barn. If the historian remains alert to the

various influences that worked to shape the final content of each farm lease, this series of documents can strengthen appreciably our understanding of agriculture on the island of Montreal in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

2.2 THE LENGTH OF THE LEASE

> A great discouragement to the amelioration or progress of agriculture in this country, is the shortness of the Leases granted, added to the power of turning off the Farmer in case of sale of the property. From these united causes, he is discouraged from making the improvements he otherwise would, not knowing who is to reap the fruits of his industry and expense.[8]

The length and security of tenure has long been considered an important indicator of the approach taken to agriculture by the landowners and tenants of a particular area. As stated by Mr. Ferguson in his testimony of 1816, and echoed elsewhere by both his contemporaries and successive generations of historians, a short lease was believed to offer no incentives to a tenant willing to embark on an ambitious programme of agricultural change.[9] But even this simple and logical cor-

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[8] Testimony of Mr. Ferguson before the Committee to Enquire into the State of Agriculture in Lower Canada, Appendix E, Journals of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada, (1816).

[9] Ian Whyte, Agriculture and Society in Seventeenth-Century Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1979): 152-153. Conversely, J.A. Perkins argues strongly against the standard interpretation that a long lease, of 21 years or more, was a requisite part of agricultural change. Instead, he claims "that the long lease was more suited to periods of relative stability in agricultural prices, profitability and techniques" than to the opposite situation. In Lindsey (Suffolk, England), Perkins finds a system of tenancy-at-will flourishing during a time of accelerated agricultural change in the nineteenth century. See his "Tenure, Tenant Right and Agricultural Progress in Lindsey, 1780-1850", Agricultural History Review, 23 (1975): 1-22.

relation between length of tenure and the complexity of the crop rotation or the addition of capital improvements to the land should not be applied without question to the farm leasing situation in Lower Canada. In this section we will examine the length of tenure of farm leases and discuss these findings in the context of both the leases themselves and with regard to the social and economic circumstances on the island of Montreal during this period.

For the purposes of this study, only leases of less than 30 years in length were considered, thereby eliminating a number of emphyteutic leases that ranged from 41 to 99 years. The reasoning behind this decision was that a span of three decades was roughly equal to the fully productive years of one man, and thus the rental of land for longer would of necessity involve more than one generation. Also, the longer emphyteutic leases were not concerned primarily with agriculture, but more with land speculation and subdivision as agricultural lands gave way to urban development.

As indicated in Table 2.1, the average length of tenure for all 564 farm leases was 4.57 years. On its own, however, this overall figure obscures several interesting patterns. Together, one and three year tenures accounted for over two-fifths of the agreements, while over half of all leases fell below four years in length. Furthermore, about 40% of the leases were for a length of tenure divisible by three, a strong indication of the existence of a triennial rotation on these farms.

TABLE 2.1
LENGTH OF NOTARIZED FARM LEASES ON THE ISLAND OF MONTREAL
1780-1820

	LENGTH OF LEASE IN YEARS															
	<1	≥1 <2	≥2 <3	≥3 <4	≥4 <5	≥5 <6	≥6 <7	≥7 <8	≥8 <9	≥9 <10	≥10 <11	≥11 <12	≥12	UNKNOWN	TOTAL	AVG
DECADE																
1780-89	2	10	1	15	1	4	3	-	-	2	-	-	1	2	41	3.4
1790-99	5	29	3	23	2	15	12	5	-	7	2	-	11	2	116	5.5
1800-09	7	31	8	36	8	25	7	9	3	12	1	1	11	4	163	4.9
1810-19	11	49	16	55	16	33	18	25	2	11	2	-	6	0	244	4.1
OCCUPATIONAL GROUP OF LESSORS																
Elites	11	66	11	60	12	39	20	21	3	10	3	-	9	2	267	4.0
Artisans	2	17	4	17	2	14	5	5	1	2	1	-	5	-	75	4.7
Farmers	3	19	8	29	4	12	5	10	1	7	-	-	5	2	105	4.5
Women	1	11	4	8	8	10	5	3	-	4	1	1	4	2	62	5.3
Rel. Inst.	1	2	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	4	-	-	6	-	16	13.6
Unknown	7	4	1	14	1	1	4	-	-	5	-	-	-	2	39	3.5
ETHNICITY																
Lessors																
Canadien	18	83	18	103	17	54	24	20	2	23	1	1	13	6	383	4.2
Non-Cdn.	7	36	10	26	10	23	16	19	3	9	4	-	16	2	181	5.3
Tenants																
Canadien	14	63	14	72	7	29	10	3	1	11	-	-	7	7	238	3.5
Non-Cdn.	11	56	14	57	20	48	30	36	4	21	5	1	22	1	326	5.3
TOTAL LEASES																
Number	25	119	28	129	27	77	40	39	5	32	5	1	29	8	564	4.6
%	4.4	21.1	5.0	22.9	4.8	13.7	7.1	6.9	0.9	5.7	0.9	0.2	5.1	1.4	100	

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

Over the four decades studied, although the average length of tenure fluctuated considerably, from 3.4 years in the decade of the 1780s to 5.5 years in the ten years that followed, there was little change in the overall pattern. A partial explanation for the high average in the 1790s can be found in the relatively large number -- ten -- of long term contracts made by the religious institutions during this period. No tendency towards leases of greater or lesser length was revealed in the analysis over time.

An examination of lease length by the occupational group of lessors hints at some possible differences in the way in which landowners managed their agricultural properties. Aside from those lessors with no known occupation, merchants and professionals on average made their leases considerably shorter than did proprietors in the other categories. At the opposite end of the spectrum from the élite average of four year tenures were the religious institutions who let their lands for an average of 13.6 years. What is suggested by this discrepancy is that on the whole, the merchant and professional lessors were perhaps more interested in maximizing their returns, and therefore showed little interest in immobilizing their capital investment and setting a rent for many years in advance. Religious institutions, on the other hand, took less of an active interest in the farm and were more concerned with a steady and stable annual income. Those proprietors in the rural, artisanal and female occupational groupings on average negotiated leases of between 4.5 and 5.3 years, but while these figures are valid as a basis

for comparison, they do not reflect the wide range within all six categories as shown in the frequency distribution table.

Non-*canadien* and *canadien* lessors also displayed one notable dissimilarity in their approach to the setting of lease length. On proportion, non-*canadien* proprietors made significantly more leases of longer than four years in tenure, a tendency reflected in an average lease length that exceeds that of *canadien* lessors by more than a year. Among tenants this difference is even greater. *Canadien* tenants contracted to let a farm for an average of 3.5 years while their non-*canadien* counterparts planned to occupy the land for an average of 5.3 years.

Is it fair to assume that non-*canadiens* were better agriculturalists solely because their contracts generally extended longer than those of the *canadiens*? What other factors are more likely to have influenced the two parties to the agreement in setting the length of the lease? The comments of Mr. Ferguson before the legislative committee -- although echoed by many of his contemporaries -- do not appear to be relevant to the situation in Lower Canada. In a country where a great deal of fertile land was still unsettled, renting was the exception and not the rule. Thus, leasing did not fulfill the same purpose as it did in Great Britain or France where it was the only way for the rural tenantry to gain access to the soil, the source of their livelihood. Renting in Lower Canada was more often a short-term solution undertaken for a variety of reasons, many of which have been discussed in some detail in the previous chapter. As a way to accumulate needed capital,

remain close to the urban market, or increase farm area, farm leasing presented a practical alternative to land ownership for both recent immigrants and native farmers. Yet for obvious reasons, it was rarely to the advantage of either party involved to make a lease for a term in excess of about nine years. Indeed, 11.7% of all contracts were cancelled prior to the original date set for termination, while only 1.6% of the leases were extended beyond the initial tenure.[10]

A further reason to discount the argument that short farm leases resulted in poor agricultural practices can be found in the content of the contracts themselves. The importance of the length of tenure in evaluating farming techniques is partially negated by detailed instructions regarding crop rotation, fertilizing and building maintenance clearly set out in many acts as the obligations of the tenant. With these directions, many lessors ensured that their property was managed in the way they desired, and not exploited for short-term gains by a tenant farmer.

2.3 RENT: FORM AND METHOD OF PAYMENT

Despite their obvious interest in any number of the obligations and terms set out in the leasing agreement, lessors and tenants were concerned first and foremost with the amount, form and method of payment of

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[10] Some caution must be used in analysing these two figures. While an early termination required an addendum to the lease held by the notary, it is possible that some lessors and tenants continued their arrangement without the benefit of a new contract at the end of the stated tenure. Thus, we must not rule out the possibility that more than 1.6% of all farm leases were continued, albeit as an informal arrangement.

the rent. For the proprietor, the rent represented his return on the capital invested in the farm, while for the lessee the amount and conditions of the rent could spell the difference between realizing a profit or incurring a debt. During the period covered by this study, the form and methods of rent payment were as varied and diverse as the people themselves involved in the practice of farm leasing. Tenants might be required to pay the rent of the farm in either money, kind, labour or a combination of two or more of these methods. Furthermore, the amount due could be either a fixed sum, a proportion of the farm's annual produce, a set amount that increased each year, or some mixture of the preceding. Nevertheless, over forty years, a definite shift occurred in the predominant form of payment specified in the leases, a change brought about in part by the altered ethnic composition of the leasing population.

In Table 2.2, the form of rent paid in each lease is examined over time, by the occupational group of the lessor, and according to the ethnicity of both parties to the contract. A money rent was the dominant method of payment, accounting for 60% of all leases passed between 1780 and 1820. The cash amount was set, a currency was specified, and a schedule of quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments was agreed on by the lessor and tenant. Rents in kind, found in just over a quarter of all leases passed in this period, were not as straightforward as the majority of money rents. A detailed listing was given of the agricultural produce to be reserved for the lessor, or even delivered to his domicile. In a relatively small number of leases, the rent was paid in

TABLE 2.2
Form of Rent Payable in Notarized Farm Leases
on the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

	MONEY		KIND		MONEY AND KIND		OTHER/ UNKNOWN		TOTAL	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
DECADE										
1780-89	12	29.3	21	51.2	1	2.4	7	17.1	41	100.0
1790-99	60	51.7	37	31.9	12	10.3	7	6.0	116	100.0
1800-09	95	58.3	46	28.2	14	8.6	8	4.9	163	100.0
1810-19	170	69.7	53	21.7	13	5.3	8	3.3	244	100.0
OCCUPATIONAL GROUP OF LESSORS										
Elites	157	58.8	75	28.1	20	7.5	15	5.6	267	100.0
Artisans	51	68.0	17	22.7	6	8.0	1	1.3	75	100.0
Farmers	66	62.9	26	24.8	5	4.8	8	7.6	105	100.0
Women	37	59.7	16	25.8	5	8.1	4	6.5	62	100.0
Rel. Inst.	8	50.0	8	50.0	-	-	-	-	16	100.0
Unknown	18	46.2	15	38.5	4	10.3	2	5.1	39	100.0
ETHNICITY										
Lessors										
Cdn.	192	50.1	133	34.7	31	8.1	27	7.0	383	100.0
Non-*Cdn.*	145	80.1	24	13.3	9	5.0	3	1.7	181	100.0
Tenants										
Cdn.	76	31.9	128	53.8	14	5.9	20	8.4	238	100.0
Non-*Cdn.*	261	80.1	29	8.9	26	8.0	10	3.1	326	100.0
TOTAL LEASES	337	59.8	157	27.8	40	7.1	30	5.3	564	100.0

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

some combination of cash and farm produce, with the greater value generally placed on the money compensation. The remainder of the contracts either contained no mention of a rent -- a puzzling omission in a formal agreement of this sort -- or specified that certain services, usually involving capital improvements to the farm, were to be performed in lieu of rent.

Between 1780 and 1820, the use of money rents became far more common. Indeed, while only 30% of the leases passed in the decade of the 1780's required a cash payment, three decades later 70% of the contracts were made for a money rent. This dramatic change in the dominant form of payment, parallelled by a concurrent decline in the incidence of rents paid in kind, can most probably be attributed primarily to two related factors. A shift from rents paid in kind to those paid in money is commonly thought to be an indicator of a move towards greater commercialization of the rural economy. Much of the evidence already presented concerning merchant involvement in the countryside around Montreal, and that to follow pertaining to production geared to the market, lends support to this assertion.

In addition to deepening commercial relations of production and exchange in the countryside surrounding Montreal, the form of rent demanded in farm leases also reflected the presumed capital resources of both lessors and tenants. The evidence for the importance of capital resources is by no means conclusive, however, it is strongly suggested by the specific pattern of money rents. Over the forty-year period, the

growing numbers of non-*canadien* lessors and tenants demonstrated a marked preference for money rents, as fully 80% of those involved in these contracts made or received their lease payments in cash. In contrast, only half of all *canadien* lessors and less than one-third of *canadien* tenants paid or collected their rent in this form. But the predilection of non-*canadiens* for money rents was not simply a matter of cultural preference. While it is probable that some lessors and tenants were influenced by the current practices in their country of origin, access to capital played a more important rôle in determining the way a rent was to be paid. To pay a rent in cash, a tenant needed either capital reserves, or produce that he could sell, to raise the required amount. Payments were requested in advance in some cases, and usually had to be made in either quarterly, half-yearly or annual installments. Rents in kind, however, were paid only when the crops were in and ready to be divided. Thus, if we were to build on the contention, discussed in Chapter 1, that the economic resources of the non-*canadien* lessors and tenants were on average greater than those of the *canadiens*, it follows that they would make or collect a larger percentage of rent payments in cash.

The form in which a rent was paid was closely related to the method used to determine its amount. With few exceptions, money rents were either a fixed annual sum, or an amount that rose in increments during the term of tenure. The proportion by which these rents increased over the term of the contract varied considerably. For example, a six-year lease made by the widow Marguerite Pillet in 1799 required the tenant

Richard Robertson to pay an annual rent of 27 *livres cours actuels* for the first two years and 28 *livres cours actuel* during the last four years.[11] In contrast to this modest increase, Daniel Robertson, a high-ranking army officer, contracted a lease in 1800 in which the rent demanded of the tenant Nathaniel Davies doubled over the six years, from £35 to £70. It is perhaps of little surprise that this lease was cancelled after one and a half years, as Davies had paid only half of the first year's rent.[12] Most graduated rents, however, increased only £5 or £10 over a five-year tenure.

In two exceptional cases, leases contained riders specifying that the rent would increase in the event of war with the United States. One of these leases, made in 1812, elaborated that such a war would surely 'enhance' the value of the farm, and for this reason two arbitrators would be appointed to determine the price over the set rent of £50. Similarly, a lease made by Bernard-Antoine Panet in 1819 specified that the annual rent would rise from £80 to £100 -- if the colony again went to war with the United States.[13]

Rents in kind were either a fixed amount, a proportion of the total produce, or a combination of the two. A relatively small number of leases had a fixed rent in kind: exact numbers were given for the *minots* of wheat, oats, peas or other grains, bundles of hay; the produce and

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[11] n.m. Chaboillez 14/03/1799 #3435

[12] n.m. Gray 16/10/1800 #540

[13] n.m. Lukin 29/09/1812 #5052; n.m. Doucet 13/09/1819 #6588

TABLE 2.3
METHODS OF RENT PAYMENT FOR NOTARIZED FARM LEASES
ON THE ISLAND OF MONTREAL, 1780-1820

	FIXED		PROPORTIONATE		GRADUATED		PROPORTIONATE/ FIXED		OTHER/ UNKNOWN		TOTAL	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
DECADE												
1780-89	15	36.6	11	26.8	-	-	8	19.5	7	17.1	41	100.0
1790-99	66	56.9	11	9.5	7	6.0	24	20.7	8	6.9	116	100.0
1800-09	97	59.5	22	13.5	13	8.0	23	14.1	8	4.9	163	100.0
1810-19	166	68.0	30	12.3	25	10.2	16	6.6	7	2.9	244	100.0
OCCUPATIONAL GROUP OF LESSORS												
Elites	156	58.4	37	13.9	22	8.2	38	14.2	14	5.2	267	100.0
Artisans	54	72.0	11	14.7	3	4.0	6	8.0	1	1.3	75	100.0
Farmers	73	69.5	10	9.5	3	2.9	10	9.5	9	8.6	105	100.0
Women	36	58.1	7	11.3	10	16.1	5	8.1	4	6.5	62	100.0
Rel. Inst.	7	43.8	3	18.8	4	25.0	2	12.5	-	-	16	100.0
Unknown	18	46.2	6	15.4	3	7.7	10	25.6	2	5.1	39	100.0
ETHNICITY												
Lessors												
Canadien	207	54.0	57	14.9	30	7.8	62	16.2	27	7.0	383	100.0
Non-*Cdn.*	137	75.7	17	9.4	15	8.3	9	5.0	3	1.7	181	100.0
Tenants												
Canadien	97	40.8	56	23.5	9	3.8	55	23.1	21	8.8	238	100.0
Non-*Cdn.*	247	75.8	18	5.5	36	11.0	16	4.9	9	2.8	326	100.0
TOTAL LEASES	344	61.0	74	13.1	45	8.0	71	12.6	30	5.3	564	100.0
Avg. Length (years)	4.97		2.99		6.84		2.92		3.15		4.57	

Source: 564 notarized leases

offspring of each animal; and the harvest of the garden and orchard required as payment from the tenant. Far more common was the custom of splitting the produce of the farm equally between landowner and tenant. Combining fixed and proportionate elements in the composition of the total rent was another frequent practice. Generally, grains, hay and the offspring of the animals were divided in half, while a specific amount was set for the other produce -- one chicken and a dozen eggs for each hen, ten pounds of butter for each milch cow (only five pounds after the first calf), so many bushels of apples, and so on.

Given the close relationship between the form of the rent and the method used to determine its amount, it is not surprising that many of the trends identified in Table 2.2 are paralleled by the figures shown in Table 2.3. Sixty percent of all leases were made for a fixed rent, with the remaining 40% spread among the other categories. The use of fixed and graduated rents increased over time, while proportionate and mixed proportionate and fixed rents became less common. Three-quarters of the non-*canadien* population involved in farm leasing paid or received a fixed sum, a proportion very close to the 80% of non-*canadien* lessors and tenants who made their payments in money.

Between the average length of a lease and the form and amount of the rent there existed a strong correlation. Leases where the rent was set as proportionate, or proportionate and fixed, averaged three years in length, while those with a fixed amount averaged five years, and those with built in increases averaged almost seven years. Clearly, a

graduated rent was used in longer leases as a means of anticipating growth in the economy or more probably projected farm improvements.

Two other forms of rent should be considered, the *cens et rentes* due to the seigneur and the tithe paid to the parish priest. In the case of the seigneurie of Montreal, the Sulpicians wore both hats, that of seigneur and parish priest, and thus collected both exactions.[14] Only 21 leases contained a reference to the payment of these dues. In 15 of these cases, the tenant was responsible for making the required payments to the Sulpicians, while the lessor indicated that he would look after this obligation in only two leases, and the two parties shared the burden in the remaining four contracts. The omission of any reference to the *cens et rentes* or the tithe in most farm leases is puzzling, but one might hypothesize that if the tenant was not obliged in the formal contract to assume these payments, the responsibility remained with the proprietor of the land.

Unfortunately, from the information contained in farm leases it is not possible to compare the relative value of agricultural rents over time. In addition to the problem of converting rents in kind to a nominal money rent, too many important variables remain unknown. Information regarding the area and the quality of the land, and the value of all buildings, animals, agricultural tools and improvements to the land

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[14] For a discussion of the complexities of the rate and collection of the tithe and the *cens et rentes* on the seigneurie of Montreal in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Louise Dechêne, "L'évolution de régime seigneurial au Canada: le cas de Montréal aux XVII^{e} et XVIII^{e} siècles", Recherches sociographiques, XII:2 (mai-août 1971): 143-183.

is inconsistent. Any comparison of rents attempted without this foundation of information would clearly be invalid.

2.4 SECURITY

The security in a notarized lease was the guarantee to pay the rent and fulfill other contractual obligations which the tenant, or someone acting on his behalf, undertook towards the lessor. According to the form that this guarantee took, there were liable to be significant differences between *canadien* and non-*canadien* lessees. These differences were further overlaid by the shift from liens against a tenant's moveable property to the use of performance bonds at the end of the period.

Both forms of security favoured by most *canadien* lessors and tenants involved a type of lien made on a tenant's possessions. In the more common form, a tenant agreed to a hypothec on all of his property, present and future, in the event that he failed to make a rent payment. Or, the tenant was obliged to stock the farm with moveable properties, usually farm animals and tools that together equalled a specified value, as collateral in case he defaulted on an installment of the rent. This form of security was also found in a number of leases involving non-*canadiens*. In both instances, non-compliance on the part of the lessee could result in the legal seizure of his property to settle the debt with the lessor.

Among the majority of the non-*canadien* population involved in farm leases, security took two quite different forms. A penalty clause was often inserted binding the two parties to the contract to fulfill their mutual obligations or forfeit a fixed sum.[15] The other method of offering security, one that was peculiarly non-*canadien* in this particular series of notarized acts, was the naming of one, but more often two, guarantors. In the event of a tenant's negligence, these people agreed to assume the responsibility for any debts incurred. Of the 57 leases where guarantors signed the notarized act, all but three of the tenants were of a non-*canadien* background and 86% of the guarantors were also non-*canadien*.

The reason for this ethnic division on the question of security is probably linked closely to both cultural traditions and community networks. While many *canadien* lessors and tenants undoubtedly knew each other, either directly or through shared acquaintances or relatives, most of the non-*canadien* lessees were obviously newcomers to the region. As recent immigrants, these people had neither the roots in the community nor the property to offer as collateral so that the proprietor could be assured that the tenant would fulfill his part of the contract. Thus, a third party who provided backing for the tenant was introduced to the contract.

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[15] In his study of agricultural leases in seventeenth century Scotland, Ian Whyte found that this clause was part of a standard format. See his "Written Leases and their Impact on Scottish Agriculture in the Seventeenth Century", AgHR, 27 (1979): 6. The increased use of this form of security in Lower Canada from the early nineteenth century on was undoubtedly a function of the growing numbers of immigrants from Scotland and England who were involved in farm leases.

In this chapter we have examined both the notarized lease itself, and some of elements common to all such agreements between lessors and tenants. The purpose, content and structure of notarized farm leases set limits on the types of analysis that may be made using this source. The most significant restriction is perhaps also the most obvious -- only the details recorded in an act can be considered, as the exclusion of information may be the result of a variety of factors dictated in large part by differences in notarial practice.

On the issues related to the legal and financial framework of the agreement, however, the leases are precise. As legal contracts, these documents were concerned foremost with the details related to the length of tenure, the amount and form of the rent, and the security offered to fulfill the terms of the contract. An examination of these three aspects of the formal agreement suggests differences in the approach to farms and farming taken by proprietors, according to their occupation, or in some cases to their ethnicity. In the next three chapters, these differences will be examined more closely.

CHAPTER 3
THE FARMS: IMMOVEABLE PROPERTY -- LAND AND BUILDINGS

> TO BE LET:
> For a term of years, the first of May next, a Farm halfway between Montreal and Lachine, commonly called Mount Pensé, in excellent order, a timothy meadow of above 30 acres that yielded a good crop this year the second of its being sowed, another meadow of about four acres good Grass, well stocked with Cattle, working Horses and farming utensiles etc. For further particulars apply to Messrs. Robertson Merchants in Montreal or the Proprietor on the Premises -- None need apply but a man with a Family and good Character.[1]
>
> TO BE LET OR SOLD:
> The Farm pleasantly situated at the Côte des Neiges the property of the late William Rankin Esq., deceased, containing about 72 acres, a valuable Orchard, Flower and Kitchen garden, through which there is a continual stream of running water, together with a Stone House, Barns, Dairy and other buildings thereon erected, the whole Fenced in and in good and substantial repair, for further particulars application to be made to the Subscriber or to Mrs. Rankin on the Premises.[2]
>
> Jonathan A. Gray

On the surface, it might appear that the authors of these two newspaper advertisements were attempting to lure prospective tenants to the land with images of a quiet idyllic rural setting. But it is ahistorical to assume that such a notion was present in late eighteenth-century Quebec society. Glowing reports of the land, buildings, livestock and agricultural tools available for let served a far more pragmatic purpose: they hinted at the productive potential of the farm. To anyone who read the newspaper announcements, or learned of the acreage

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[1] Montreal Gazette, 5/10/1791.

[2] Montreal Gazette, 15/03/1792.

for rent from other sources, descriptions of the immoveable and moveable elements of the farm provided an idea of the capital investments already made in the property. For ultimately, they knew that the productive capacity of a farm was closely tied to the level of capital expenditures made to maintain and improve output.

This chapter and the one to follow will examine some of the more tangible aspects of capital investment on the farm. While the first two chapters have dealt with the people involved in agricultural leasing, and the form and basic provisions of their contract, we have yet to look at the object of exchange -- the farm. In this chapter, the focus will be on the immoveable properties of a farm, principally the land, house and other buildings. Together with agricultural implements and livestock, to be considered in Chapter 4, the land and buildings constituted a major investment for the owner, and an opportunity for the tenant to practice his livelihood without making significant outlays of capital.

How then might the leased farms compare with other farms on the island of Montreal, or even in the rest of Quebec?[3] Did the lessor's ethnicity or access to capital have an affect upon the size of the holding and the way in which the property was maintained? Or was proximity to the growing urban food and land market of more importance in determining the amount of the financial investment made in a property?

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[3] Although it is recognized that farms around Montreal enjoyed and, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, exploited more favourable conditions for commercial production, a more detailed comparison with the rest of Quebec must await similar studies on this period.

3.1 THE LAND

By the late eighteenth century, contemporary observers and travellers had already recognized the land around Montreal to be among the most fertile in the colony. In his comprehensive survey of Lower Canada first published in 1815, Joseph Bouchette was unequivocal in stating that:

> The soil of the whole island [of Montreal], if a few insignificant tracks be overlooked, can scarcely be excelled in any country, and is highly productive in grain of every species, vegetables, and fruits of various kinds; consequently there is hardly any part of it but what is in the most flourishing state of cultivation, and may justly claim the pre-eminence over any of Lower Canada.[4]

Along with fertile soil, the closeness of the expanding urban market was of no less importance in making the land surrounding Montreal an attractive investment. Furthermore, transportation throughout the island and into the town was achieved with relative ease by means of "several roads running from north-east to south-west, nearly parallel to each other ...crossed by others at convenient distances, so as to form a complete and easy communication in every direction."[5] Contemporary observers were unanimous in their praise of the advantages of the area, all echoing in similar manner the words of an American traveller who wrote, "if the vicinity of Montreal is less wildly magnificent, than that of

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[4] Joseph Bouchette, A Topographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada, (London, 1815; reprint Saint-Lambert, 1973): 134. For a more detailed description of the soil types on the island of Montreal see Raoul Blanchard, Etudes canadiennes. L'Ouest du Canada français: Montréal et sa région, (Montréal, 1953).

[5] Bouchette, A Topographical Description..., p. 134. See also Map 3.1 for a visual depiction of the road network on the island in 1834. With minor exceptions, this system was in place between 1780 and 1820.

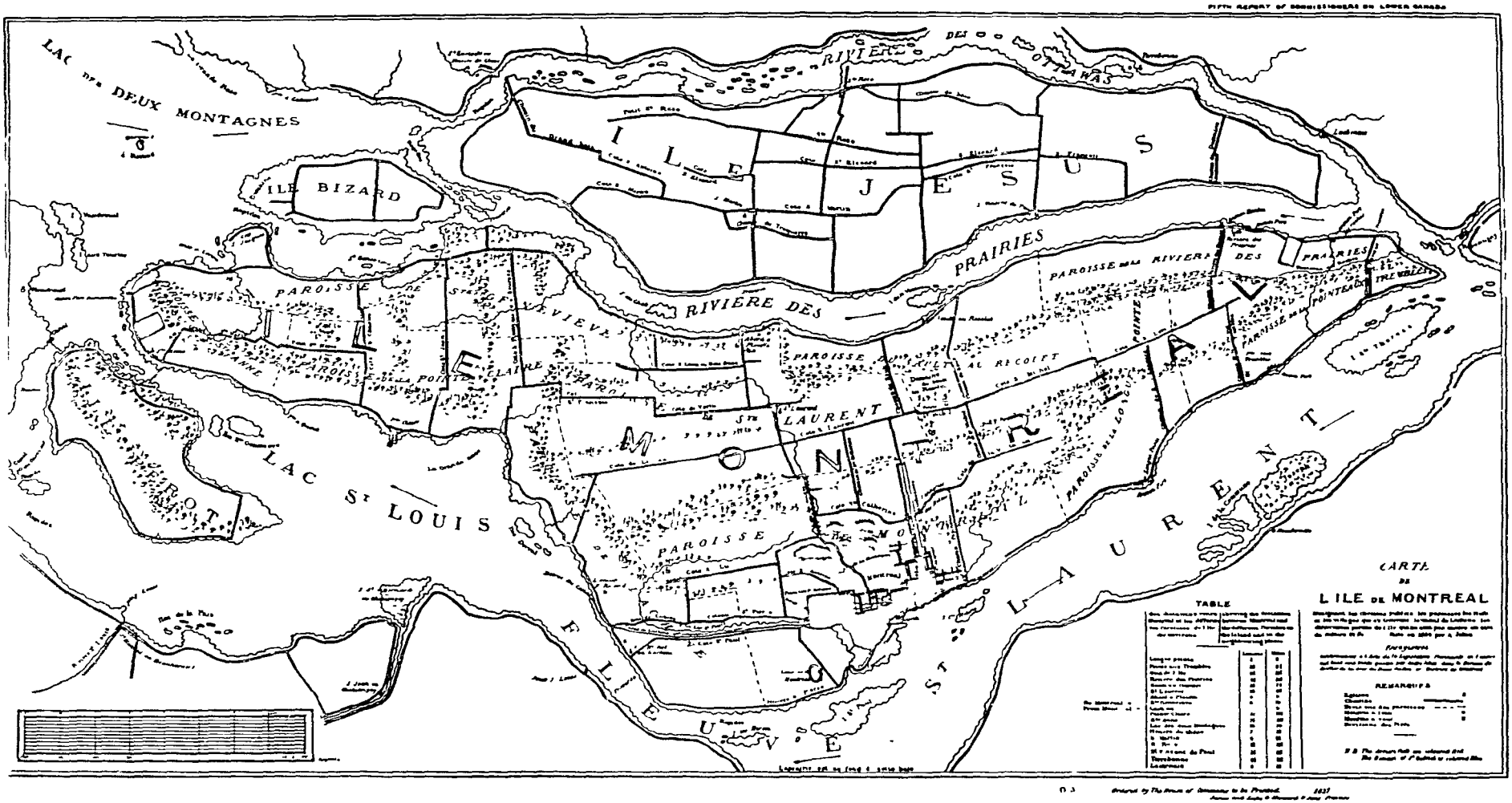

FIGURE 7.1: A. JOBIN, CARTE DE L'ILE DE MONTREAL, 1834.

Quebec, it is far more luxuriant and smiling."[6]

Location

The definite majority of the agricultural lands leased on the island of Montreal between 1780 and 1820 were concentrated in the immediate vicinity of the town. As demonstrated in Table 3.1, 60% of the farms were located in the Parish of Montreal itself, while a further 34% could be found in the neighbouring parishes of Lachine, Saint-Laurent, Longue-Pointe and Sault-au-Récollet. Although this large percentage might be attributed in part to the methodological decision to include only those leases passed before a Montreal notary, several other factors contributed to the concentration.

Many lessors explicitly reserved the right to inspect their property at any time during the course of the lease. While we have no way of knowing how often this right was exercised, the inclusion of such a provision indicates a landowner's interest in the maintenance and state of the property. A farm close to the city would facilitate regular visits, especially for the 70% of all lessors who lived somewhere in the Parish of Montreal (see Table 1.5).

But in addition to keeping the distance short between principal residence and rental property, the proprietors of these farms may have

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[6] Joseph Sanson, Sketches of Lower Canada, Historical and Descriptive; with the author's recollections of the soil and aspect; the morals, habits and religious institutions, of that isolated country; during a tour to Quebec, in the month of July, 1817, (New York, 1817): 231.

TABLE 3.1
Location of Leased Lands In Notarized Farm Leases
on the Island of Montreal, 1780-1820

Parish	No	%	1780-89	1790-99	1800-09	1810-19
Montreal	334	59.9	26	76	104	128
Lachine	78	13.7	10	22	23	23
Saint-Laurent	61	10.8	2	5	16	38
Longue-Pointe	33	5.9	-	5	8	20
Sault-au-Récollet	18	2.8	-	2	2	14
Pointe-Claire	8	1.4	1	-	2	5
Sainte-Anne	8	1.4	-	2	2	4
Sainte-Geneviève	2	0.4	-	1	1	-
Pointe-aux-Trembles	9	1.6	-	-	-	9
Rivière-des-Prairies	1	0.2	-	-	-	1
Montreal/Lachine	3	0.5	1	-	2	-
Montreal/Saint-Laurent	2	0.4	-	-	2	-
Montreal/Longue-Pointe	1	0.2	-	-	-	1
Unknown	6	1.1	1	3	1	1
TOTAL LEASES	564	100.0	41	116	163	244

Source: 564 notarized leases

owned land near the city because of the structure of land use and property values around the town. Unlike the outlying areas of the island, agriculture close to Montreal was for the most part more labour and capital-intensive, clearly as a result of the presence of a large market. Some lessors may have bought their land in order to exploit this potential, or possibly with a view to eventually realizing a profit when land values rose in response to urban pressure.

The pattern did alter slightly over the course of forty years, as the proportion of lands leased in the parishes of Montreal, Lachine and

Longue-Pointe declined by 15% in relation to those found in the more removed parishes. This increase in the number of farms located outside of the three central parishes might best be explained as a response to a lack of available properties, or to a prohibitive increase in land prices closer to the city of Montreal.

Area

Farm size has often been interpreted as an absolute indicator of the relative value of one property over another. Yet a comparison based only on the total area of each holding neglects crucial factors such as soil quality, stage of settlement, amount of land under cultivation, land use and location. Nevertheless, in an established settlement the size of the island of Montreal, where the soil quality and land use pattern was relatively consistent across the whole of the defined region,[7] an examination of farm size does suggest a number of trends in landholding patterns.

In Table 3.2, farm size is surveyed over time and by the occupation and ethnicity of the proprietors. The unit of measure, indicated as *arpents* on the table, requires some explanation. Farm sizes were given in *arpents* in 60% of all leases, while a further 11% of the acts stated

[7] The most significant exception to this statement was the area just outside of the town on the southern slopes of the mountain where the land was used almost exclusively for orchards and gardens. See Map 3.1 for the location of this area.

TABLE 3.2
Area of Land Leased in Notarized Farm Leases
on the Island of Montreal, 1780-1820

	Area in Arpents									
	Not Given	<10	10 <50	50 <100	100 <150	150 <200	200	Total	Avg.	Avg. 10
Period										
1780-89	18	7	2	2	6	3	3	41	94.5	134.4
1790-99	52	6	7	18	20	6	7	116	102.3	112.7
1800-09	62	15	18	24	23	16	5	163	87.9	102.4
1810-19	56	21	48	57	36	18	8	244	81.5	91.2
Occupational Group of Lessors										
Elites	105	24	28	30	44	23	13	267	96.3	112.4
Artisans	20	9	11	16	14	3	2	75	76.6	91.1
Farmers	18	10	17	33	15	9	3	105	82.2	92.1
Women	27	3	12	8	4	7	1	62	80.2	87.1
Rel. Inst.	9	-	3	-	1	1	2	16	118.0	118.0
Unknown	9	3	4	14	7	-	2	39	77.4	85.6
Ethnicity of Lessors										
Canadien	117	36	50	82	60	23	15	383	82.7	95.0
Non-*cdn.*	71	13	25	19	25	20	8	181	99.3	112.1
Location										
P. of Mtl.	147	37	46	46	33	20	9	338	75.2	92.4
Rest of isl.	41	12	29	55	52	23	14	226	100.3	106.9
Total Leases	188	49	75	101	85	43	23	564	87.6	100.1

Source: 564 notarized farm leases

the area in acres and the final 29% did not specify a unit. But despite the use of the term 'acres', it is probable that the unit of measure in all of these leases was still the *arpent*.[8] The island of Montreal had been surveyed using the linear *arpent* thus, for example, making a farm of 3 X 20 acres impossible.[9]

The explanation for this confusing use of measures lies in the efforts of English notaries or proprietors to translate *arpent* as 'acre'. Proof for this assertion can be found among the farm leases themselves. For example, Daniel Robertson's farm Mont-Pensé at Coteau Saint-Pierre was recorded as measuring 3 X 40 *arpents* by the French notary Pierre Mezière, while English notaries Jonathan Abraham Gray and John Gerband Beek described the same farm as comprising 120 acres in area.[10]

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[8] The distinction is important as 1 *arpent* = 36787 square feet, and 1 acre = 43560 square feet or nearly 20% more area.

[9] In his analysis of the 1851-1852 agricultural census in Lower Canada R.M. McInnis encounters the same problem with the two units of measurement and concludes that the "most tenable hypothesis is that, regardless of what respondents called their land areas, the actual units were those of the original surveys." See McInnis' "Some Pitfalls in the 1851-1852 Census of Agriculture of Lower Canada", Hs/SH, XIV:27 (May 1981): 219-231. The same approach is taken by Serge Courville, "Villages and Agriculture in the Seigneuries of Lower Canada: Conditions of a Comprehensive Study of Rural Quebec in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century", in Donald H. Akenson (ed.), Canadian Papers in Rural History, (Gananoque, Ont., 1986): 130 and endnote 15.

[10] See the numerous leases for Robertson's farm: n.m. Mezière 08/04/1782 #2672, n.m. Beek 26/07/1793 #838, n.m. Gray 15/09/1798 #246, 16/05/1799 #341, 16/10/1800 #540, 08/03/1802 #726. The same situation was encountered with a number of farms which appeared two or more times in the series.

The average size of all farms leased on the island of Montreal between 1780 and 1820 was 88 *arpents*.[11] This figure rises to 100 *arpents* when only those farms of 10 *arpents* or more are included in the calculation.[12] Plots of less than 10 *arpents* in area could not be viable farms, but were generally gardens and orchards located in the suburbs of the town or on the slopes of Mount Royal.[13] This concentration of small gardens and orchards accounts in part for a lower average area among the farms in the Parish of Montreal as opposed to those on the rest of the island. A gap of 25 *arpents* separates the two averages, but this difference is almost halved when plots of less than 10 *arpents* are excluded.

If only those holdings of 10 *arpents* or more are considered, the average size of the leased farms declined by over forty *arpents* during the four decades of this study. While this drop in the average size of the farms was dramatic, it is nearly impossible to evaluate its importance. The presence of a growing urban population would be expected to result in the gradual subdivision of farms close to the city -- an hypothesis supported by the disproportionately high number of

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[11] This average is close to that of 96.8 *arpents* derived from the 1781 *aveu et dénombrement* of the island of Montreal, although the farms in the southern and eastern parts of the island tended to be about 15% larger than those in the north and west. Calculations were made from the information contained in Claude Perrault, Montreal en 1781, (Montreal, 1969).

[12] R.M. McInnis also dismisses holdings of less than 10 *arpents* when calculating average farm size in "Some Pitfalls in the 1851-1852 Census of Agriculture of Lower Canada", pp. 221-224.

[13] Louis Charland's 1801 map of Montreal and suburbs clearly shows the numerous gardens and orchards surrounding the city.

properties between ten and fifty *arpents* during the decade of greatest suburban growth, 1810 to 1819. Nevertheless, the average farm size in this ten-year period of just over ninety *arpents* was still quite large by comparison with other holdings in the District of Montreal.[14] Pressure on land may also have contributed to a shift from extensive agricultural practices to intensive ones, so that while the average farm size decreased over time the number of *arpents* cultivated per farm increased.

Religious institutions and elites possessed larger farms on average than their fellow proprietors. As expected, properties owned by artisans were smaller, an indication of the number of garden or orchard plots and relatively small farms they owned in and around the suburbs. The difference in the average size of holdings among farmers, artisans, women and those with no known occupation was not significant, with a total range of little over five *arpents*.

Between *canadien* and non-*canadien* lessors, however, the difference in average farm size was much greater. Regardless of whether or not plots of less than ten *arpents* are considered, the lands of non-*canadien* proprietors averaged seventeen *arpents* more than those of their native

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[14] Using the Census of 1831, Serge Courville calculated an average farm size of sixty-four *arpents* for the District of Montreal. This figure, however, does not include the island of Montreal for which the documentation was missing. See Courville's "Villages and Agriculture in the Seigneuries of Lower Canada: Conditions of a Comprehensive Study of Rural Quebec in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century", in Donald H. Akenson (ed.), Canadian Papers in Rural History, (Gananoque, Ont., 1986): 136-140.

counterparts. Yet to conclude from this figure that non-*canadien* landowners possessed larger farms than did *canadien* landowners would be misleading. The occupational composition of the two ethnic groups, presented earlier in Table 1.6, indicated an extremely high number of non-*canadien* merchant and professional lessors -- nearly 65% of the total group. Thus, the larger farms of the non-*canadien* lessors were, for the most part, also the properties of the elites.

Land Use

The general pattern of land use on the island of Montreal as exhibited in the series of notarized farm leases fully corroborates the evidence compiled from the many contemporary descriptions written by travellers to Lower Canada. In the immediate vicinity of Montreal, especially northwest of the town in *faubourg* Saint-Laurent, *faubourg* Saint-Antoine, and on the slopes of Mount Royal, were numerous gardens and orchards ranging from one to five *arpents* in size. The intensive cultivation of this area was unanimously praised by travellers. One visitor who took up residence in the province for a period of three years from 1806 to 1808 wrote:

> Between the Mountain and town of Montreal, there are a great many very fine gardens and orchards, abounding with a variety of fruit of the very first quality, and no place can be better supplied with vegetables than Montreal...[the] soil and climate [of Montreal] combine to produce the finest fruit I have ever seen. The apples are particularly good... Peaches , apricots and plums are found in the greatest perfection... Currants, raspberries, goose-

> berries, and every sort of small fruit are found in great abundance.[15]

Forty-five of the leased properties were classified principally as orchards, seven as gardens and fifteen as combined garden-orchards. All of these holdings were located within the Parish of Montreal, with the exception of a plot of land described as a six acre garden-orchard found in the Parish of Sainte-Anne.[16] The concentration of fruit production close to Montreal was also indicated by the pattern of land use on individual farms. The leases show a total of 217 properties with some sort of fruit cultivation, be it a small number of trees for family consumption or possibly enough to produce a surplus to market. A clear majority of these farms, 82%, were located in the Parish of Montreal. Gardens, on the other hand, were spread fairly evenly around the leased properties on the island, as would be expected from the importance of a *jardin potager* to the diet of rural families.

Also located in the area surrounding Montreal were a number of small pastures, used both by butchers to fatten livestock close to the market and by urban dwellers without land who paid to allow their ani-

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[15] Hugh Gray, Letters from Canada, written during a residence there in the years 1806, 1807, and 1808; shewing the present state of Canada, its productions -- trade -- commercial importance and political relations, (London, 1809): 150-151.

[16] n.m. Griffin 24/10/1816 #1621.

mals to graze on the grasses.[17] In one example, Phineas and Stanley Bagg, two Montreal innkeepers, annually rented a pasture at Côte Sainte-Catherine from the merchants Toussaint Pothier and Pierre Foretier. Each year, the Baggs also hired Michel Sire, identified in some acts as a *vacher* and in others as a *journalier*, who was obliged to:

> garder avec soin ...autant de vaches qu'il lui en sera confié par le dit Sieur [Bagg]...les qu'elles vaches il sera tenus prendre tous les matins de chaque jour même les fêtes et dimanches durant le temps chez chacun de ceux à qui elles appartiendront dans la ville et faubourgs, et les remener le soir et faire le profit et avantage de [Phineas and Stanley Bagg]....[18]

Leases of land identified solely as pastures were concentrated in this area on the outskirts of the city, with twelve of fifteen located within the Parish of Montreal. Not surprisingly, however, pastures that were

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[17] In his rough notes for the 1825 census, Jacques Viger identifies four *parcs à vaches* which, at the time of enumeration, provided pasturage for 181 cows owned by those resident in the town. Rates for this service ranged from 12 shillings and six pence to 25 shillings (of which five shillings went to the cowherd). Archives du Séminaire de Québec, fonds Viger-Verreau, untitled summary statistics for the island of Montreal in 1825, boîte 45, liasse 7 (I would like to thank Alan Stewart for bringing this document to my attention). In 1816, the charge to pasture cattle during the months of August, September and October on John Clark's property located near Côte Sainte-Catherine was ten shillings per cow for inhabitants of the town, and eight shillings and nine pence for those in the suburbs. See the advertisement from The Montreal Herald, July 27, 1816 in Lawrence M. Wilson's This was Montreal in 1814, 1815, 1816 and 1817, (Montreal, 1960): 120.

[18] n.m. Cadieux 23/04/1809 #97. For the leases of the pasture land see n.m. Chaboillez 14/04/1809 #8660, 04/07/1810 #9359, and 09/04/1811 #9760 and for Sire's other hiring contracts see n.m. Cadieux 09/04/1811 #148, 27/04/1813 #217, and 25/04/1815 #224. Further evidence of this practice can be found in n.m. Barron 26/04/1805 #860; and also in n.m. Barron 17/09/1813 #2266 where a proprietor reserved the right to pasture "des animaux étrangers" on the land in paying half of the money collected to the tenant.

part of a larger farm operation were found on most properties, regardless of their situation on the island.

Woodlots were mentioned in only 84 of the 564 leases, but significantly active timber stands were far more common on the farms outside of the Parish of Montreal. Where wood was referred to on farms close to the city, the contracts generally contained strict regulations prohibiting tenants from using any of the timber, either standing or fallen, for personal firewood or farm maintenance. The demand for firewood in the urban market, combined with the higher value of the agricultural land closest to the city, had undoubtedly contributed to this decrease in the amount of forested land in the Parish of Montreal.

Arable land used for the production of non-specialized crops was obviously located all over the island, with the aforementioned exception of the region of intensive market gardening in the immediate vicinity of the city. Aside from this one area, the tilled fields of almost all farms were planted predominantly in grains and pulses. Farms in the Parish of Montreal, however, on average were 25% smaller in total size than those on the rest of the island -- a figure that may or may not indicate less arable land on holdings within this parish.

Fences and Ditches

Fences and ditches represented one of the major capital investments made in farming during this period. Not only was a large amount of labour required to build fences and dig ditches and keep them both in

repair, but the costs of the materials used was also high. By the late eighteenth century, fences and ditches were essential to the mixed farming practised across the island of Montreal. Indeed, ordinances were passed in the earlier part of the century requiring all *habitants* to join with their neighbours and build a common fence and ditch on the property line between farms.[19] The purpose of the ditch was straightforward, to facilitate the proper drainage of the land. Reasons for enclosing the land were more complex, but the essential function in terms of agriculture was to keep animals contained in certain areas and out of others, thus protecting crops in the field and controlling the use of grazing and pasture lands.

The material and agricultural importance of fences and ditches to farms during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is attested to by the detailed descriptions and obligations contained in farm leases concerning their construction and maintenance. From the information provided in the acts, we can ascertain the different types of fences built.

Most common was a rail and picket or *boulinier* fence, described in one case as "faites... avec des bois de cèdre et perches de cèdre ou de fresne, les piquets auront sept pieds de long -- trois pieds en terre et

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[19] Louise Dechêne, Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVII[e] siècle, (Montréal and Paris, 1974): 314. However, as Dechêne explains, the practice of *vaine pâture*, communal grazing on the stubble left in the fields after harvest, continued well into the eighteenth century. As fences interferred with this custom, it would indicate that in many areas of the island there were still no fences in the mid to late eighteenth century.

quatre pieds hors de terre; cheviller...."[20] In another lease the fence was again to be made with "cedar *piquets* three feet in the ground" but the instructions went on to specify the use of "five rails in each panel of cedar or ash timber."[21] Although cedar pickets or posts were used almost exclusively, there are a few references to the use of walnut for this purpose.[22] Cedar, a wood resistant to weathering and rot, was the most common timber used for the rails or *perches*, though ash was employed often and aspen was also mentioned in one act.

Another kind of wood fence, generally referred to as a board or plank fence, increasingly appears in the series of leases. Some contemporaries believed that board fences were an improvement on the picket and rail fences. John Duncan, a traveller to Lower Canada in 1819, commended the "European" ways of the inhabitants of the farms on the road between Montreal and Lachine, writing that: "Neither stumps nor worm fences were to be seen, but straight enclosures of boards".[23] One tenant, the master butcher John Clark, went so far as to erect a board fence around the 26 acres of pasture he had rented for seven years, on the condition that he might remove this fence at the end of the lease

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[20] n.m. Delisle 03/02/1800 #2907. A more detailed description of the construction methods of a similar fence can be found in Howard S. Russell, A Long Deep Furrow: Three Centuries of Farming in New England, (Hanover, N.H., 1982; abridged edition): 105-106.

[21] n.m. Chaboillez 22/10/1803 #6140.

[22] See for example n.m. Delisle 05/10/1810 #6353 and 05/10/1810 #6355.

[23] John Duncan, Travels through part of the United States and Canada in 1818 and 1819, Vol. II, (Glasgow, 1823): 145.

and put back the original rail and picket fence.[24] Despite the association of this type of fencing with 'improved' farming practices, the reasons for its increased use were probably far more pragmatic. Timber resources on the island of Montreal had become more valuable, and board fences required less wood, although in a more refined state, than the traditional rail fence.

The decreasing supply of affordable wood, combined with the immense labour costs of maintaining wooden fences both around the perimeter of a farm and to separate the various fields within the farm, led some proprietors to have a more durable structure built from materials readily at hand -- stones.[25] One lessor required his tenants to "erect a division dry stone wall on the east line of the premises of four feet high and about 30 rods in length" in return for which he agreed to pay the two brothers 50 cents for each rod of the wall.[26] Joseph Thriolet, a *cultivateur*, simply instructed his tenant James Thom "d'ôter toutes et chacunes des pierres qui se trouve sur la terre qu'un homme peut lever et les mettre le long des clôtures de la dite terre", a practice that in time would lead to some sort of stone barrier.[27] Although stone fences

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[24] n.m. Chaboillez 20/10/1804 #6677.

[25] William Cronon cites identical reasons as the impetus behind the building of stone walls in the New England States around the same time. See his Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England, (New York, 1983): 120.

[26] n.m. Gray 30/04/1804 #1106.

[27] n.m. Desautels 28/08/1817 #3416; similar instructions were given to a tenant in n.m. Bedouin 01/09/1818 #476. As a clarification of an obligation to build a board or a stone fence on a property of 1 X 10 *arpents*, François-Georges Lepailleur instructed his tenant, the master

were shorter than wooden fences, three to four feet in height as opposed to four to five feet, their broader base helped to provide as much security against wandering livestock as did the taller wood structures.

Hedges, common in the long settled countryside and more favourable climates of France and the British Isles, but seemingly impratical in a Lower Canadian context, were mentioned but twice. In one case, John Ogilvy -- an ardent promoter of all things English and the proprietor of land at Côte des Neiges commonly referred to as "Trafalgar" and described as comprising 20 acres in area -- gave his tenant clear instructions on the care of the hedge fences.[28] Clerk of the market James Morrison's orchards at Côte Sainte-Catherine had thorn fences that the lessees were to clip and not allow to grow higher.[29] From the evidence, however, it would appear that other farmers in the district chose not to erect a 'live' fences.

Fences served more than to demarcate and protect a given farm holding. For the lessor, the fences on the property represented a large capital outlay, one which continued every year unless he was one of the

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butcher John Clark, that "si elle est en pierres elle sera sans chaux ni mortier de trois pieds de haut, de troid pieds de paisseur par le bas venant à deux pieds par le haut". n.m. Cadieux 05/05/1808 #80.

[28] Elsewhere in the same lease Ogilvy included the stipulations that he was to provide the tenant Robert Turner with a book on the life of Nelson and a flag, which flag Turner was to hoist above the cabin (also called Nelson's cabin) on the anniversary day of each of Nelson's victories. n.m. Griffin 24/03/1818 #2178. In addition see Ogilvy's biography in the DCB, Volume V, (Toronto, 1983): 635-637 for his involvement in the Montreal Agricultural Society.

[29] n.m. Chaboillez 14/04/1804 #6407.

relatively rare landowners who elected to have stone barriers put up. To the tenant, labour on the fences was one of the more time consuming chores involved in the yearly cycle of agricultural work. In the majority of the leases, the proprietor of the land was responsible for the materials needed to repair and maintain the fences, while the tenant provided the labour. The timber needed might come from the land itself, but increasingly it came from more distant woodlots or even, in an increasing number of instances, from off the island of Montreal. Rafts were floated into the port at Montreal from the lands being cleared further west, and the lessor, or more often the tenant himself, was responsible for carting the wood to the farm.

The labour required to keep the ditches and drains on a farm properly "scoured and cleansed" was no less strenuous than that required on the fences. As with fences, most farms not only had ditches along the length of the land, but also crossing the land at various intervals. Almost all leases clearly stated that it was the duty of the tenant to ensure that these ditches were regularly cleaned so that the land might drain properly. Many lessors instructed their lessees to tend to the common ditches and fences around each farm "à la demande des voisins". Occasionally, a tenant was further obligated to make new ditches during the course of a lease.

In addition to their labour on the fences and ditches contained on the farm, tenants were generally responsible for any statutory work required on public roads or bridges which crossed or bounded on the

land. How onerous this obligation proved to lessees is not possible to ascertain, yet it undoubtedly varied considerably from one farm to another according to the road frontage of the holding.[30]

3.2 BUILDINGS

Next to the land, the cluster of buildings located on each farm usually represented the second most significant capital investment made in a rural property. The progression from crude, makeshift structures to a more durable, finished building of wood or stone marked both the stage of settlement of an area and also the level of prosperity enjoyed by its inhabitants.

On the island of Montreal, the number of houses, excluding those located in the town and in the suburbs, doubled during the period from 1780 to 1820. More significantly, the number of stone houses rose from 78, or 6.8% of all houses counted in the 1781 *aveu*, to 706 in 1825 -- a number that represents 30.3% of all rural houses on the island.[31] Almost all of the stone houses existing in 1781 were located either in the area surrounding Montreal, or in the few small villages scattered about the island. By 1825, the distribution was much more uniform, with

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[30] For a full discussion of the legal obligations concerning road work, see Léon Robichaud, "Le pouvoir, les paysans et la voirie au Bas-Canada à la fin du XVIII^{e} siècle", (MA Thesis, McGill University, 1989).

[31] The figures for 1781 were calculated from the information contained in Claude Perrault, Montréal en 1781; those for 1825 are from Perrault's Montréal en 1825.

over one-quarter of the houses in each parish enumerated as stone.[32] The parishes in the centre of the island -- Montreal, Lachine, Saint-Laurent and Sault-au-Récollet -- had a much denser concentration of stone houses, accounting for 63.5% of the total, but these same parishes also had the greatest populations.[33]

Farm leases contained short descriptions of the property being let, including the various buildings on a farm. Sometimes this description was elaborate, providing an inventory of each building, its construction and its general state, while other leases summarily stated "la maison, grange et autres bâtiments". Due to the seemingly incomplete nature of this information, only tentative conclusions can be drawn concerning the occurrence, location and ownership of stone houses.

Over the forty years, 20% of the 502 houses indicated in farm leases were described as constructed of stone. This percentage did not rise each decade in gradual increments as might be expected, perhaps an indication that the number of stone houses was underrepresented in later leases. Just over 80% of these stone houses were located in the three central parishes of Montreal, Lachine and Saint-Laurent, a proportion that closely matches the representation of these parishes in the 564 leases (see Table 3.1). The same is true of the proprietorship of stone

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[32] The one exception was the Parish of Saint-Geneviève where only 22% of the houses were made of stone.

[33] For excellent photographs and descriptions of stone houses on the island during this period -- and still standing today -- see the Répertoire d'architecture traditionnelle sur le territoire de la communauté urbaine de Montréal: Architecture rurale, (Montreal, 1986).

houses across the six occupational classifications, where each group owned stone houses in a ratio equal to their numbers in the series. *Canadien* lessors were only slightly more likely than their non-*canadien* counterparts to have stone houses on their farms.

Aside from houses, the other structures commonly found on farms were barns, stables (often two -- an *étable* for lodging the cattle and an *écurie* for the horses) and various smaller outbuildings such as sheds, hen-roosts, dairies, root cellars, and ovens. The barn was the largest and most important of these buildings, generally used for storage of grains and hay, and also for threshing during the winter months. In the *aveu* of 1781, a barn had been counted on almost all farms on the island of Montreal, and was crucial to the type of mixed farming widely practised on the island. A total of 342 barns, with few exceptions all constructed of wood, were enumerated in the series of 564 leases.[34] Although the proportion of barns to leased properties seems low, it is explained by a couple of factors: a barn would be unnecessary on a plot of less than ten *arpents*, and it is clear in a few cases, and possible in others, that the land alone was rented to someone who already possessed a barn in the immediate vicinity.

Responsibility for the upkeep of the various buildings on a farm was often shared by the lessor and the tenant. Tenants were always

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[34] Wood was preferable to stone as a building material for barns due to the accumulation of frost on the inside walls of a stone barn during the winter months. See Robert-Lionel Séguin, Les granges du Québec du XVII^{e} au XIX^{e} siècle, (Ottawa, 1963): 7.

liable for the regular maintenance and any minor repairs needed to the buildings during their residence on the farm. In the balance of the contracts, major repairs were either the sole responsibility of the lessor, or were made by the lessee with materials provided by the proprietor. Some leases did not distinguish between small and more extensive restorations, but simply stated that the tenant was to perform all necessary repairs to any building in his keep.

In conclusion, the effect of the urban market on the agricultural lands close to the city is demonstrated by a number of patterns found in our analysis of the land and buildings in farm leases. The concentration of leased properties around Montreal, many of them owned by people residing in the town and suburbs, suggests the increased participation of urban elements in the economy of this region. This trend towards greater integration of the rural and urban economies within the Parish of Montreal will be further supported in Chapter 5 by evidence of intensive and specialized agricultural production near to the city. Compared to the rest of Quebec, the island of Montreal -- especially the central part -- possessed not only some of the richest land, but also more favourable conditions for profitable investment in rural lands, due to geographic, social and economic circumstances. And these advantages already had been clearly recognized by the colony's elite, whose presence in the countryside, and possession of farms larger than the average for all other rural proprietors, indicated that the possibility existed for greater capital investment in farming.

CHAPTER 4
THE FARMS: MOVEABLE PROPERTIES -- FARM IMPLEMENTS AND LIVESTOCK

It is perhaps a truism to state that a man who has land but no agricultural tools or livestock is not a farmer. But it is not uncommon for historians to disregard the instruments of production in examining the agriculture of a region. While this is poor practice, it is understandable on one level -- tools are broken and abandoned, their wood parts rot, and animals eventually die. Thus, the only record left of these articles is on paper, whereas the land itself remains, occasionally along with some of the buildings on it.

Roughly one-third of the agricultural leases passed between 1780 and 1820 contained an inventory of the animals and agricultural implements to be let with the land. Livestock was mentioned in more leases and generally warranted a more detailed description than did tools.[1] From these inventories it is possible to examine the tools and animals found on some of the farms on the island of Montreal and determine how patterns of ownership may have changed over time. Also, the information contained in the farm leases once again permits us to link the possession of these articles with the occupation of the proprietor, and the ethnicity of both lessors and tenants, thereby indicating differences in the level of capital investment.

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[1] In his excellent ground-breaking study of sharecropping in France, Louis Merle found that *le cheptel vif*, or livestock, was more important and valuable than *le cheptel mort*, the agricultural instruments and buildings. See his La métaire et l'évolution agraire de la Gâtine poitevine de la fin du Moyen Age à la Révolution, (Paris, 1958): 108-116.

4.1 FARM IMPLEMENTS

Many contemporary observers deemed that the agricultural tools employed in Lower Canada in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were wholly inadequate for the task. This view has subsequently become a cornerstone of the theory concerning an 'agricultural malaise' during the early decades of the nineteenth century.[2] Yet, despite the recognized importance of farm implements in understanding the agriculture of a region, there have been few attempts to determine exactly what tools were used by whom.[3]

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[2] Fernand Ouellet makes extensive use of the 1816 inquiry into the state of agriculture conducted by the Lower Canadian House of Assembly in order to support this contention. However, Ouellet mentions only the testimony of those 'expert' witnesses who support his own opinions and disregards the obvious bias displayed by many of these men in favour of European systems and tools of cultivation. He also disregards the fact that few of those called to testify were themselves directly involved in farming. With regards to the quality and suitability of the tools of agriculture, five men criticized all farm implements, but three other witnesses did not subscribe to this view. See the testimony of Brehaut, LaRue and Ferguson (none of them mentioned by Ouellet) in "Appendix E", Journals of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada, (1816); and Ouellet's Economic and Social History of Quebec, 1760-1850, (Ottawa, 1980): 229.

[3] Robert-Lionel Séguin methodically recorded various notarial references to farm implements and toured the province compiling a vast photographic collection of Quebec's agricultural tools of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. While Séguin's work is extremely useful in identifying, for example, the numerous changes or differences in the construction of a certain tool over the course of two centuries, it is less useful at a more specific level. The question of how many people possessed and used a particular plough or harrow is not successfully answered. See Séguin's L'équipement de la ferme canadienne aux XVII^{e} et XVIII^{e} siècles, (Montréal, 1959); La civilisation traditionnelle de l'"habitant" aux XVII^{e} et XVIII^{e} siècles, (Montreal, 1973; 2^{e} édition) and the posthumously published L'équipement aratoire et horticole du Québec ancien (XVIIe, XVIIIe, et XIXe siècles), 2 vols., (Montréal, 1989). Some recent work has addressed the problem of the distribution of farm implements among rural families. See Christian Dessureault, Les fondements de la hiearchie sociale au sein de la paysannerie..., pp. 342-354; and Dessureault and John A. Dickinson, "Farm Implements and Husbandry in Colonial Quebec, 1740-1840", unpublished paper, presented in summer of 1989.

The information contained in farm leases does present an opportunity to link a set of tools to a farm, an owner, a location or a specific time. Agricultural implements were not included in all farm leases, however; in the 564 acts passed between 1780 and 1820, only 26% of all leases contained a reference to the letting of any tools.[4] Close to one-third of those contracts which included farm implements did not give an itemized account of those instruments to be left for the use of the tenant. Instead of the detailed inventory provided in the other leases, many of these documents merely contained the phrase that "tous les ustensiles d'agriculture nécessaire" or "les ustensiles propres à l'agriculture" were to be part of the rental agreement.

What tools were used on the other 74% of the properties leased during this time remains a mystery. It is not clear if the tenant was expected to provide all of the equipment he needed, or if the two parties considered the letting of the instruments of agriculture to be part of an informal agreement, and therefore one to which the notary was not a witness. Fragmentary evidence in the leases themselves indicates that both circumstances occurred. The question is an important one, for those tenants expected to furnish all implements and animals necessary to cultivate the land obviously required far more resources than those who leased a fully equipped farm.

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[4] With few exceptions, those acts which included farm implements in the leasing agreement were for farms and not for small plots of land, gardens or orchards.

The care of farming utensils was generally left to tenants who were held to return the tools in the same condition as they were received. Some lessors agreed to bear half the costs of any work required on the iron parts of an instrument by a blacksmith, however, tenants were solely responsible for repairs using wood. Indeed, it was not unusual for the tenant to be provided with the iron parts of a particular tool or instrument with the understanding that he would then construct the complete article.

From the descriptions, and occasional evaluations, of farm implements contained in 99 of the leases, we can come to some understanding of the distribution and use of the various tools of agriculture on the island of Montreal between 1780 and 1820.

Ploughs and Harrows

Among the assorted implements needed to cultivate the soil, the plough and the harrow, in the words of one contemporary observer, were "the most material".[5] Whether David Anderson was referring to the value of these two instruments in terms of money or in terms of usefulness, the two senses could be seen as correct. A plough was obviously indispensable for tilling the soil and the harrow "an instrument of nearly as much importance as the plough, and of quite equal value in cultivation."[6] Both implements required draught animals to be drawn across the

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[5] Testimony of David Anderson, "Appendix E", JHALC, (1816).

[6] Charles Edward Whitcombe, The Canadian Farmer's Manual of Agriculture, (Toronto, 1874): 473.

soil, thus making their operation more capital intensive than the use of hand tools.

From the descriptions provided in farm leases, it appears that the wheeled Canadian plough with an iron coulter and an iron ploughshare of between 28 and 32 pounds was still used on many, if not the majority, of farms.[7] English ploughs were used on some farms, but it is not possible to determine their exact numbers.[8] The lighter hoe plough appeared along with a Canadian plough on the farm of the Montreal merchant William McGillivray.[9] Also mentioned towards the end of our period, in

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[7] The more complete descriptions found in several leases generally inventoried all metal parts of the plough, obviously the most valuable parts of the instrument, and also gave the weight of the ploughshare. In 11 cases, only the ironwork for a plough was provided to the tenant, leaving it to him to construct the necessary wooden parts and assemble the implement. A diagramme showing the various components of this type of plough can be found in Robert-Lionel Séguin's L'équipement de la ferme canadienne..., p.34, along with two pictures in the same book, Planche V.

[8] The farm of spruce brewer Duncan Cumming on Côte de la Visitation had both a Canadian and an English plough -- see n.m. Lukin, 15/04/1796 #741. An English plough was also among the tools leased by Montreal trader Frederick Gonnerman along with his farm on Côte Saint-Martin in the Parish of Longue Pointe -- see n.m. Gray 26/09/1806 #1653. These references and those found in JHALC, "Appendix E" and Charles Grece, Essays on Pratical Husbandry..., clearly indicate that these ploughs were used in this area well before 1823, the date Corinne Beutler cites as their first mention in a non-continuous series of inventories after death collected for the Montreal region. Much of the information in her discussion of ploughs is misleading, for example Beutler does not realize that the *charrue à rouelles* and the *charrue canadienne* were essentially the same implement. See Corinne Beutler, "L'outillage agricole dans les inventaires paysans de la région de Montréal reflète-t-il une transformation de l'agriculture entre 1792 et 1835?", in François Lebrun et Normand Séguin (dir.) Sociétés villageoises et rapports villes-campagnes au Québec et dans la France de l'Ouest XVII^{e} -- XX^{e} siècles. Actes du colloque Franco-Québécois de Québec, (1985): 129.

[9] n.m. Gray 09/04/1807 #1792.

1818, was an iron plough with a value of £9.15, an amount that was three times greater than that given for any other plough.[10]

Although many of the descriptions were not precise enough to identify the kind of plough, the type of yoke and harnesses listed, in addition to the draught animals included with the livestock, often provided an important clue. The Canadian plough was usually drawn by a team of four oxen, with the addition of one or two horses to provide greater speed.[11] Only two horses were required for the English plough -- an important advantage in the eyes of those who believed that the use of less draught animals would benefit farmers.[12] Although it was much maligned by numerous contemporary commentators, the heavier Canadian plough was much better suited to the soils of the island of Montreal than was the lighter English version. In addition, the degree of competence required to effectively operate the English plough, a swing plough without wheels, was not possessed by the average farmer, in Lower

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[10] n.m. Doucet 12/08/1818 #5443. Two iron ploughs valued at £5.10 each along with five drill ploughs and one wooden plough were among the agricultural implements inventoried on the properties of John Ogilvy, a wealthy Montreal landowner, after his death in 1819. See Ogilvy's estate inventory, n.m. Griffin 11/11/1819 #2837.

[11] Louise Dechêne, "Observations sur l'agriculture du Bas-Canada au début du XIXe siècle", in Joseph Goy et Jean-Pierre Wallot (dir.), Evolution et éclatement du monde rurale: Structures, fonctionnement et évolution différentielle des sociétés rurales françaises et québécois XVIIe -- XXe siècles, Actes du colloque franco-québécois d'histoire rurale comparée, (1982; published 1986): 196.

[12] Testimony of Dumont and Larue, JHALC, "Appendix E"; and Charles Grece, Essays on Practical Husbandry..., pp. 23-25.

Canada, Upper Canada or in Great Britain.[13] By virtue of their specialized skill, ploughsmen in England occupied a privileged position in the hierarchical ordering of the various rural workers.[14]

Harrows in use at this time can be divided into two broad categories -- those with wooden teeth and those with the more effective and more durable iron teeth. The number of iron spikes on the latter type of harrow was commonly put at around 25 in those leases with detailed inventories. Although the shape of the implement was rarely mentioned, most evidence indicates that a triangular form was most popular.[15] One reference to a "double harrow", most probably two squares or rectangles joined by short chains, was found in the yeoman James McGregor's lease of his farm on Côte Sainte-Catherine.[16]

For the period between 1780 and 1820, the figures in Table 4.1 demonstrate that almost all farms leased with an itemized inventory of agricultural implements had a plough. Although the total number of ploughs counted equaled one per farm, there were eight farms that had

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[13] Charles Edward Whitcombe, The Canadian Farmer's Manual of Agriculture, p. 466.

[14] Howard Newby, The Deferential Worker: A Study of Farm Workers in East Anglia, (Middlesex, 1977): 31-34.

[15] Grece, Essays on Practical Husbandry..., pp. 27-28; Séguin, L'équipement de la ferme canadienne..., pp. 31-32. A slightly different form, a diamond shape, was among those harrows listed in John Ogilvy's inventory after death, n.m. Griffin 11/11/1819 #2837.

[16] n.m. Doucet 12/08/1818 #5443. See also G.E. Fussell, The Farmer's Tools: A History of British Farm Implements, Tools and Machinery Before the Tractor Came: From A.D. 1500-1900, (London, 1952): 68.

TABLE 4.1
Distribution of Ploughs and Harrows by Decade
in Notarized Farm Leases for the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

	1780-89	1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	Total
Total no. of leases	41	116	163	244	564
(1) Leases incl. tools	10	44	38	53	145
(as % of total)	(24%)	(38%)	(23%)	(22%)	(26%)
(2) Missing inventory	4	15	12	15	46
Plough	3	31	21	34	89
Ironwork for plough	2	5	1	3	11
Total	5	36	22	37	100
(as % of (1) - (2))	(83%)	(100%)	(85%)	(97%)	(100%)
Harrow	1	4	4	11	20
Harrow with iron teeth	-	6	4	5	15
Harrow with wood teeth	-	4	1	2	7
Total	1	14	9	18	42
(as % of (1) - (2))	(17%)	(48%)	(35%)	(47%)	(42%)

TABLE 4.2
Distribution of Ploughs and Harrows by Occupational Classification
of Lessors in Notarized Farm Leases for the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

	Elites	Art^{ns}	Farm^{s}	Women	Rel. Inst.	Unkn^{n}	Total
Total no. of leases	267	75	105	62	16	39	564
(1) Leases incl. tools	79	14	22	15	4	11	145
(as % of total)	(30%)	(19%)	(21%)	(24%)	(25%)	(28%)	(26%)
(2) Missing inventory	34	1	4	4	1	2	46
Plough	44	11	16	7	1	10	89
Ironwork for plough	8	1	-	1	1	-	11
Total	52	12	16	8	2	10	100
(as % of (1) - (2))	(100%)	(92%)	(89%)	(73%)	(67%)	(100%)	(100%)
Harrow	17	1	1	1	-	-	20
Harrow with iron teeth	10	1	2	-	-	2	15
Harrow with wood teeth	5	1	1	-	-	-	7
Total	32	3	4	1	0	2	42
(as % of (1) - (2))	(71%)	(23%)	(22%)	(9%)	(0%)	(22%)	(42%)

TABLE 4.3
Distribution of Ploughs and Harrows by Ethnicity of Lessors and Tenants in Notarized Farm Leases for the Island of Montreal, 1780-1820

	Lessors		Tenants		
	cdn	non-*cdn*	*cdn*	non-*cdn*	Total
Total no. of leases	383	181	238	326	564
(1) Leases incl. tools	97	48	73	72	145
(as % of total)	(25%)	(27%)	(31%)	(22%)	(26%)
(2) Missing inventory	23	23	18	28	46
Plough	66	23	55	34	89
Ironwork for plough	10	1	9	2	11
Total	76	24	64	36	100
(as % of (1) - (2))	(100%)	(96%)	(100%)	(82%)	(100%)
Harrow	7	13	4	16	20
Harrow with iron teeth	13	2	10	5	15
Harrow with wood teeth	7	-	7	-	7
Total	27	15	21	21	42
(as % of (1) - (2))	(36%)	(60%)	(38%)	(48%)	(42%)

two ploughs. The rate of ownership of this implement was roughly consistent across the forty years of this study. On the other hand, the number of farms which included a harrow or harrows with the working tools of the land rose during this period, from only 17% of all properties in the first decade to almost half in the last decade. As harrows were used on all farms, this increase most probably indicates that more expensive materials, namely iron teeth, were increasingly used in the construction of this instrument.[17]

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[17] Sylvie Dépatie finds few references to harrows in inventories after death for île-Jésus, and hypothesizes that the instrument was crude, and therefore of little value, thus accounting for its omission. See "L'évolution d'une société rurale: l'île-Jésus au XVIIIe siècle", (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 1988): 243-249. Harrows made with iron teeth were obviously of greater value than those with only wooden prongs.

Turning to the question of which proprietors owned ploughs and harrows, the numbers contained in Table 4.2 indicate some interesting trends. Farm leases made by the élite were more likely than those of all other proprietors to include agricultural implements. In addition, from the inventories made in the 99 leases, the merchant and professional lessors clearly had the most capital invested in their ploughs and harrows. The farms of élites had an average of 1.2 ploughs and .7 harrows per farm, figures that, especially in the case of harrows, were well above those for all other occupational categories. Not only did these farms have a greater number of these implements, but they clearly also had more of better construction -- ten of the 15 harrows identified as possessing iron teeth were found on properties owned by merchants and professionals.

The ethnic distribution of ploughs and harrows among *canadien* and non-*canadien* lessors and tenants as shown in Table 4.3 reveals few major differences. Aside from the greater propensity of *canadien* tenants to engage in leases which included farm implements, the only other dissimilarity between the two ethnic groups was in their possession of harrows. A larger proportion of the properties owned by non-*canadien* lessors, 60% as opposed to 36% of *canadien* proprietors, had a harrow included among the working tools of the farm. Between the two groups of tenants a similar but less pronounced gap existed, with the non-*canadien* lessees once again ahead of their *canadien* counterparts. Despite this apparent proclivity of the non-*canadien* population involved in farm

leasing to possess harrows more than other farmers, any conclusion regarding better agricultural practices would be unfounded, due to the possible exclusion of crude wooden harrows, fashioned by the tenant, from many leases. The difference was not significant enough to make any judgment, but more importantly 13 of the 15 harrows with iron teeth were owned by *canadien* lessors and two-thirds of these same implements were on farms leased by *canadien* tenants.

Hand Tools

The hand tools found on most Lower Canadian farms can be divided into three broad categories -- instruments required for cultivation, for harvesting and for threshing. Although certain basic tools from each of these groupings were needed to perform the common and repetitive tasks of farming, these smaller implements were often not included in the list of agricultural instruments leased to the tenant. Possible reasons for the exclusion of these tools are likely linked to their value in relation to the more expensive ploughs, harrows and carts. Hand tools may not have been inventoried with the larger implements simply because they were not as valuable, and were therefore included through an informal agreement between lessor and tenant. Or, perhaps the lesser cost of these various small tools meant that many tenants possessed their own, and required only that the more substantial farm implements be provided on the farm.

A variety of hand tools used in cultivation or in other closely related tasks were found in 28 leases. Shovels and spades were common,

as were hoes, both generally described as having blades made of iron. Different types of hoes were listed -- a garden hoe, a dutch hoe, a grubbing hoe (probably a mattock or pick axe), and a 'large' hoe. In addition to these tools were a number of rakes and a variety of iron forks -- pitchforks, hay forks and dung or manure forks.

Tools used in harvesting were mentioned even less frequently than those employed in the earlier stages of planting and growing a crop. Only ten leases contained any reference to sickles, scythes or reaping hooks, and eight of these leases were made between 1810 and 1820. The two other leases, passed in the 1790's, referred to a scythe on one farm and "six grandes faucilles" on the second farm.[18] After 1810, however, only one sickle is mentioned, while 14 scythes are counted along with eight reaping hooks. Snaths, the wood pole or shaft of a scythe, were also enumerated in one lease.

The instruments required for threshing and preparing the grain for consumption or for sale were indicated but six times. Five leases made prior to 1800 contained references to a *van* or winnowing-basket, in addition to a number of mentions of metal measures of a *demi-minot* or a *minot*. A lease passed in 1810 described "one fanning mill or crib for wheat" valued at £6.10 on a farm owned by George Clark, a Montreal furrier.[19] Several leases also made reference to half-bushel and full bushel measures.

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[18] n.m. Chaboillez 29/01/1790 #269; n.m. Delisle 26/10/1795 #1158.5

[19] n.m. Gray 17/12/1810 #2942.

Other small tools mentioned included iron implements such as axes, crowbars and hammers. A grindstone to keep certain tools sharp, especially sickles and scythes, appeared in a few leases. Reference was also made to a pruning hook, probably for use in an orchard, and shearers to trim the fleece from sheep. Such tools were undoubtedly of the same sort as those referred to simply as "and other sundry utensils" at the end of the inventories contained in some leases.

Specialized Implements

The numerous cider-presses located in and around Montreal yielded a product that was the envy of many visitors to the town.[20] Seven presses were counted among the implements included in leases of agricultural lands, and except for two found in Lachine, the rest were located very close to the city on the slopes of the mountain, on Côte Sainte-Catherine and on Côte Saint-Antoine.[21] Equal numbers of *canadien* and non-*canadien* lessors owned a press, but in terms of their socio-economic status, the six owners could not be termed representative of the general population. Three men classified in the merchant and professional category possessed four of the cider-presses, while two more were owned

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[20] In 1818, Jacques Viger identifies four major cider-presses in the immediate vicinity of Montreal, and in the census of 1825 three others are mentioned in the outlying *côtes*, "Statistique: Montréal en 1805 et Montréal en 1818", Archives du Séminaire de Québec, fonds Viger-Verreau, boîte 69, liasse 1; untitled summary statistics for the island of Montreal in 1825, boîte 45, liasse 7. Two writers who believed Montreal's cider to be of the finest quality were Joseph Bouchette, Topographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada..., p.160; and Hugh Gray, Letters from Canada..., p. 151.

[21] n.m. Sanguinet 07/02/1782 #1940; n.m. Foucher 12/01/1790 #6736; n.m. Chaboillez 14/07/1792 #575, 14/04/1804 #6407, 12/09/1808 #8363, 09/02/1809 #8527.

by the Soeurs Religieuses de Saint-Joseph (Hôtel-Dieu) and the last was on the land of a widow. For the most part, the descriptions of this device were brief, however, in one case a "horse mill" was given as the power behind the mechanism, while in another the press was recorded as "un pressoir en pierres avec tous ses ustensiles".[22]

Dairy production was also very important to the local market. Ten leases contained inventories of the equipment needed to collect and keep milk and to manufacture butter and cheese.[23] This activity was far less centralized than was the production of cider, as the ten farms were scattered among five parishes -- Sault-au-Récollet, Montreal, Lachine, Saint-Laurent and Longue-Pointe. Nevertheless, a definite occupational concentration was encountered among the owners of these ten properties. Except for an artisan and a widow, the remaining eight lessors were all part of the merchant and professional grouping. In terms of ethnicity, there was once again an even split, five *canadien* and five non-*canadien* lessors. Numerous articles used in dairy production were listed, among them flared pails for milk, large brass kettles for boiling milk to make cheese, cauldrons, vats and terrines of many sizes, strainers, metal hoops and presses necessary for cheese making, and churns for butter.

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[22] n.m. Chaboillez 14/04/1804 #6407, 12/09/1808 #8363.

[23] n.m. Delisle 15/12/1789 #177, 04/10/1790 #276, 26/10/1795 #1158.5; n.m. Foucher 12/01/1790 #6736; n.m. Barron 16/08/1814 #2419, 17/10/1814 #2449; n.m. Bedouin 12/04/1817 #230; n.m. Doucet 02/10/1816 #3845, 12/08/1818 #5443; n.m. Jobin 30/01/1818 #1013.

Carts and Other Means of Transport

From the valuations of farm equipment made in several farm leases, it is clear that carts were among the most costly items found on a farm. Descriptions found in many of the leases containing inventories emphasized the wheels of these vehicles, obviously an expensive and crucial part of the cart. Once again, it was undoubtedly the iron portion of the wheels that contributed a substantial portion of their cost. Most wheels were described as either *ferrée*, *frettes et bottes*, iron shod or iron bound, although a small number of the wheels were reported as *non-ferrée*. In some cases, the carts were given over to the tenant without any wheels at all, leaving it to the farmer to make them himself, or more probably obtain the necessary number of pairs from a wheelwright.[24]

Because of the relative value of carts and their importance in the work of a farm, just over three-quarters of all leases which included an inventory of farm tools made mention of at least one transport vehicle used in the work of the farm. The majority of these farms contained a selection of the different means of transport, but at least one cart was found on almost all of these properties. Some carts were categorized by their size, with numerous references to *une grande charette* and *une petite charette*, while others such as hay carts, dung carts and water carts were classified by their function, and oxwain carts and horse carts were named after the draught animals used to pull them. A smaller

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[24] Robert-Lionel Séguin, L'équipement de la ferme canadienne..., p. 53.

cart, commonly referred to as *un tombereau* or a tipcart, or the wheelbarrow which did not require draught animals, was also used on many of these farms to transport heavier items such as stones, earth or manure.[25] During the winter, sledges or *traînes* were employed to haul the numerous cords of wood required as fuel in the farmer's household.[26] Wood canoes were included in several leases where part of the land let was an island off the shore, probably used as a pasture for the livestock.

4.2 LIVESTOCK

Animals were an integral part of agricultural production. Not only were they an important part of the diet, but in an era long before the mechanization of farm work, draught animals were an essential source of power to perform many tasks, chief among them ploughing and carting. Furthermore, their manure provided an indispensable source of fertilizer for the soil.

Livestock was included in a third of the 564 farm leases passed between 1780 and 1820. Of the 183 leases which involved some animals, 12.6% did not contain a description of the number and kinds of livestock let. In the majority of the leases without descriptions, reference was made to an inventory already drawn up, or to be taken, but the document either was never annexed to the act or was lost. Those acts with an

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[25] Ibid, p. 62.

[26] Charles Chaboillez, a Montreal merchant, had a toboggan described as "*une grande traîne Bostonnaise*" on his land. See n.m. Delisle 26/10/1795 #1158.5.

inventory of livestock often included details about each ox, cow or horse, notably the age and value of the animal.[27] Most of the contracts in which livestock was included also contained agricultural implements, thus meaning that the farm was fully equipped for the tenant.

From the information displayed in Tables 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6, few clear trends are revealed in the distribution of livestock. In the four decades extending from 1780 to 1819, no pattern was found of either increased or decreased inclusion of livestock in farm leases. Some fairly significant differences could be found among the different occupational classifications, however, where those proprietors in the elite and unknown categories were more likely to include animals in their agricultural leases. Artisans and the religious institutions displayed less of a tendency to make livestock part of the property let by agreement. Among *canadien* and non-*canadien* lessors, roughly equal proportions of each group included livestock in their leases, but among the tenants, a greater percentage of the *canadien* population received animals through their formal contract.

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[27] Occasionally, the description contained even more information. For example, some oxen were described as "boeufs anglais" and others as "boeufs canadiens". See n.m. Chaboillez 31/03/1788 #69; n.m. Delisle 26/10/1795 #1158; 09/05/1794 #850. Also, cows were often divided into milch cows, those ready to calve and the younger cattle.

TABLE 4.4
Distribution of Livestock by Decade
in Notarized Farm Leases for the Island of Montreal,
1780-1820

	1780-89	1790-99	1800-09	1810-19	Total
Total no. of leases	41	116	163	244	564
*Leases incl. livestock	10	49	53	71	183
(as % of total)	(24%)	(42%)	(33%)	(29%)	(32%)
Missing inventory	2	8	8	5	23
OXEN					
Leases with oxen	7	27	23	32	89
(as % of *)	(88%)	(66%)	(51%)	(49%)	(56%)
Average per farm[1]	*3.9*	*3.4*	*3*	*2.6*	*3*
Range	2-6	1-10	2-6	1-6	1-10
CATTLE					
Leases with cattle	8	39	41	59	147
(as % of *)	(100%)	(95%)	(91%)	(89%)	(92%)
Average per farm	*7.3*	*7.6*	*4.8*	*7.5*	*6.7*
Range	2-12	1-18	1-20	1-25	1-25
HORSES					
Leases with horses	7	31	27	43	108
(as % of *)	(88%)	(76%)	(60%)	(65%)	(68%)
Average per farm	*2.1*	*2*	*1.6*	*1.8*	*1.8*
Range	1-3	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4
PIGS					
Leases with pigs	5	14	6	13	38
(as % of *)	(63%)	(34%)	(13%)	(20%)	(24%)
Average per farm	*5*	*5*	*4.3*	*4*	*4.6*
Range	3-6	2-9	2-7	1-8	1-9
SHEEP					
Leases with sheep	3	24	22	17	66
(as % of *)	(38%)	(59%)	(49%)	(26%)	(41%)
Average per farm	*8*	*14.9*	*11.8*	*13.5*	*13.2*
Range	6-10	2-40	1-33	6-30	2-40
POULTRY					
Leases with hens	6	19	9	23	57
(as % of *)	(75%)	(49%)	(20%)	(35%)	(36%)
Average per farm	*27*	*29.6*	*21.3*	*20*	*24.3*
Range	18-48	12-48	6-36	3-48	3-48

[1] Averages are based only on the number of farm leases which include a particular animal.

TABLE 4.5
Distribution of Livestock by Occupational Classification of Lessors in Notarized Farm Leases for the Island of Montreal, 1780-1820

	Elite	Art[ns]	Farm[s]	Women	Rel. Inst.	Unkn[n]	Total
Total no. of leases	267	75	105	62	16	39	564
*Leases incl. livestock	96	19	32	20	2	14	183
(as % of total)	(36%)	(25%)	(31%)	(32%)	(13%)	(36%)	(32%)
Missing inventory	16	-	2	3	1	1	23
OXEN							
Leases with oxen	43	10	18	6	1	11	89
(as % of *)	(54%)	(53%)	(58%)	(35%)	(100%)	(85%)	(56%)
Average per farm[1]	*3.5*	*2.9*	*2.8*	*3.6*	*2*	*2.9*	*3*
Range	1-10	2-6	2-4	2-6	-	2-4	1-10
CATTLE							
Leases with cattle	76	18	27	15	1	10	147
(as % of *)	(95%)	(95%)	(87%)	(88%)	(100%)	(77%)	(92%)
Average per farm	*7.3*	*7.4*	*5.1*	*6.5*	*5*	*5.1*	*6.7*
Range	1-25	1-21	1-10	1-18	-	2-8	1-25
HORSES							
Leases with horses	61	12	14	11	1	9	108
(as % of *)	(76%)	(63%)	(45%)	(65%)	(100%)	(70%)	(68%)
Average per farm	*1.9*	*1.6*	*1.6*	*1.9*	*2*	*1.6*	*1.8*
Range	1-4	1-3	1-2	1-4	-	1-2	1-4
PIGS							
Leases with pigs	28	-	2	5	-	3	38
(as % of *)	(35%)	-	(7%)	(29%)	-	(23%)	(24%)
Average per farm	*4.7*	-	*5.5*	*4.5*	-	*3.3*	*4.6*
Range	2-9	-	5-6	4-6	-	3-4	2-9
SHEEP							
Leases with sheep	30	4	17	6	1	8	66
(as % of *)	(38%)	(21%)	(55%)	(35%)	(100%)	(62%)	(41%)
Average per farm	*16.2*	*13*	*8.6*	*10.3*	*12*	*13.9*	*13.2*
Range	5-40	12-15	1-30	6-14	-	5-30	1-40
POULTRY							
Leases with hens	26	5	12	9	1	4	57
(as % of *)	(33%)	(26%)	(39%)	(53%)	(100%)	(31%)	(36%)
Average per farm	*26.9*	*20.4*	*18.8*	*16.8*	*30*	*22.5*	*24.3*
Range	3-48	12-24	12-48	6-30	-	18-24	3-48

[1] Averages are based only on the number of farm leases which include a particular animal.

TABLE 4.6
Distribution of Livestock by Ethnicity of Lessors and Tenants in Notarized Farm Leases for the Island of Montreal, 1780-1820

	Lessors		Tenants		
	cdn	non-*cdn*	*cdn*	non-*cdn*	Total
Total no. of leases	383	181	238	326	564
*Leases incl. livestock	121	62	87	96	183
(as % of total)	(32%)	(34%)	(37%)	(29%)	(32%)
Missing inventory	11	12	12	11	23
OXEN					
Leases with oxen	73	16	62	27	89
(as % of *)	(66%)	(32%)	(83%)	(32%)	(56%)
Average per farm[1]	*3.4*	*2.3*	*3.4*	*2.6*	*3*
Range	1-10	1-4	2-10	1-6	1-10
CATTLE					
Leases with cattle	99	48	65	82	147
(as % of *)	(90%)	(96%)	(87%)	(97%)	(92%)
Average per farm	*6.3*	*7.5*	*5.5*	*7.6*	*6.6*
Range	1-24	1-25	1-20	1-25	1-25
HORSES					
Leases with horses	76	32	54	54	108
(as % of *)	(69%)	(64%)	(72%)	(64%)	(68%)
Average per farm	*1.7*	*1.9*	*1.8*	*1.8*	*1.8*
Range	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4
PIGS					
Leases with pigs	22	16	15	23	38
(as % of *)	(20%)	(32%)	(20%)	(27%)	(24%)
Average per farm	*5.1*	*3.9*	*4.7*	*4.5*	*4.5*
Range	2-9	2-7	2-6	2-9	2-9
SHEEP					
Leases with sheep	58	8	45	21	66
(as % of *)	(53%)	(16%)	(60%)	(25%)	(41%)
Average per farm	*13.3*	*12.1*	*10.9*	*18*	*13.2*
Range	1-40	1-30	1-40	1-40	1-40
POULTRY					
Leases with hens	47	10	40	17	57
(as % of *)	(43%)	(20%)	(53%)	(20%)	(36%)
Average per farm	*26.1*	*14.1*	*28*	*13.4*	*24.3*
Range	3-48	6-24	3-48	6-18	3-48

[1] Averages are based only on the number of farm leases which include a particular animal.

As with the properties that were leased without any farm tools, it is not known what animals were kept on the 68% of the farms which apparently were leased without livestock. Animals were not necessarily required on all of the leased lands, especially the many smaller garden and orchard plots -- but what of the numerous properties which required draught animals in order to cultivate the arable land? In a few cases, provisions were made for the tenant to have the use of a team of oxen only during ploughing time. Several lessors obliged the tenant to provide a specific number and variety of animals, or more commonly, to furnish the farm with sufficient moveable property, consisting primarily of livestock and tools, as security for the payment of rent.[28] How many tenants were without the necessary draught animals and were therefore required to borrow or hire oxen or horses cannot be accurately determined from farm leases.

Occasionally, the lessor and tenant supplied equal numbers of draught animals, as in the case of Charles Laporte and François Dubreuil, two *cultivateurs* from the Parish of Pointe-aux-Trembles who were both obliged by the terms of their contract to leave two oxen on the farm.[29] Similarly, James McGregor, a yeoman living on Côte Sainte-Catherine, agreed to supply one draught horse and his tenant John Hamilton Borland the other work horse necessary for labour on McGregor's 90

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[28] For example, see n.m. Doucet 04/01/1817 #3985 and n.m. Jobin 07/10/1818 #1298.

[29] In addition to the two oxen, Dubreuil was also required to put 2 horses, 3 cows and 3 sheep on the land. See n.m. Cadieux 04/02/1813 #54.

arpent farm.[30] Pierre Plessis-Belair and Charles Côté, also *cultivateurs*, were to furnish at shared cost a pair of oxen and a horse "seulement pour les travaux de la terre".[31] What is most interesting is that in each of the three cases, the two parties to the lease were farmers. This trend lends support to the hypothesis that those lessors in this occupational category had less capital resources available to fully stock a farm than did the merchant and professional lessors.

The daily care of the animals was left to the tenant, although he did not always assume complete responsibility for their well-being. If an animal was lost through negligence on the part of the lessee, he was solely responsible for the cost of replacement. The costs of replacing livestock which died as the result of natural causes or an act of God were generally shared by the lessor and tenant, or in fewer cases borne by the owner alone.

Draught Animals: Oxen and Horses

Of all the animals kept on a property, the draught animals were clearly the most important for the operation of a farm. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, opinions were divided about the suitability of the ox or the horse as the draught animal of choice in Lower Canada. Reports of the agricultural societies, testimony before the Legislative Assembly, and writings by travellers and residents of

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[30] n.m. Doucet 12/08/1818 #5443.

[31] Separately, Plessis-Belair provided 2 cows and Côté 2 cows and 1 horse. See n.m. Trudeau 06/08/1816 #426.

the island all offer opinions on the superiority of either the horse or the ox as the work animal on the farms of the region.[32] The debate was closely linked to which plough, the lighter English type or the heavier Canadian sort, a particular commentator favoured. As discussed in the previous section, the Canadian plough was better suited to the denser soils on the island of Montreal. A team of oxen, generally led by one horse, was required to pull this implement across the fields, and although their progress was considerably slower than two horses with the lighter plough, the resulting furrow was deeper than would otherwise have been possible, contributing to better soil aeration, moisture, and mixing. Harrows could be easily drawn across the fields by one horse.

The figures shown in Table 4.4 indicate that the number of farms with oxen included in the inventoried list of livestock declined steadily between 1780 and 1820. Not only were oxen mentioned in fewer leases, but on the properties that did house these animals, the average number per farm dropped from almost four to just over two and a half. Even if possible problems with the source are considered, these trends clearly indicate that proportionally less oxen were found on farms by the end of this period. Did this mean that oxen were used less as draught animals or that the oxen in the region were concentrated in

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[32] See for example Grece, Essays on Practical Husbandry, pp. 23-24, and JHALC, "Appendix E". Most of those who advocated the use of the English plough with a team of two horses were from Great Britain themselves, and clearly felt that the wholesale transfer of English implements, techniques and approaches to agriculture would result in great improvements to Lower Canadian farming. What these critics failed to recognize was that while the fundamental principals of agriculture are constant, the practice of agriculture must be adapted to the specific circumstances of a given region.

fewer hands? The fact that there was a decline in the average number of oxen per farm suggests the dwindling importance of oxen as work animals; however, further evidence in Tables 4.5 and 4.6 also indicates definite concentrations in the ownership of these animals.

If the use of oxen seemed to be declining, was there a concurrent rise in the employment of horses for draught purposes? According to the figures in Table 4.4, such an increase does not appear to have occurred. In fact, both the number of properties which included horses among the animals being let, and the average number of horses on these farms, also declined during this forty-year period. Two possible explanations for the appearance of fewer draught animals in farm leases must be considered. A switch from the English plough would eliminate the need for oxen, but not necessarily increase the numbers of horses, as only two draught horses were required. Or, the growing numbers of smaller, specialized agricultural properties in the area around Montreal may have had less use for draught animals, making it more viable to hire work horses or oxen only when needed.

Tables 4.5 and 4.6 show a couple of significant trends in the distribution of draught animals according to both occupational and ethnic classifications. As would be expected, those leases made by elite and female (in many cases the widows of merchants or professionals) proprietors contained on average more oxen and horses than did those made by the other lessors. What is of even greater interest, though, is that significantly more oxen were both owned and used by

canadien lessors and tenants. Proportionally twice as many properties possessed by *canadiens* included oxen in their inventories, and on these farms the average number of oxen was 3.4, as opposed to only 2.3 on the lands owned by non-*canadiens*. This pattern was repeated among tenants, where 83% of the farms leased by *canadiens* and containing livestock inventories had oxen, while only 32% of those rented by non-*canadiens* included this animal. Once again, the average number of oxen per farm was considerably higher among the *canadien* tenant population. Clearly, the stronger presence of oxen on *canadien* farms indicates that the *canadien* population favoured the use of the Canadian plough, while many of their non-*canadien* counterparts employed the English plough.

The obvious explanation for this discrepancy between the two ethnic groups in the possession and use of oxen is that the non-*canadien* population favoured the use of the horse as a work animal on their farms. But the pattern of horse ownership among the non-*canadiens* differed little from that found for the *canadiens*. Indeed, horses were present on proportionally more *canadien* than non-*canadien* farms. Could this be an indication that non-*canadien* lessors and tenants expected that the lessee should be responsible for providing a sufficient number of draught animals? Or does this support the view of some contemporaries that a farm required only two good work horses, thereby saving valuable feed by eliminating the need to maintain oxen?

Other Livestock: Cows, Sheep, Pigs and Poultry

The cows, sheep, pigs and various kinds of poultry found on farms on the island of Montreal during this period were kept both for personal consumption and to be sold on the local market. Most cows were bred and calved each year, both to ensure the replacement of the draught team and to produce milk. While many farms had only one or two milch cows to provide the dairy produce consumed by those people resident on the property and possibly the lessor living in town, a number of other farms kept herds ranging upwards to 25 animals in order to supply the local market with milk, cream, butter and cheese, as well as young calves, meat and hides. One gets the sense from contemporary documentation that sheep were considered more important for their fleece than for their flesh, although mutton was certainly consumed by some. It is indisputable, however, that pork was an important part of the diet for the majority of the population during this period. Poultry, especially chickens, but also turkeys, ducks and geese were kept in large numbers as a source of eggs and feathers as well as meat.

Between 1780 and 1820, the number of farms which included cows in their inventory of livestock decreased slightly, from all of the properties in the first decade to 89% by the last decade. Except for a drop to below five cows per farm from 1800 to 1809, the average number of cows on these properties remained at around seven and a half throughout the rest of the period. The slight drop in the proportion of farms keeping cows, combined with a steadily increasing range in the size of herds -- the maximum number of cows kept on a single farm doubled in the

forty-year timespan -- hints at some movement towards specialization. Among the different occupations, ownership of cows was strongest in both the merchant and professional and artisanal groupings, with these proprietors being more likely to keep cows and to have larger herds than the other lessors, especially farmers and those with no known occupation. The distribution of cows between ethnic groups also yielded a clear pattern, as the non-*canadien* population involved in farm leasing, both lessors and tenants, had cows on almost every property and on average maintained larger herds than their *canadien* counterparts.

The percentage of farm leases which included pigs among the livestock being let had, by 1810-1819, dropped to less than a third of the level registered between 1780 and 1789. Parallel to this reduction was a gradual decline in the average number of pigs per farm. Elite lessors once again were more likely to have pigs on their farms, although the number they kept was only slightly above the average for the farms of all other proprietors. A larger proportion of the farms owned or rented by non-*canadiens* included pigs among the livestock, but *canadiens* who possessed or tended these animals generally kept more.

The inclusion of sheep -- the animal best adapted to the grazing practices of traditional subsistence agriculture -- among farm livestock inventoried in leases did not follow the same downward trend taken by pigs between 1780 and 1820. Instead, the percentage of properties which housed sheep went up and down over the four decades, while the average size of the flock kept on those farms increased. Proportionally more of

the farms owned by farmers, religious institutions and those without a recorded occupation had some sheep, however, the average size of the flocks maintained by merchants and professionals was greater than that for all other occupational designations. The likelihood of a property owned or leased by a *canadien* containing sheep was far greater than it was for the non-*canadien* population involved in these contracts.

The smallest, and generally most numerous, animals kept on a farm were domestic fowls. Despite the inclusion of turkeys, ducks and geese in a number of leases, only chickens appeared on a regular basis. With few exceptions, the number of hens kept on a farm was a multiple of 12, with the addition of one rooster for every dozen fowl. Similar to the pattern encountered with most of the other kinds of livestock, both the proportion of farms with chickens, and the average size of those flocks, declined over the forty years. As with almost all varieties of livestock, elite lessors who had chickens maintained the largest flocks. A clear division was once again made between ethnic groups, with proportionally more *canadien* lessors and tenants possessing chickens in flocks that were on average double the size of those found among the non-*canadien* lessors and tenants.

One final question should be addressed before summarizing the major trends in the distribution of the livestock included in notarized farm leases. Is it possible that many more animals, owned by either the lessor or the tenant, were kept on the 160 properties analysed here but not mentioned in the inventory included in the contract? If so, the

value of the preceding comparison of the farm animal inventories found would be questionable. But the fact alone that listings and evaluations of the animals were made in these particular leases eliminates much of the possible support for this theory. Livestock constituted an important part of the working capital of a farm, and therefore all were worthy of protection by the lessor in the formal agreement. Furthermore, since animals consumed the resources of the farm, it would not be in the best interests of the proprietor to allow the tenant to keep his own livestock unless the produce of these animals was shared. Several leases did state explicitly that the tenant was not to keep any other animals on the property. Thus, the listings of livestock made in the 160 farm leases represents a reasonably accurate profile of the animals kept on these particular properties. A different approach to livestock was possibly at work in many of the contracts that did not include animals as part of the leasing agreement, especially those where a flat money rent was paid and the lessor had no direct share in the profits and produce of the farm.

In sum, the pattern of animal ownership on the farms with leases that included an inventory of livestock showed several definite trends. Overall, during the four decades examined, both the rate of ownership and the average number of each kind of livestock kept on these properties declined. While merchant and professional lessors consistently had more animals on their farms than did any of the other proprietors, such a clear-cut distinction was not evident between the two ethnic groups. Regardless of whether they were lessors or tenants, proportionally more

canadiens kept greater numbers of oxen and poultry and more non-*canadiens* had larger herds of cows. Ownership of the other kinds of animals did not follow a specific pattern, but indicated that in no way could one ethnic group be considered to possess better stocked farms than the other.

The strongest conclusion to be drawn from this examination of the distribution of farm animals and tools in notarized agricultural leases is perhaps not surprising -- the occupational classification of proprietors was the single most important variable influencing the level of capital expenditures made in the moveable properties of a farm.[33] How these investments affected the production and techniques on the farms of the élite is the subject of the next chapter.

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[33] Sylvie Dépatie also found the few farms owned by merchants on île Jésus in the eighteenth century to be better stocked than those of the other proprietors. See "La structure agraire au Canada: Le cas de l'île Jésus au XVIIIe siècle", CHA Historical Papers / Communications historiques, (1986): 68.

CHAPTER 5
PRODUCTION AND TECHNIQUES

The subject of Lower Canadian agricultural production and techniques has fuelled a continuing debate in Quebec history. Early visitors decried what they saw as the misguided efforts of the native *canadien* population, but at the same time missed no opportunity to exalt the efforts of their transplanted fellow countrymen.[1] To these travellers, the major problem was obviously one of cultural ignorance -- a view taken up by subsequent generations of historians.[2]

But there are two major problems with this assessment. In the first place, the evaluation of which agricultural methods and crops were best suited to the particular circumstances of the province is ignored.

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[1] In addition to the authors cited in the Introduction, see also John M. Duncan who praised the neatness and order of some farms he journeyed past with the comment that "the fields which I passed on the road to Montreal [from Lachine], betokened that their cultivators had brought their ideas of farming from a European school." Travels through part of the United States and Canada in 1818 and 1819, 2 Volumes, (Glasgow, 1823): 145. A decade later, George Henry Hume wrote of "the popular errors which were persevered in, simply because they had been transmitted from a past to a present generation, the prejudices retained by ignorance, or the caprices dictated by folly" in characterising Lower Canadian agricultural practices. Hume further commends farmers in Upper Canada and those in the vicinity of Montreal who "have adopted the provisions of an English system in the cultivation of the soil, and they need only ask comparisons with the agriculturalists of Lower Canada, to prove their infinite superiority." The Emigrant's Guide: or, Canada as it is. Comprising Details relating to the domestic policy, commerce and agriculture, of the Upper and Lower Provinces..., (Quebec, n.d.; circa 1832): xii.

[2] Perhaps the most blatant example of this approach, based on a compilation of numerous contemporary commentators' criticisms of the archaic and inefficient practices of the *habitants*, is found in R.L. Jones, "French-Canadian Agriculture in the St. Lawrence Valley, 1815-1851", Agricultural History, XVI:3 (July 1942): 137-149. See also the other writings of Jones and those of Fernand Ouellet.

Even within the arable territory covered by the colony there existed a variety of different conditions, all of which warranted modifications on the general approach taken to agricultural production. Writing in 1874, H. McCandless, principal of the Ontario School of Agriculture, directly addressed this long standing issue:

> In all countries, and under all circumstances, the principles that underlie the art of husbandry are identical, but the practice through which they are brought to bear upon the cultivation of the soil must necessarily vary, owing to the modifications that are indispensable to bring that practice into harmony with surrounding circumstances.
>
> Hence, while the scientific or theoretical literature of agriculture is of universal application, and may with success be imported, that relating to the practice of the farm should, to be of substantial use, be a home, and not a foreign production.[3]

McCandless' observations strike also at the heart of the second problem with the interpretation of the 'backward' *habitant* -- that of the sources used as evidence. A lack of good quantitative information concerning agricultural production in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has, in some cases, led to an uncritical and highly selective use of travellers' accounts and other contemporary commentaries. But it must not be forgotten that these impressionistic accounts were left by people who for the most part were not engaged in agricultural production, and whose knowledge of the matter was generally

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[3] from the Introduction of Charles Edward Whitcombe, The Canadian Farmer's Manual of Agriculture: The Principles and Practice of Mixed Husbandry as Adapted to Canadian Soils and Climate, (Toronto, 1874): vii.

confined to the current farming practices of their homeland. Thus, when it came to "the practice of the farm", the advice and admonitions directed at the province's farmers were often of "a foreign production", and of little use in a Lower Canadian context.

While the various tracts and other commentaries concerning agriculture are not to be discounted as an important source for the study of early Quebec farming, one must be judicious in their use.[4] For it has been on the basis of the descriptions in these accounts that the myth of the culturally inferior *canadien* farmer has been built.[5] Riding past in their carriages, these writers assumed that the well-operated farms were owned by the non-*canadien* population, while the poorly managed properties were all those of the *canadiens*. The difference was portrayed as being cutural, other factors such as location or access to capital were rarely considered.

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[4] For a more complete discussion of these sources, see Louise Dechêne, "Observations sur l'agriculture du Bas-Canada au début du XIX^{e} siècle", in Joseph Goy et Jean-Pierre Wallot (dir.) Evolution et éclatement du monde rurale: Structures, fonctionnement et évolution différentielle des sociétés rurales françaises et québécois XVII^{e} -- XX^{e} siècles. Actes du colloque franco-québécois d'histoire rurale comparée, (1982; published 1986): 190-192.

[5] In opposition to this view, two economic historians, analysing census material from the mid-nineteenth century, have concluded that variations in agricultural production in Lower Canada cannot be attributed to ethnicity. See the two articles by Frank D. Lewis and R. Marvin McInnis, "The Efficiency of the French-Canadian Farmer in the Nineteenth Century", Journal of Economic History, XL:3 (September, 1980): 497-514; and "Agricultural Output and Efficiency in Lower Canada, 1851", Research in Economic History, IX (1984): 45-87.

The most significant advantage of farm leases over travellers' accounts and other contemporary commentaries is that any information concerning farm management can be directly linked to a number of factors which may have influenced the approach taken to agricultural production -- namely the capital resouces of the proprietor, proximity to market and cultural background. In addition, any commentary regarding agricultural practices and production found in these documents was made by the people directly involved in the affairs of that particular farm, and not on the basis of casual observation. Farm leases allow us to examine agriculture through a source produced by those actively engaged in farming.

These advantages aside, there are limits to this source, alluded to in Chapter 2, that are of direct relevance to the questions posed in this chapter. Information concerning farm methods and production was not necessarily considered relevant, or of sufficient importance to be included in the formal legal contract. Therefore, we must limit ourselves to discussing only the details recorded, and not make assumptions based on the omission of similar information in other leases. The resulting portrait will by no means be complete, but it should be more accurate. Although the farm was a single unit of production combining a number of elements (including, for example, fields for crops and pasturage, livestock, a henhouse, an orchard, and a kitchen garden), for the purposes of analysis, the segments comprising farm production will be treated separately.

5.1 FIELD CROPS

Production

Despite the aforementioned shortcomings of some farm leases on the subject of agricultural production and techniques, this source does contain a great deal of information on what was grown on the land. Just over one-third of all leases include a listing of the rent to be paid in kind -- an excellent indicator of some or all of the produce raised on the farm. In approximately another third of the leases, instructions are given concerning what crops are to be grown on the farm, or a clause regarding who is to provide how much seed forms part of the agreement. From all of this information, we can compose an excellent picture of agricultural production around Montreal.

Wheat, peas and oats, the traditional combination in eighteenth-century Quebec agriculture, remained the principal field crops during this period. With the obvious exception of the smaller garden and orchard plots, the majority of the farm leases which mentioned either the seed to be sown or the rent in kind referred to these three crops. The general pattern was to sow an equal number of *minots* of wheat and oats and approximately one-half to two-thirds the same number of *minots* in peas, although not all farms adhered to this practice.[6] This propor-

[6] For example, a large farm of 12 X 21 *arpents* to the east of the city on Côte Saint-Michel, owned by the estate of the late merchant Gabriel Cotté, was sown in 80 *minots* of wheat, 30 *minots* of peas and 36 *minots* of oats. This concentration on wheat production was unusual, but so also was the situation on the military officer, Daniel Robertson's farm at Côteau Saint-Pierre where only 6 *minots* of wheat were sown along with 20 *minots* of peas and 40 *minots* of oats. See n.m. Papineau 04/05/1795 #2259 for Cotté's lease and n.m. Mezière 08/04/1782 #2672 for Robertson's lease.

tion of oats relative to wheat was high, a clear indication that a large part of this crop was destined for sale as horse feed on the urban market.[7]

Wheat was the most important grain grown on Lower Canadian farms, due both to the significance of bread as a staple part of the diet and to the relatively easily converted value of the grain as a marketable commodity. Peas, a term used to include several varieties of leguminous plants, were cultivated for both human consumption and as feed for swine. Oats were raised almost exclusively as fodder.

All evidence indicates that by 1820 the cultivation of fall or winter wheat on the island of Montreal had been abandoned, for the most part, and replaced by the use of spring wheat. Although the yield and quality of winter wheat is generally superior to that of spring wheat, the arrival of the Hessian fly combined with a number of winters where the ground did not receive an insulating cover of snow, thereby exposing the newly sprouted wheat to destructive freezing temperatures, resulted in the shift to spring wheat.[8]

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[7] Cole Harris estimates that wheat accounted for 75% of all grain and pulse production in New France. See The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study, (Madison, Wisc., 1968): 151. In her study of eighteenth-century île-Jésus, Sylvie Dépatie used inventories-after-death to calculate that approximately 60% of the arable land was planted in wheat, 23% in oats, and 17% in peas. See "L'évolution d'une société rurale: l'île Jésus au XVIII^{e} siécle", (Phd dissertation, McGill University, 1988): p.213.

[8] Dechêne, "Observations sur l'agriculture du Bas-Canada...", pp. 197-198.

Farm leases lend support to the timing of this change in two different ways. Explicit mention of the variety of wheat to be sown is made in five leases, and in only one of these contracts, passed in 1796, is there a reference to "blé d'automne".[9] The other four leases, all made two decades later between 1814 and 1819, contain instructions that a red bearded spring wheat is to be sown -- identified more specifically as either "blé rouge de trois mois" or "blé barbarie".[10]

Another indicator of the shift from winter to spring wheat might be found in the season of the commencement of the lease. In a study of leasing practices in France, Louis Merle found that the sowing time of the region's main cereal crop established the date on which a lease began.[11] The majority of the leases passed before 1800 were made between August and November, but increasingly after this time the lessee's tenure began in the spring, generally somewhere from March to the beginning of May.[12] Clearly, the autumn dates correspond with the sowing of a winter wheat, while those commencing in the spring indicate the use of spring wheat.

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[9] n.m. Delisle 17/10/1796 #2302.

[10] n.m. Barron 26/09/1815 #2702; n.m. Cadieux 25/06/1819 #331, and 09/07/1819 #354; n.m. Desautels 10/06/1814 #1098. This variety of wheat was also referred to as *blé de Jourdain* in Lower Canada at this time. See the testimony of Desbarats and La Rue in "Appendix E", JHALC, 1817.

[11] Louis Merle, La métaire et l'évolution agraire de la Gâtine poitevine de la fin du Moyen Age à la Révolution, (Paris, 1958): 27.

[12] The most popular date of commencement in the fall was the 29th of September, known also as the *jour de Saint-Michel*. In the spring, May 1st was the most common.

Three secondary grains were cultivated on the island of Montreal in addition to wheat, peas and oats. Indian corn, barley and buckwheat were all mentioned, although the quantities of these grains sown in relation to the others was low, and many farms with inventories of produce or seed did not refer to any of these crops. Of the the three grains, Indian corn or '*blé d'Inde*' was most common. No mention was found of rye, a grain suited to poor, acidic soils which would not support the growth of other cereals.

The increasing significance of the potato to agriculture on the island of Montreal was demonstrated by the mention of this root crop in proportionally more leases made after 1800 than in the two decades previous.[13] Some contracts included this vegetable among the garden produce, while other acts indicated that the potato was an important field crop, grown in large quantities. According to Charles Grece, an Englishman living on a farm in the Parish of Longue-Pointe, who after several years of applying and adapting his farming knowledge to his new surroundings, wrote a treatise on agriculture addressed to Lower Canadian farmers:

> Potatoes ... after their utility for the table ... are very good food for horses, when cut small and mixed with bran or oats. Cattle fat with them, they increase milk in cows; but do not appear suitable for sheep... For fattening pigs in the autumn, they

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[13] Only six leases made between 1780 and 1799 contained references to potato cultivation, but 30 leases after 1800 named the potato as produce from the farm. All but 25% of the lessors involved in these leases were *canadien*.

> are the cheapest and most efficacious food that can be given....[14]

The approach to the cultivation of flax and hemp, two plants grown for both their fibres and the oil produced from their seed, differed dramatically. Among those leases with an account of farm production, it was common to see references to small amounts of flax. Usually one-half to one *minot* of linseed (the seed of flax) was sown, and the harvest was reserved for the exclusive use of the tenant.[15] This pattern of production indicates that flax was grown primarily for the use of the farm family in making homespun clothing and linens. The surplus seed from the crop might be fed to the livestock in the form of linseed cakes, or could be sold to a linseed oil manufacturer who would then process the seed to obtain an oil used as a base for paints and varnish.[16]

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[14] Charles Frederick Grece, Essays on Practical Husbandry, Addressed to the Canadian Farmers..., (Montreal, 1817): 64.

[15] According to Charles Grece's figure of 2.5 *minots* of seed per *arpent*, this would mean that only 1/4 to 1/2 of an *arpent* would be used for flax production. Grece's yield estimates of two hundredweight of flax and eight *minots* of linseed per *arpent* were probably higher than those attained by most farmers on the island. Essays on Practical Husbandry, Addressed to the Canadian Farmers ..., p. 74-76.

[16] A linseed oil mill was established by James Goodman, *manufacturier d'huile de lin*, in the *Faubourg* Saint-Laurent in 1803. See n.m. Delisle 13/05/1803 #3337 for Goodman's lease of the land on which he planned to erect the mill. Jacques Viger also identified two linseed oil manufacturers in Montreal in the 1825 census. See Jean-Paul Bernard, Paul-André Linteau and Jean-Claude Robert, "La structure professionnelle de Montréal en 1825", RHAF, XXX:3 (décembre 1976): 411.

Hemp cultivation was far less common than that of flax, despite the efforts of the government to stimulate the production of this crop in Lower Canada. As a result of the renewed demand in the shipyards of Great Britain for a colonial source of the hemp fibres used to make rope, the Lower Canadian government passed an act in 1802 pledging a sum of £1200 "to enable the Inhabitants to enter on the culture of hemp, with facility and advantage". Two years later, a further £1200 was promised for the same purpose.[17] But the money and the use of 'agents', farmers paid by the government to encourage hemp production through both example and an active campaign to disseminate the knowledge needed to grow this crop, met with little success. In his testimony before the committee called to inquire into the state of agriculture in Lower Canada in 1816, David Anderson spoke of the failure of this programme:

> The Canadians also very naturally declined taking the advice of one employed by government to instruct them in the mode of cultivating hemp: he having recommended the sowing of hemp *instead of wheat* -- an advice which must appear equally absurd, both to Canadian and British farmers. They also treated with equal indifference, the advice of another agent ... [who] informed them he had *sown his whole farm with hemp*, and invited them to *come and see his operations*, and *learn* the art of cultivating that crop from his example....[18]

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[17] "An Act for the encouragement of the Culture of Hemp in this Province", Provincial Statutes of Lower Canada, (1802), 42 Geo. III, Chapter 5; "An Act for the further encouragement of the Culture of Hemp ...", Provincial Statutes of Lower Canada, (1804), 44 Geo. III, Chapter 8.

[18] "Appendix E", JHALC, (1816). Only a decade earlier, Hugh Gray had written positively of the government's early attempts to stimulate hemp production, stating that "example in aid of precept is most likely to be efficient." See his contemporary account, Letters from Canada, written during a residence there in the years 1806, 1807, and 1808..., (London, 1809): 205-206.

Clearly, the cultivation of a crop solely for exportation to the imperial market held little appeal for most rural producers. It was not only that hemp was of no direct use to the largely self-sufficient farm family, but also that an excessive amount of labour was involved in the cultivation and preparation of the fibres for sale.[19]

In view of the difficulties posed by hemp production, it is not surprising that mention of this crop was limited to only a couple of farm leases where the proprietor was a member of the merchant and professional class. Indeed, the labour demands created by the cultivation of this crop are well illustrated by Isaac Winslow Clarke's additional hiring of a labourer, Thomas Fingland, for a full year in 1801, to "do the work of pulling, rotting, breaking and dressing hemp under the direction of Nathaniel Stimpson", the tenant on the small plot of between eight to ten *arpents*.[20]

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[19] Charles Grece, a promoter of hemp cultivation, gives a lengthy description of the steps involved in this process. Essays on Practical Husbandry, Addressed to the Canadian Farmers..., pp. 68-74. Although the crop was not popular with most farmers, Grece persisted in its culture. In 1816, Grece placed an advertisement in The Montreal Herald requesting "A few bushels of HEMP SEED, the growth of 1815 [for which] Fifteen Shillings per bushel will be given..." See Lawrence M. Wilson, This was Montreal in 1814, 1815, 1816 and 1817, (Montreal, 1960): 85. Newton Bosworth, in his description of a rope manufactory in Montreal in 1839, mentions that the hemp used was of Russian origin and imported from England. He attributes the failure to encourage the cultivation of hemp to the misguided attempts of the government, who did not recognize that the barrier to the success of this crop lay in the complicated and time-consuming tasks of preparing the plant for market. See Hochelaga Depicta: The Early History and Present State of the City and Island of Montreal, (Montreal, 1839; reprint Toronto, 1974): 179-180.

[20] n.m. Beek 08/07/1801 #1602; n.m. Chaboillez 13/07/1801 #4802.

Another commercial crop which met with much greater success on the island of Montreal was hops. During his stay in Canada between 1806 and 1808, the Englishman Hugh Gray praised the quality of this crop:

> The Canadian soil and climate are friendly to the growth of hops, of which enough is raised to supply the wants of brewers. They grow very luxuriantly, and the flowers are very large; larger indeed than I ever remember to have seen in Kent. They are likely to become an article of consequence for exportation. Small quantities have already been sent to England.[21]

Like hemp, hops production was labour intensive -- the plants needed pruning, fertilizing, weeding and harvesting by hand, and once gathered had to be carefully dried and cured. In addition to labour, the cultivation of hops also required a significant outlay of capital, for fertilizers, for the hop poles on which to train the plant's vines, and for the storage facilities used to dry and cure the hop cones.[22]

With the founding of his brewery in Montreal in 1787, John Molson created a local demand for hops that was initially met only by American producers. Throughout the 1790's, Molson annually purchased about 5000 pounds of hops from traders in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.[23] By

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[21] Hugh Gray, Letters from Canada, written during a residence there in the years 1806, 1807, and 1808..., p.205.

[22] Herman Seaver, supplier of hops to John Molson, purchased 6000 hop poles for £22.10 in 1819. n.m. Griffin 26/10/1819 #2819. For a discussion of hop cultivation and post-harvest processing see Thomas Rumney, "The Hops Boom in Nineteenth-Century Vermont", Vermont History, LVI:1 (Winter 1988): 36-37.

[23] For the contracts related to Molson's purchases of hops from the United States in this period see n.m. Beek 01/04/1796 #1044, 05/04/1796 #1049, 18/04/1796 #1053, 01/03/1797 #1116, 22/06/1797 #1148, 26/02/1798

1802, local production of hops was assumed by Herman Seaver, a hop merchant and gentleman-farmer originally from Massachusetts. From 1802 to 1810, Seaver leased the farm of Montreal surgeons Charles Blake and Henry Loedel at the Courant Sainte-Marie, in the immediate vicinity of Molson's brewery. Initially in partnership with another native of Massachusetts, Thomas Barlow, and soon on his own, Seaver tended a hop-yard of some 8000 hills on which an average annual production of 8000 pounds was expected. By 1812, Seaver had bought his own farm in this area and continued to cultivate 8000 hills of hops, frequently relying on tenant farmers to tend the hop vines under his supervision. Seaver had a guaranteed market for the produce of his hop-yards: a series of contracts with John Molson starting in 1802 promised a minimum sale of 8000 pounds of hops at a fixed price each year.[24] In 1802 and 1803,

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#1185, 05/03/1798 #1191. In his earlier dealings, Molson dealt with Montreal merchants who in turn contracted for the hops from the American traders; however, beginning in 1797 Molson eliminated the middlemen and purchased directly from the traders in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Two contracts concerning the sale of hops produced in the United States to Montreal merchants cannot be linked to Molson, although it is conceivable that the produce eventually found its way to his brewery -- n.m. Beek 01/03/1797 #1115, 16/02/1799 #1264.

[24] Seaver and Barlow were both included in the "Register of Americans Admitted to Take the Oath of Allegiance in the District of Montreal", Archives du Séminaire de Québec, Fonds Verreau 46, liasse VII. This document, composed during the war with the United States in 1812-1814, listed the occupation, state of origin and any lands held by these American emigrants. The farm lease with Blake and Loedel is found in n.m. Beek 29/05/1802 #1657, with a two-year extension made on 14/11/1808. The partnership agreements between Seaver and Barlow are n.m. Beek 01/06/1802 #1658 and n.m. Gray 23/06/1802 #782. In the "Register of Americans Admitted to Take the Oath of Allegiance...", Seaver, who took the oath in 1812, is recorded as owning a farm at the Courant Sainte-Marie. This farm is leased to two farmers for three years in 1815, and at the end of this lease to another farmer for a year. In the first lease, the tenants Smith and Pattie are to tend the hop-yards under the supervision of Seaver, however, the act passed in 1818 reserves all aspects of hops production for Seaver, leaving the standard

Seaver also sold a total of 8000 pounds of hops to the Quebec brewer James Mason Goddard.[25]

Although Herman Seaver was not the only hops producer in Montreal in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, his story is a well-documented example of one immigrant who recognized a ready market for a crop and possessed the capital required to exploit this opportunity. Five other acts related to hops production, three farm leases and two sales contracts, were recovered for the period from 1810 to 1814. The information in these documents conforms to the general pattern of Seaver's experience. The farms on which the hops were cultivated were very close to the city -- on Côte de la Visitation, Côte à Barron and at the Tannery -- with the exception of one yard at Longue-Pointe. Many of the people involved in the production of hops had recently emigrated from the northeastern United States. And finally, producers ensured themselves of a guaranteed market for their harvest through the use of sales agreements, extending in two cases for as long as eight years,

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farm duties to the tenant: n.m. Jobin 28/03/1815 #116 and 30/01/1818 #1013. For the sales agreements with Molson see n.m. Gray 19/07/1802 #791, n.m. Jobin 28/03/1815 #116, n.m. Griffin 13/01/1818 #2085. Seaver initially undersold the American traders, charging only one shilling per pound of hops delivered to Molson's brewery in 1802, however, he subsequently raised his price to the same level of one shilling and three pence per pound.

[25] n.m. Beek 12/07/1802 #1669, 07/07/1803 #1744. Until 1801, Goddard operated Quebec City's large St Roc Brewery in partnership with John Young. The association with Young was terminated early in that year as Goddard joined with the firm of Lester and Morrogh to set up the Cape Diamond Brewery. See the biographies of Robert Lester and John Young in the DCB, Volume 5, (Toronto, 1983): 492-497 and 877-883.

made with brewers or merchants in Montreal or in Quebec City.[26] Thus, the capital and labour intensive production of this commercial crop was carried out close to the urban market, largely by Americans who possessed the capital resources and the specialized knowledge required to successfully grow and process this plant, but did not own land. Property did not present an obstacle, however, as they were able to lease farms near the city.

Pasturage is the last element of production to be considered. The importance of hay to both lessors and tenants was clearly evident in the sections of farm leases which dealt with this crop. A common clause found in numerous contracts called for the division of all hay, straw and fodder after the wintering of the livestock housed on the farm. Conversely, if the hay and forage produced on the farm ran out before the animals could be put to pasture in the spring, the two parties were generally held responsible to each provide half of the required feed. Despite this provision, it was anticipated that there would usually be a surplus of hay and fodder produced on a farm which could meet a ready demand on the urban market.[27] Indeed, in many leases with a combined

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[26] The three leases are n.m. Gray 17/12/1810 #2941; n.m. Guy 21/12/1811 no #; n.m. Lukin 06/02/1811 no #; and the sales contracts n.m. Griffin 27/01/1814 #406, 13/10/1814 #659. From either information recorded on the notarial document, or from cross-referencing with the "Register of Americans Admitted to take the Oath Of Allegiance...", the majority of the hops producers in these documents were identified as native Americans.

[27] By 1803, a separate hay market had been established in the town; fourteen years later it had been moved to a larger venue on Commissioner's Square on McGill Street. See ANQM, "Lois et Réglements de Montréal", P1000/44-871; and Cour de Session de Quartier, District of Montreal, (1817), Chapter 3, "Regulations Respecting the Hay Market",

money and kind rent, the proprietor specified a portion of hay as the only rent in kind.[28] For the many lessors residing in the city, rural properties obviously represented an important source of hay and forage for their horses stabled in town.

It is difficult to determine what types of grasses were grown for either summer pastures or to be cut and dried as hay. As there are few mentions of grass seed, we must assume that there was considerable use of natural grasses. Charles Grece described the native grasses of the region:

> The white honey suckle clover is a native of the country, and comes in on all lands that are cleared, and suffered to lay fallow. Hop clover does the same as the white, the sheep fescue is a native and comes in on cleared land: those are upland grasses. The low meadow grasses which are natives and easy to introduce, are the great meadows, known by the name of *franc-foin*. The silver hair grass, *foinfol*, the cyprus or blue joint, which is to be found in meadows formed by the beavers, before the Country was settled.[29]

The cultivation of artificial meadows has long been accepted as an important element of agricultural innovation. Farm leases definitively indicate the cultivation of artificial grasses on 34 of the properties

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Article 3, pp. 86 and 88.

[28] See for example n.m. Barron 17/10/1814 #2449; n.m. Chaboillez 15/09/1795 #1493, 12/10/1798 #3213, 27/03/1810 #9233, 27/10/1812 #10445 -- all leases where the lessor received rent payment in money and in a specified number of bundles of hay.

[29] Charles Grece, Essays on Practical Husbandry, Addressed to the Canadian Farmers..., p. 51.

included in the series.[30] Two-thirds of these farms were owned by proprietors in the merchant and professional category, a proportion in excess of their representation in all 564 leases. Just over half of these lessors were *canadien*, but the overwhelming majority of the tenants involved, 85%, were non-*canadien*. Twenty of the 34 references to an artificial meadow were made after 1810, while the remaining 14 were made between 1790 and 1809. Timothy was the most common grass mentioned, followed by millet and some mixtures of the first two grasses with clover or rye-grass.

Crop Yields

Historians have generally measured the success of grain production by either the amount harvested per acre or *arpent*, or more commonly by the seed/yield ratio.[31] All of the information needed to calculate this ratio -- namely the exact amount of seed sown on a defined area of land, and the volume of the harvest from this sowing -- is notoriously difficult to obtain from the available sources.[32] One exceptional farm

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[30] These 34 leases contained explicit reference to the sowing of grass seed (usually the variety was also specified). As seed grain was mentioned in only a small number of acts, references to grass seed too were probably not always made, making it probable that there was a much more widespread use of cultivated grasses.

[31] David Grigg, The Dynamics of Agricultural Change: The Historical Experience, (London, 1982): 173.

[32] It is partly for tnis reason that some historians have resorted to some rather far-fetched comparisons in order to fill in the missing data. In Quebec historiography, perhaps the most glaring example is Cole Harris' use of an estimate made by the European agricultural historian B.H. Slicher van Bath of the amount of wheat sown per acre during the Middle Ages in France as a base for calculating seed/yield ratios in New France. See The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study, p. 153.

lease, made in 1817 by the merchant Thomas McCord and a farmer, Ira Whitcombe, contains all of the data necessary to figure both the crop yield per acre and the seed/yield ratio.[33] The farm, consisting of the unsold area of fief Nazareth, land which McCord held under a 99-year emphyteutic lease from the Hôtel-Dieu, had 24 acres ploughed and seeded and another six acres in hay.[34] In 1818, one year into the lease, while the crops were still standing in the fields, McCord and Whitcombe decided to cancel the lease. To deal with the matter of dividing the produce of the farm according to the proportions agreed to in the lease, an estimation was made of the forthcoming harvest. Along with this estimated yield per acre -- for wheat, oats, potatoes, barley and hay -- the pencilled calculations included the amount of each seed sown and its cost, the area under that crop, and the presumed value of the harvest. The yield per acre admittedly was based on an estimation, and not on an actual measuring, but it was made late in the season and most probably by two experienced evaluators as was the custom of the time.

On the basis of the information found in McCord's lease, a yield of 15 bushels per acre and a seed/yield ratio of 1:10 was calculated for the ten acres sown in wheat. For oats, the expected harvest was 20 bushels per acre and the seed/yield ratio was also 1:10. The four acres seeded in barley were expected to produce 25 bushels per acre with a seed/yield ratio of 1:16.7; while a harvest of 200 bushels per acre was

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[33] n.m. Jobin 09/07/1817 #876.

[34] See n.m. Chaboillez 23/07/1792 #579 for McCord's emphyteutic lease of the Hôtel-Dieu's Terre des Pauvres, or Fief Nazareth.

anticipated on the five acres reserved for potato production. Once cut, the estimators believed that the six acres of hay would produce 6,000 bundles, a yield more commonly expressed as just over seven tons per acre.[35] For wheat and oats production, these figures were neither exceptional nor were they out of line with those in the northeastern United States, but for the three remaining crops these yields do appear high, especially in the case of hay.[36] McCord, it must be remembered, was a man of considerable wealth who promoted agricultural advancement through his leadership in the local Agricultural Society.[37]

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[35] According to the market regulations established by the Justices of the Peace for Montreal, 1 bundle of hay was to weigh 16 pounds; see the Rules and Regulations of Police, for the City and Suburbs of Montreal, (Montreal, 1810): 46, article 50; these regulations were renewed and expanded in 1817, by which time a separate hay market had been set aside, Rules and Regulations of Police, for the City and Suburbs of Montreal, (Montreal, 1817): 80-88. When sold by the ton, hay was to weigh 2240 pounds, equivalent to 20 hundredweight or 1 long ton. This scale of measures is also cited in William Evans, The Theory and Practice of Agriculture, (Montreal, 1835): x; used by Lewis and McInnis, "Agricultural Output and Efficiency in Lower Canada, 1851", p. 83, note 4.

[36] The yields per acre for wheat and oats were very close to those calculated for a period three decades later by R.M. McInnis in "Some Pitfalls in the 1851-1852 Census of Agriculture of Lower Canada", Hs/SH, XIV:27 (May 1981): 226-227. James T. Lemon's The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania, (New York, 1976): 152-160, provides figures that enable a comparison with yields in late eighteenth-century Pennsylvania. While Lemon's average yield for wheat was also ten bushels per acre, McCord's yields for oats were slightly higher, those for barley were 66% greater, and the anticipated yield for potatoes was double. Perhaps what is most surprising, however, is the extreme difference between Lemon's estimate of an average of 1.5 tons of hay per acre and the figure from McCord's farm of 7.1 tons per acre. Despite this massive discrepancy, it must be remembered that hay yields can vary greatly according to both the quality and variety of the grass and that of the soil.

[37] See McCord's biography in the DCB, Volume VI, (Toronto, 1987): 432-434.

The numbers recorded at the time McCord and Whitcombe settled their accounts also provide the basis for a glimpse at agricultural income and the relative value of the different crops on this one property. Although they occupied only half of the 30 acres considered, wheat and potatoes accounted for 80% of the expected revenue. The anticipated harvest of 1000 bushels of potatoes from the five acres seeded was valued at £125, while the 150 bushels of wheat produced on ten acres were expected to bring in £75 at the market. Six thousand bundles of hay were valued at £25 and 100 bushels of oats and the same amount of barley were to bring £12.10 and £20 respectively. Thus, the estimated value of the five crops totalled £257.10, from which costs of £52.15 (£12.5 for seed and £40.10 for extra labour) were deducted to arrive at a farm income for the year of £204.15. Whitcomb's share of one-third of the neat produce after expenses, agreed to in the initial lease, worked out to £68.5; thereby leaving McCord with the sum of £136.10 from which to pay the annual rent of £25 to the Hôtel-Dieu. This left McCord with a clear profit of £111.10, a sizable sum in 1818.

In their summary report made to the House of Assembly, the Committee formed to inquire into the state of agriculture in Lower Canada in 1816 stated that the "inhabitants pay too little attention to the quality of their seed wheat..."[38] The choice of seed was long recognized as a fundamental element of successful grain production, affecting both yields and the quality of the harvest. Charles Grece advised that seed grain should be free of weeds and should be changed at least every three

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38 "Appendix E", JHALC, (1816).

years, preferably for seed procured from a region with a slightly shorter growing season, thereby ensuring that the grain would ripen in time for harvest.[39] For the educated and wealthy minority, the newly formed agricultural societies and newspaper advertisements would have provided two sources for new seed grain.[40]

The source of seed for the cultivation of wheat and the other grains was not made clear in most leases, but the traditional practice of saving a portion of the farm's harvest from one year to sow in the next persisted, probably on the majority of the farms. In those leases where the lessor and tenant were to provide seed for the first year's sowing, one might assume that at least half of the seed would be purchased or brought from another farm. When the proprietor specified that he would supply the grain to be sown, it was possibly a new variety or purchased seed grain, but more probably part of the previous season's harvest. The switch from a fall wheat to spring wheat, however, undoubtedly caused farmers to seek new seed grain in at least one, if not more instances.

Methods of Cultivation

When discussing agricultural techniques, crop rotation is one of the best subjects to begin with as it considers the longer term opera-

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[39] Grece, Essays on Practical Husbandry, Addressed to the Canadian Farmers..., p.32.

[40] See for example the advertisement for "Choice English Seed Oats ... worthy the attention of farmers" in the September 7, 1816 edition of The Montreal Herald, reproduced in Lawrence M. Wilson's This was Montreal..., p. 137.

tions of the farm. Evidence in farm leases indicates that it is not possible to speak of a common approach to crop rotation among farmers on the island of Montreal, for practices ranged from the most rudimentary biennial system to complex rotations which required years to complete only one cycle. Many leases contained a standard cryptic phrase obliging the tenant to cultivate the land "par soles et saisons convenables sans les dessoler ni dessaisonner ni détériorer". But this clause tells us nothing about the actual crop rotation being followed on a farm, it merely instructs the tenant to maintain the existing order of planting, ploughing and leaving fields in fallow. Nevertheless, while the clause is silent on the form of crop rotation practiced, its inclusion in a lease indicates that the proprietor of the land saw it as important to protect the system of cropping employed on his farm.

In leases with a more explicit reference to systems of crop rotation, a multitude of approaches to cultivation were found. Seven leases contained direct references to a biennial rotation with minor variations on the simple instruction to "ensemencer un côté de la terre et pacager l'autre".[41] But it is not possible on the basis of a handful of leases to determine the prevalence of this rather primitive cropping system of alternating a year of cultivation with a year of bare fallow.[42] None of

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[41] n.m. Delisle 16/08/1793 #740, 14/12/1793 #800, 10/12/1794 #927, 22/09/1795 #1143; n.m. Desautels 10/07/1818 #3919; n.m. Prévost 28/07/1806 no #; n.m. Sanguinet 28/11/1780 #1713.

[42] Although primitive, the biennial rotation made sense where there was a shortage of labour and an abundance of land. See Allan Greer, Peasant, Lord and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840, (Toronto, 1985): 31.

the contracts with more complex rotations elaborated on the number of fields the farm was divided into and what crops were to be grown on the individual fields each year. A nine-year contract made on a farm of 1.5 X 14 *arpents* in the Parish of Saint-Laurent directed the tenant to "pacager [la terre] entièrement deux années des dites neuf années en sorte que la locataire ne semera et recoltera que le produit de sept années".[43] Did this mean that the tenant farmer could cultivate the whole farm for seven of the nine years of the lease, or were there further unwritten restrictions on how much land could be seeded annually?

What is more clearly elaborated is the place of artificial meadows in the different systems of crop rotation. Etienne Nivard St-Dizier, a Montreal merchant, instructed his tenant to plough in an existing field of timothy grass at the start of his lease, and to sow the same field in timothy during the fourth year of the five-year lease.[44] In this relatively rare case, the artificial grass clearly was used as a green crop to improve the soil. It is probable that this was also the intention behind Montreal trader Frederick Gonnerman's directions to his tenant that for any meadows ploughed up during the tenure of the lease, "others in their stead [are] to be enclosed and laid down in grass."[45] Similar instructions were found in five other leases, farms owned by both *canadien* and non-*canadien* lessors, indicating that the use of artificial

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[43] n.m. Barron 17/03/1809 #1510.

[44] n.m. Bedouin 01/09/1818 #476.

[45] n.m. Gray 26/09/1806 #1653.

meadows in the crop rotation was practiced on the island of Montreal, from about 1800 on, by a small minority of agricultural producers.

More common, however, was the isolation of artificial meadows from the arable lands on a farm, whereby the cultivated grasses were used solely to improve permanent pastures and meadowlands. Many leases required tenants to cultivate and maintain artificial grasses for the consumption of livestock, and under no circumstances was the lessee permitted to plough these meadows.[46] In some cases the tenant was expected not only to maintain the existing meadows, but he was also exorted to increase the acreage under grasses.

All of the above instructions to tenants concerning elements of the crop rotation followed on a farm provide only partial glimpses of what was an elaborate procedure. With the diversity of crops grown on many of these farms, it would make sense that a secondary grain, a nitrogen-fixing pulse crop or perhaps potatoes, follow wheat and precede fallow, resulting in a basic triennial rotation. As discussed in Chapter 2, the lease length in 40% of all acts was a number divisible by three -- a recognized indicator of a triennial rotation. In the final analysis, generalizations concerning crop rotation on the farms of the island of Montreal cannot be made from the information found in farm leases, for

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[46] See for example n.m. Desautels 4/11/1815 #2045 and n.m. Griffin 23/11/1815 #1192, both nine-year leases where the lessee was prohibited from ploughing the meadows during the course of the lease. In n.m. Beek 02/12/1795 #1010, the tenant was subject to a fine of £5 per acre if he ploughed any part of the meadows without the consent of the lessor.

the evidence points most conclusively to the existence of a wide range of approaches taken to this most important element of farm management.

Aside from crop rotation, the other proven method for maintaining the productivity of the soil is the use of fertilizers. Manure was the only fertilizer used on the majority of farms.[47] A ludicrous story, copied from one traveller's account to another and eventually repeated by some historians, had the *habitants* carting the dung from their stables to the river so that it might be washed away.[48] But the evidence in the farm leases points to widespread recognition among all lessors -- merchants and farmers, *canadien* and non-*canadien* -- of the importance and value of the manure on their farms.[49] The Montreal merchant Charles Lusignan reserved the right to instruct his tenant where to spread manure, but most proprietors simply commanded the lessees to use the manure on those parts of the land that were most in need.[50] Other

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[47] Straw was often composted for use as manure. Many leases contained a clause instructing the tenant to "convertir en fumier toutes les pailles qui ne seront pas mangées par les animaux...".

[48] R.M. McInnis has demonstrated the fallacy of this myth in attributing its source to a misreading of a comment, made in the mid-eighteenth century, that nightsoil from the cities was not used in the countryside, but was disposed of in the rivers. See "A Reconsideration of the State of Agriculture in Lower Canada in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century", in Donald H. Akenson (ed.), Canadian Papers in Rural History, Volume 3, (Gananoque, Ont., 1982): 21.

[49] Indeed, two farmers to the west of the city, James Fisher and Alexander Sommerville, considered their disagreement over the evaluation of dung which Sommerville was to pay Fisher of sufficient magnitude to appoint judges and have a notarized Arbitration Bond drawn up. The two parties were bound to abide to the final award under penalty of £50. n.m. Lukin 13/12/1810 #4629.

[50] n.m. Delisle 11/02/1793 #615.

lessors required their farmers to manure the land by equal parts each year.[51] In any lease mentioning manure, lessees were always prohibited from removing any of this substance from the property and were to leave the same amount on the farm at the end of the lease as they found at the start. The tenant on the farm of hops producer and merchant Herman Seaver was further obligated to go to market and draw dung from the town, undoubtedly for use on the hop hills.[52] Some parts of the farm, most notably the gardens and the pastures, undoubtedly received more manure than did the fields. Nevertheless, if the fields did not receive sufficient manure, it was not the result of mismanagement or ignorance, but of a lack of resources. Farmers were generally limited to the use of the manure produced on their own land, thus if they had only a small number of livestock, they would have little manure to put back into the land.

While the use of manure as a fertilizer was common to all farms throughout the forty-year span of this study, two other methods -- artificial meadows and lime -- were employed only on a few farms, generally those of the élite. As discussed previously in this chapter, the ploughing under of artificial meadows as a technique to improve soil fertility was followed on a small number of farms on the island of Montreal. Only three leases made direct reference to lime or marl to be

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[51] See for example n.m. Desautels 10/01/1815 #1398; n.m. Chaboillez 20/04/1811 #9785

[52] n.m. Jobin 30/01/1818 #1013.

used to enrich the soil.[53] A handful of other leases referred to limestone quarries and lime kilns on a property, however, it was not stated if the lime produced was intended for use as fertilizer or for mortar or whitewash.

Ploughing and harrowing were crucial tasks in the yearly agricultural cycle. Lower Canadian farmers were often criticized for not ploughing their fields more than once a year, but the shortness of the growing season left little time to complete even one pass over the land. Lessors commonly instructed their tenants to plough the fields in the autumn, turning in stubble to provide higher water absorption during the end of winter thaw, clearly as preparation for spring sowing. Once the snow had melted and the fields were ready, the ground would be harrowed and the crop put in. One proprietor, making a lease in the middle of October, recognized that little time remained in the season and therefore commanded the farmer to plough as much as he could in the fall and finish the rest in the spring.[54] Another common requirement of tenant farmers was the obligation to leave the same amount of ploughed land at the end of the lease as they received at the start of their tenure.

The presence of weeds and thistles in the fields and pastures was a continuing problem on many Lower Canadian farms. In 1805, the Lower

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[53] Two of the lessors were Montreal élites while the other farm was the inherited property of a family of urban artisans. n.m. Chaboillez 05/05/1810 #9290; n.m. Delisle 23/08/1793 #742; n.m. Doucet 28/10/1817 #4646.

[54] n.m. Desève 18/10/1786 #121.

Canadian Assembly debated and passed "An Act for the Improvement of Agriculture by the destruction of thistles", but the bill never received Royal assent and the full content of the act was not revealed.[55] A decade later, in their final report, the Committee formed in 1816 to study the state of agriculture recommended the establishment of "Regulations for preventing negligent persons from causing damage to their neighbours, by their Thistles and Weeds."[56] According to the instructions in farm leases, the most common method of dealing with the weeds and thistles was to mow them "in the proper season", presumably before the seeds matured and could be spread.[57]

5.2 ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Production

The importance of livestock as draught animals and as a source of manure for fertilizing the fields has been discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 4. In the traditional system of peasant agriculture, which concentrated on cereal production for subsistence, animals had performed these functions for centuries with little change. One of

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[55] JHALC, (1805).

[56] "Appendix E", JHALC, (1816).

[57] For example, Barthelemy Billon, a Montreal merchant, directed his tenant Pierre Hurtubise *fils* to "faucher les chardons dans les parcs et les *herbes St-Jean* dans les prairies et vergers et ce en temps et saison convenables" on his farm on Côte Saint-Antoine. See n.m. Barron 03/06/1803 #445; and for similar instructions n.m. Cadieux 28/09/1811; n.m. Chaboillez 14/03/1794 #1011, 28/03/1803 #5816; n.m. Delisle 09/09/1805 #5107; n.m. Mondelet 09/07/1804 #2717.

the most significant transformations in agriculture was signalled by a change in the perception of the rôle of animal husbandry. The decision to raise livestock for meat and dairy production brought about, and was also partly the result of, a restructuring of the basic approach to agriculture in a given region and time. Less emphasis was placed on grain production for human consumption, while more land was employed to cultivate forage crops and the use of bare fallow declined. Animal husbandry required a more capital and labour intensive approach to farming. Thus, the increased consumption of animal products is generally taken to signify a rise in the standard of living of a society.

From those farm leases with an inventory of the livestock or an account of the rent to be paid in kind, we can gain an idea of the scale of animal husbandry on the island of Montreal between 1780 and 1820. Patterns of ownership and the distribution of livestock have been discussed in Chapter 4, but little has been said of the produce of these animals. Some cattle were kept on almost all farms, and aside from their use for traction, these animals -- once butchered -- were a source of meat, tallow and hides. The milk of the milch cows was undoubtedly consumed in an unprocessed state on the farm but, more importantly, it was made into butter and cheese, products that were easier to preserve and market. Sheep were valued for their mutton, fleece, and skins, while pigs were raised for pork and lard. The relatively large numbers of poultry kept supplied a steady source of eggs, and once slaughtered

their down was used as well as their meat. A few farmers maintained bee hives.[58]

How much of this produce was consumed on the farm and how much found its way to the urban market? Although there was undoubtedly some commercial production involving all of these animals, dairying is the only clear case of specialization during this period. Twenty-four herds of ten or more milch cows were inventoried in the series of farm leases. In both real and absolute terms, the number of herds of this size increased between 1780 and 1820, from none in the first decade, five each in the second and third, to 14 in the final ten years.[59] These herds, large by contemporary standards, represented a considerable investment of capital. Considering the expense involved, it is not surprising that 18 of the 24 proprietors were members of the urban élite. Although non-*canadien* lessors were disproportionately represented among farms specialized in dairy production, outnumbering their *canadien* counterparts by a margin of 13 to 11, it was only in the final decade of this period that the newcomers came to dominate.

Care of Animals

Despite the importance of animals to agricultural production, farm leases contained surprisingly few guidelines related to the care of

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[58] n.m. Delisle 16/07/1814 #6981; n.m. Griffin 13/06/1818 #2287.

[59] The average size of these dairy herds also increased, rising from 11.2 in the 1790's, to 13.6 in the 1800's and 14.5 in the 1810's.

livestock.[60] A standard, vague clause directing the tenant to take proper care of all animals on the farm was found in most leases, but further instructions were relatively infrequent. Most of the additional instructions concerned the hay and fodder required by the farm animals during the winter months. For instance, the *habitant* François Bleignier *dit* Jarry left "23 voyages de foin nette, la paille de 600 gerbes d'avoine, le péza de 8 voyages de pois, la paille de 180 gerbes de bled" on his farm in the Parish of Sainte-Geneviève to feed his livestock over the winter.[61] An adequate supply of fodder was crucial to successful animal husbandry. If a farmer ran short of feed before the animals could be put out to pasture in the spring, he was forced to either buy more fodder, at inflated prices, or to slaughter or sell the animals.[62]

The remaining clauses which referred to livestock management were concerned less with the animals and more with protecting other aspects of farm production. Several leases contained directions to the tenant restricting the areas in which the animals, especially cattle and pigs, could graze. Orchards were generally out of bounds to all livestock, as

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[60] Louise Dechêne found the same pattern in her analysis of farm leases on the island of Montreal in the seventeenth century. Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVII[e] siècle, (Montréal, 1974): 316.

[61] The tenant in this lease, Jean-Baptiste Charron, was obligated to leave sufficient fodder for wintering the animals at the end of his tenure. n.m. Chaboillez 04/10/1805 #7171.

[62] In many leases the lessor and tenant agreed to split the cost of additional fodder if it was needed. But not all proprietors and tenants were prepared or able to assume this cost. Marguerite Vallée instructed the tenants on her farm in the Parish of Lachine to sell the farm animals if the fodder did not last through the winter. n.m. Foucher 16/08/1784 #5576.

were meadows that were to be cut for hay. The practice of allowing animals to graze on the straw stubble left after the harvest was mentioned in only two leases.[63]

5.3 ORCHARDS AND GARDENS

Production

Fruit and vegetable production took two different forms on the island of Montreal. As part of a larger farm operation -- the kitchen garden and a few fruit trees -- the produce was consumed mainly by the family, with some surplus being sold. On the other hand, the garden-orchard plots in the immediate vicinity of the city, generally the properties of the urban elite (*canadien* and non-*canadien*), produced for the urban market. Fruit and vegetable production on the large gardens and orchards in the vicinity of Montreal was well-documented by travellers. No matter how derogatory their general comments concerning agriculture in Lower Canada, contemporary commentators had only praise for Montreal's gardens and orchards.[64] While the garden-orchard plots produced a variety of crops, the one most frequently mentioned and commented upon was apples, for both eating and cider. In addition to apples, pear and plum trees were relatively common, as were melons and

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[63] n.m. Beek 18/06/1804 #1793; n.m. Huguet-Latour 12/04/1815 #1024.

[64] Refer to Hugh Gray's laudatory description of this produce in Chapter 3; see also Joseph Sanson, Sketches of Lower Canada..., (New York, 1817): 231; and George Henry Hume, The Emigrant's Guide..., (Quebec, n.d.): xii.

various kinds of berries.[65] Some more exotic fruits were mentioned -- grape vines imported from France, and cherries and raspberries from Europe -- but they were found only on a few farms, generally those of proprietors interested by and able to experiment with different plants.[66] The vegetables most regularly cultivated in gardens were onions, carrots, beets, cabbage and potatoes along with a small patch of tobacco.

Methods

Farm leases contained little information concerning the maintenance and cultivation of garden plots. Most garden leases included directions to the tenants to properly manure the soil and keep the paths clear, but that was often the sum total of the instructions. In the case of some larger gardens, like that of Louis Partenais '*bourgeois*' residing at Côte Sainte-Marie, more complicated and explicit guidelines were given. Among the tasks Partenais' tenant gardener Pierre Desjardins was obliged to perform, in addition to weeding, manuring, and mounding earth (*chausser*), was to pick all ripe vegetables in the proper seasons and transport them to market where he could sell them. After each session at the

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65 Fruit trees were occasionally brought from England or from the United States. See the excellent detailed description of Isaac Todd's large orchard in the *faubourg* Saint-Antoine, n.m. Gray 10/09/1808 #2156; and the advertisement in The Montreal Herald, May 4, 1816 for the sale of "FRUIT TREES ... Just arrived from New York, a large collection of the choicest FRUIT TREES, consisting of Apples, Pears, Cherries, Peaches, &c." Wilson, This was Montreal in 1814, 1815, 1816 and 1817, p. 93.

66 n.m. Lukin 27/10/1807 #4068; n.m. Delisle 10/05/1808 #5961.

market, Desjardins was to furnish Partenais with an account of the sales and one-half of the proceeds.[67]

While instructions concerning the cultivation of gardens appear sparse, those referring to the management of orchards are abundant. All leases of orchards contained explicit instructions concerning the tarring of the trees and the removal of caterpillars, while the majority of the acts also had clauses dealing with the application of manure around the base of the trees, pruning and the care of the nursery. Insistence on these aspects of orchard care was in part a function of the lessor's desire to protect his investment from the destruction that would result from an infestation of insects. But an even more basic reason existed for the consistent inclusion of these obligations. In 1805 a petition of "sundry proprietors of lands cultivated as orchards in the neighbourhood of the city of Montreal" detailing the problems caused by the caterpillar *arpenteuse* was put before the Lower Canadian Assembly.[68] As a result of this action, an act concerning the preservation of apple trees in the Parish of Montreal was passed in March of 1805. The preamble to this act chronicled the extent of this problem in the orchards around Montreal, and while noting that the caterpillar could be stopped by the application of a bandage smeared with tar around the base of the tree, noted that:

> the labour of industrious persons who employ the said means to preserve the said trees, may be rendered endless, and in a great measure useless by the

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[67] n.m. Cadieux 31/10/1816 #488.

[68] JHALC, (1805): 216-218.

> indolence and negligence of their neighbours, who leave their trees to be over run by the said insects, whereby they are annually propagated and again extended to the trees of such industrious persons....[69]

To force all proprietors of orchards to deal with the caterpillar problem, fines of between five shillings and £5 per tree were to be imposed on all persons who did not follow the detailed instructions to apply tar to the base of the tree four times in the spring, four times in the summer and three times in the fall.

Detailed instructions concerning the care of orchards were therefore a lessor's protection against both the damage caused by caterpillars and the fines levied against those who did not comply with the law.[70] In one lease made in 1806, the tenant was simply instructed to "arranger [the orchard] de la manière la plus convenables et suivant la loi maintenant en force dans la province".[71] Clearly, the proper management of an orchard required a significant input of labour.

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69 "An Act for the preservation of Apple Trees in the Parish of Montreal", Provincial Statutes of Lower Canada, (1805), 45 Geo. III, Chapter 15; and see also the extension "An Act further to continue for a limited time, an Act passed in the forty-fifth year of His Majesty's Reign, intituled, 'An Act for the preservation of Apple Trees in the Parish of Montreal'", Provincial Statutes of Lower Canada, (1808), 48 Geo. III, Chapter 17.

70 Several lessors reserved the right to work in the orchards themselves, or to inspect the work of the lessee.

71 n.m. 29/09/1806 #147.

This examination of farm production and methods on the island of Montreal indicates the diversity of strategies employed on the agricultural properties surrounding the city. In addition to production intended mainly for consumption on the farm, farm leases chronicle a wide range of crops raised for commercial purposes. Hay and fodder, in particular oats, were in constant demand to feed the many horses kept in the city.[72] Sizeable dairy herds were kept on a few farms, presumably to fulfill the need for dairy products among urban dwellers. Large-scale garden and orchard production was concentrated on the lands just outside of the city, and hops were cultivated within a stone's throw of the brewery where they were processed to make beer. With the exception of hay and fodder, the production of all of these commercial crops was both capital and labour-intensive.

But not all farmers cultivated these cash crops. Among the properties included in the farm lease series, it was the farms owned by the urban élite that were more likely to be involved in specialized agricultural production. Only hops cultivation, limited to a small number of American emigrants, was dominated by one ethnic group. Overall, the proportional representation of *canadien* and non-*canadien* proprietors among those who employed more intensive agricultural practices was roughly equal. Thus, capital was the most important single factor in determining the approach taken to farming on a particular property.

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[72] The "Rôles Générales des Contribuables aux Chemins et Ponts de la Ville et Paroisse de Montréal" for 1796 and 1797 enumerate 602 and 871 horses, respectively, within the city limits. Archives de Séminaire de Québec, Fonds Viger-Verreau, boîte 51, liasse 4.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined approaches to agriculture on the island of Montreal between 1780 and 1820. Although limited to those farms let through a formalized notarial contract during this period, we have found much evidence that points to a diversity of strategies employed by those involved in agricultural production, either indirectly as lessors, or directly as tenants. The single most important factor in determining which farms would engage in the raising of specialized crops for the urban market was the capital resources of the proprietor.

A variety of circumstances made the island of Montreal an ideal case study for a study of Lower Canadian farming. The soil, climate, and situation of the island had made the area one of the most important agricultural regions in the province by the late eighteenth century. All of these natural advantages were in part responsible for the creation and development of what was perhaps the greatest benefit enjoyed by the rural producers around the city -- the growth of a significant urban market. Of course, the opportunities presented by this situation were not open to most farmers in Lower Canada, but it is only through an evaluation of the strategies employed under this particular set of circumstances that we can compare with agriculture in other areas and identify the reasons for any significant differences.

The information contained in the 564 farm leases passed before Montreal notaries between 1780 and 1820 permits us to identify some of

the people involved in farming around Montreal, to examine their capital investment in the farm and the tools and animals used to exploit it, and to understand aspects of agricultural production and techniques. This source allows only partial glimpses into the operation of a few Lower Canadian farms, and in some cases raises more questions than it answers; nonetheless, it contributes new information to the much greater picture of farming throughout early Quebec.

The proprietors and tenants involved in farm leases represented a cross-section of Lower Canadian society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, although certain elements of the population were present in disproportionate numbers. Merchants and professionals residing in Montreal demonstrated an active interest in agricultural production through their ownership of rural properties, as they accounted for almost half of all lessors. Several urban artisans also held agricultural properties, as did widows, and of course the religious institutions. A small, but increasing number of farms let during the forty years studied were owned by farmers who, for reasons not known, leased their land instead of tending it themselves.

Over the course of the four decades, the most significant change in the composition of the population involved in farm leases was the sharp increase in the numbers of non-*canadiens*, especially in the capacity of tenant. By the last decade of the eighteenth century, early emigrants from the British Isles and the northeastern United States had begun to settle in Lower Canada. Those who came to the island of Montreal tended

to cluster around the city, remaining within the parish. Many of these newcomers experienced their introduction to Canadian farming on leased properties. The motivations of some of the people implicated in farm leases appeared relatively straightforward, for instance in the case of merchants who maintained rural properties, but a combination of financial and familial reasons undoubtedly contributed most to the decision made by the majority of lessors and lessees.

Most agricultural properties, 60%, leased on the island of Montreal between 1780 and 1820 were concentrated around the city, in the Parish of Montreal. A further 34% of the farms were scattered among the four parishes that bordered the island's central and most populated parish. On average, the religious institutions, merchants and professionals owned the largest farms. But more importantly, the élite possessed many of the garden and orchard plots situated just outside of the city, to the northwest and on the slopes of Mount Royal. The produce of this intensively cultivated land enjoyed a captive market within the city limits. In addition to the concentration of gardens and orchards in the vicinity of Montreal, several pastures were maintained close to the city for the purpose of providing grazing, at a set fee, for the horses and cows kept by the inhabitants of the town and the suburbs.

About 30% of the farm leases contained inventories of agricultural implements and livestock included as part of the leasing agreement. The most significant pattern identified in an analysis of these listings is that merchant and professional proprietors invested more capital in the

moveable properties of their farms than did any other lessors. Also of interest was the decline in the use of the oxen as a draught animal, most probably tied to an increasing use of the English swing plough by the non-*canadien* tenants.

Several different approaches to agricultural production were identified on the leased farms. While a number of farms continued to cultivate, almost exclusively, the traditional combination of wheat, peas and oats; there was also a diverse range of specialized production. The cultivation of some cash crops -- for instance fruit, vegetables, hay and fodder -- did not originate in this period, but had been practised on a lesser level on the island of Montreal for many decades. What did increase was the scale of this production.

Two new specializations -- dairying and hops production -- started during these forty years. Although small numbers of cows, no more than two or three, had been kept by most *cultivateurs* before this time, the primary purpose of these animals had been to reproduce the oxen required for draught purposes, thereby relegating milk production to a secondary function. Hops, required by the newly established and expanding breweries, were grown by a small number of farmers, for the most part Americans experienced in the difficult cultivation and preparation of this crop.

The unifying factor in the use of capital and labour-intensive methods of production was the economic resources available to the pro-

prietor of the land. With few exceptions, the large-scale production for the urban market detailed in farm leases was found on the properties of the élite lessors. These proprietors could afford to invest more capital in their properties and could also afford to experiment with new crops or agricultural techniques. The ethnicity of the lessors did not appear to have a significant affect on their approach to farming.

The information contained in this series of farm leases has permitted us to gain some insight into agricultural production on the island of Montreal, but it is only a very small part of a much greater whole. A more complete context for this study awaits further investigations into the people, farms, agricultural production and techniques of other regions in Lower Canada. Only then can we assemble a truly composite picture of agriculture in early Quebec.

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CN0601-0016	Barron, Thomas	1799-1831
CN0601-0028	Bedouin, Thomas	1812-1844
CN0601-0029	Beek, Jean Gerband	1781-1821
CN0601-0054	Bouvet, Mathurin	1769-1783
CN0601-0068	Cadieux, Jean-Marie	1805-1827
CN0601-0074	Chaboillez, Louis	1787-1813
CN0601-0121	Delisle, Jean-Guillaume	1787-1819
CN0601-0126	Desautels, Joseph	1810-1821
CN0601-0128	Desève, Jean-Baptiste	1785-1805
CN0601-0134	Doucet, Nicolas-Benjamin	1804-1851
CN0601-0158	Foucher, Antoine	1746-1800
CN0601-0185	Gray, Jonathan-Abraham	1796-1812
CN0601-0187	Griffin, Henry	1812-1847
CN0601-0194	Guy, Louis	1801-1842
CN0601-0243	Huguet-Latour, Louis	1804-1835
CN0601-0215	Jobin, André	1813-1853
CN0601-0217	Jorand, Jean-Jacques	1798-1815
CN0601-0254	Leguay, François (père)	1770-1789
CN0601-0269	Lukin, Peter (père)	1790-1814
CN0601-0290	Mezières, Pierre	1758-1794
CN0601-0295	Mondelet, Jean-Marie (fils)	1794-1842
CN0601-0302	Nolin, Charles-Louis	1818-1824
CN0601-0309	Panet, Pierre-Louis	1781-1783
CN0601-0313	Papineau, Joseph	1780-1841
CN0601-0334	Prévost, Charles	1801-1838
CN0601-0363	Sanguinet, Simon (fils)	1764-1786
CN	Sarault, Louis	1806-1812
CN0601-0384	Trudeau, François-Joseph	1811-1819

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"Register of Americans Admitted to Take the Oath of Allegiance in the District of Montreal", Fonds Viger-Verreau, boîte 46, liasse VII.

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