CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND INSTITUTIONS
IN LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY ONTARIO

by

Julie Mathien

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Theory and Policy Studies
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Julie Mathien 2001
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author’s permission.

L’auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-58891-2
ABSTRACT

Children, Families and Institutions in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Ontario.

Master of Arts, 2001
Julie Mathien
Department of Theory and Policy Studies
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

The changes in childhood in 19th and 20th century English-speaking Ontario took place within a context of economic and social developments that included industrialization, urbanization, new immigrant groups, change in family occupations, scientific advances and economic liberalization. The change was exhilarating, but caused profound unease. This generated a search for order that appeared in existing institutions, such as churches and schools and in new institutions, such as kindergartens and settlement houses, that reformers initiated to fix the perceived flaws of the new environment.

Childhood became the subject of intense scrutiny. While some young children attended school from the early 19th century, new ideas of childhood meant that, by 1900, kindergarten for the youngest pupils was entrenched in public schools. By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, supervision during school hours had expanded to the rest of the day in settings such as settlement houses.
Introduction

The last half of the 19th century saw the industrialization and urbanization of Canada. Throughout this period, people shifted from the countryside to towns and cities and changed occupation from (usually) self-employed agricultural work to employment in service or industry. By 1891, just over half of Canada’s population was engaged in non-agricultural pursuits.1

Furthermore, the new work was no more stable than the old pursuits. In describing the period, James Struthers writes, “In hindsight, we know that the steam revolution in transportation and industrialization fractured local labour markets, accelerated the dependency of the population on wage labour and provoked a vast upsurge in labour mobility and cyclical fluctuations in labour demand, a phenomenon that we now call ‘unemployment’.”2 Despite overall economic growth, recessions were a feature of each of the last three decades of the century and a full recession started in the early ’90’s and continued until 1900.

The cities were the crucible of social change. They were the growth areas, the sites of the new services and industries and the places where social critics perceived the effects, positive and negative, of the new economic order. Moreover, Michael Piva cites Toronto’s economic preeminence among all of the nation’s cities when he states that it stood at “the centre of Canada’s industrial economy.” Toronto’s growth in both capital and gross and net value of production between 1900 and 1921 was both impressive and steady.3

---

1Census of Canada, 1890-91, Volume 4, Table P, p. 450.


Many citizens, including those influential in areas like education and religion, had decidedly mixed feelings about the rapid growth and change taking place around them. They were exhilarated by the vitality and prosperity that expansion provided. However, the rapid pace of the progress and the changes that it generated left them with the sense that they were losing control over the ability to direct the course of society.

The changes that industrialization brought to the lives of working people were accompanied by changes in family occupations, education and schools, English Canadian Protestantism and, finally, early in the 1900's ethnic demographics due to an upsurge in immigration. All of these shifting strands of influence changed the ways in which society, families and institutions approached childhood and child rearing. While it is always dangerous to attribute cause and effect in complex situations that persist overtime, the strands are interrelated. As well, they shift within themselves and relative to each other. All are part of a multi-layered social reform process that gained momentum in Canada after 1850 and was in full swing by 1900.

In this period, the Canadian family changed from a unit where most members were involved in production (mainly farming) from an early age to a group organized around wages earned outside the home. The public utterances regarding the treatment of children both in and outside the home became more frequent and promoted an ordered, gentle approach rather than harsh discipline.

Education in Ontario, and particularly in urban areas like Toronto, moved from a service that had all of the indicators of underdevelopment (e.g. lack of universal coverage, inadequate physical infrastructure, haphazard staffing) to a system with public funding, purpose-built facilities, prescribed
curricula and textbooks, an emphasis on learning through discovery and provincially-mandated teacher training and qualifications. By 1871, every child had to attend for at least part of the year until age 12.

Concern about the effects of industrialism had given rise to social reform movements on a number of fronts, including Protestantism in prominent English-speaking societies like Canada. New science, especially Darwinism with its emphasis on change and orderly progress, influenced philosophy and religion by introducing the notion of perfectibility.

One of the points of convergence for all of these strands was the increased attention paid to children and childhood. The fear that the new economic and social order might destroy the perceived social unity of the past heightened and the new idea that perfectibility was possible gave momentum to the desire evident in religious and educational reform efforts to influence (and, at times, control) socialization during childhood. Alison Prentice writes, "The movement to send all children to school was, above all, a movement to bring sanctity and order to human affairs." Reform efforts focussing on children were also preventative in nature in that they were often an attempt to provide guidance before the corrosive influences of the (mainly urban) environment could reach them.

By the end of the century, the betterment of childhood had become a societal preoccupation. Manifestations of this preoccupation, such as the articulation of new approaches to child rearing, school systems, child labour laws and recreation and playground programs, regulated childhood, making it public and organized in ways that it had never been. Neil Sutherland identifies Toronto as the major location for childhood reform. Although

working class families participated in reforms, especially through the labour movement which was gaining strength in urban workplaces, Sutherland maintains that, “a host of middle class city dwellers, with Toronto in the lead, first expressed the new ideas on childhood and family life and organized the many associations, campaigns and the like which tried to put the theory into practice.”

This paper considers this period of reform in two ways. First, it looks at the experience of children under age 6 - primarily those aged 3 to 6. Second, it examines the Ontario early childhood experience through two settings where young children spent time - schools and settlement houses. Very little work has been done on how very young Canadian children spent time outside the home. The paper provides a broad treatment of this experience, in the context of the shifting and many-layered social reform process, from the early days of private and publicly-supported schools to the provision of new programs in Toronto in the late 19th and early 20th century - specifically kindergartens in downtown Elizabeth St. School and preschool programs in Central Neighbourhood House. Both kindergartens and settlement houses (albeit started at different times, but over time, concurrent) were part of the child-centred reform efforts that sought to reconcile the economic and social changes taking place in Canada’s most prosperous city. Both contain elements of education and religious reform.

---

In Toronto and Ontario, very young children were in school throughout the 19th century. Edith Firth included in her work, The Town of York, a description of the public examination of the York Infant School that appeared as a news item in the Courier of Upper Canada for May 9, 1832. According to the Courier, the infant school was the first of its kind in Upper Canada although others existed in England and the United States.

The examination was held in St. Andrew’s Church. It was "announced by the entrance of the children - 12 boys and 12 girls - between the ages of 7 and 12 years - all very neatly dressed and formed in a double line - the boys to the right and the girls to the left - regularly sized - the tallest in front and hand in hand. In this order and headed by their teacher, they marched along the aisle of the church, singing the following hymn and keeping step with each other, and to the tune, with the precision of a platoon of light infantry:

The hour is come, I will not stay,  
But haste to school without delay.  
Nor loiter here, for tis a crime  
To trifle thus with precious time.  
Say - shall my teacher wait in vain,  
And of my sad neglect complain?  
NO! rather let me strive to be  
The first of all the family.

The examination proceeded with oral questions in, among other things, geography, astronomy, natural history, bible history, and scientific matters such as "the various causes of death". Two boys carried on a dialogue about creation. The Courier reported that, "Upon all these subjects numerous

---

questions were put by the teacher, which were answered simultaneously by the children with a promptitude and accuracy which were absolutely astonishing."

The audience was so impressed with the childrens' performance that they immediately organized a meeting to establish a permanent infant school for the town. Archdeacon Strachan chaired the meeting and Jesse Ketchum donated funds to build a schoolhouse. The infant school continued in this building, attached to the Secessionist Presbyterian Church on Richmond St., for many years.7

The York Infant School was a private school supported, in the main, by user fees. Two decades later the Portsmouth Infant School operated in the same fashion but a different context.8 Located near Kingston, it was established in 1852 by the Rev. J. Allen, a local Anglican clergyman and the Superintendent of Schools for Kingston, with the residents of the village who were affiliated with St. George's Church.9

Unlike the York Infant School, the Portsmouth school was part of a larger charity effort. The initiators, "The Portsmouth Auxiliary of the Kingston Widows' and Orphans' Friend Society", were, "desirous of promoting the welfare of the village by giving encouragement to early education and of assisting widows and orphans by affording the opportunity of obtaining free schooling for their children ..." As well, they provided for, "the visitation

7Ibid.

8AO. Education Papers Collection. Record Book, Portsmouth Infant School. The author would like to thank the staff of the Public Archives of Ontario for restoring the document to a state of legibility.

9Rev. Allen appears as the Superintendent of Schools in the Annual Report(s) of the Normal, Common and Grammar Schools for the years that the Portsmouth Infant School existed.
and relief of cases of mishap occurring in the neighbourhood and a general superintendence over the poor for the purpose of supplying work and encouraging a spirit of self-dependence." The assumed cause and effect of education and community well-being was linked to the charitable goal of helping the less fortunate. Adult classes were also started but failed for lack of interest.10

One indication of the perceived need for such a program in Portsmouth may lie in the fact that Kingston consistently had greater numbers of indigent pupils in the district schools than other cities. The greater number of poor families was likely because dependants of inmates of the penitentiary moved there to be close to their incarcerated relative. While most families paid a small fee, children of widows and deserted wives attended free of charge, subsidized by the larger organization in Kingston.11

Initially, the program attracted younger children. In 1852, the first year of operation and the only year in which ages were recorded, eight 3 year-olds, one 4 year-old and one 5 year-old were enrolled. Enrolment grew steadily. By 1858, towards the end of the school's existence, fifty-one children attended. Despite the Anglican sponsorship of the school and a curriculum that leaned heavily on Protestant children's hymns and Bible verses, a large number of the children were Roman Catholic.

In 1856, the Kingston Widows' and Orphans' Friend Society withdrew their subsidy and the school had to close in November until plans for its future were made. The school was able to re-open in April of 1857 but only

10Record Book, Portsmouth Infant School.

11See the Statistical Report(s) of The Report(s) of the Normal, Model Grammar and Common Schools of Upper Canada. For example, in 1850, Toronto had 58 indigent pupils, Hamilton had 61 and Kingston, the smallest of the three cities, had 398.
lasted three years. In March of 1859, a Roman Catholic School opened in Portsmouth with the result that "all the R.C. children were withdrawn, many of them expressed regret at leaving" although some "returned at the interval when the school was broken up." In October of 1860, the infant school closed. Children were invited to a village home once a week to continue learning their Bible verses, but most of them went to the district school.\textsuperscript{12}

Neither the life nor the death of the Portsmouth Infant School is surprising. That it started as a charitable effort is understandable given the number of poor families in the area. However, it was also dependent on private funding and parent fees - neither being a stable source of revenue. For example, as Ian Davey has documented, younger children were more likely to attend school in the summer when the weather was more likely to make walking agreeable.\textsuperscript{13} This pattern held for the Portsmouth Infant School. Absenteeism was a major problem for the school during the winter months when it typically fell to fifty percent of enrolment. The record-keeper complained in 1854 that the committee had difficulty meeting expenses in the winter because parents did not pay fees when the children did not attend.\textsuperscript{14}

The Portsmouth Infant School and other small, neighbourhood private schools were, thus, unstable in the early, volatile days of Ontario's education system. The interesting aspects of the life of the school are that a number of families were prepared to pay (as it turned out, not enough) to have very young children attend school, particularly when a district school was

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{14}Record Book, Portsmouth Infant School.
available and that, until a separate school was built, many Roman Catholic parents preferred a Protestant, denominational school to one operated by local government.

While the small pupils of the Portsmouth Infant School were busy learning to sing "To the Sabbath School I'll Go", many of their contemporaries elsewhere in the province simply accompanied their neighbours and older siblings to the local school. The experience of these children under 6 is detailed in letters written by teachers of the day. In the late 1890's, John George Hodgins, Egerton Ryerson's former deputy began to write a history of education in Ontario. His research included an invitation to all of the superannuated teachers in the province to send him written accounts of their experiences teaching during the system's formative years. The letters to Hodgins contain a wealth of detail on schools, teaching and children, primarily in rural areas, during the 1850's and 60's. The contents of the letters are consistent both with each other and with other contemporary accounts of schools in what was then Canada West.16

The schools of the day were, by all accounts, rudimentary and crowded. James Kyle's description of his school in Prescott in 1854 is typical. He wrote that he had "40 or 50 scholars of all ages from 5 up to 15." The schoolhouse had a total floor space of 320 square feet to accommodate the teacher, pupils and furniture. It was common at the time to have long writing desks placed around the periphery of the room, often attached to the walls. In Kyle's school, "The desks were arranged in a single row around the walls with only an open space for the door. Long wooden benches inside for seats so that when any pupil had occasion to move, he disturbed all the other occupants.

15Ibid.

16Archives of Ontario Local School Histories, RG2, Series E2.
The stove occupied the centre of the room and in cold weather the backs of the little ones were warm while their faces were freezing."17 There were chronic shortages of books, maps, globes and blackboards. Playgrounds were practically non-existent until the 1860's.

Teachers generally described the smallest children in their schools with a mixture of sympathy and good humour. Mary J. Bates, for example, taught in the "Junior Department" of the Prince Albert Public School between 1863 and 1867. All of her pupils were below the Third Book. In her schoolroom, "the seats were long, backed benches on each of which eight little mortals were packed and expected, by some people, to keep still". When writing at their seats, the children usually rested their slates on their left arm while the right hand worked the pencil. This posture was not easy to maintain and Bates wrote that, "Of course, held in this way there would be an occasional (or semi-occasional) crash as some tired or awkward little one let his or her slate 'slip'."18

Olive Olmstead was concerned about the effect that unsuitable seating could have on the physiques of her small charges. She reported that, while sitting on the backless seats in her schoolroom, "little children could not touch the floor with their feet. It is a wonder that they did not leave school with crooked spine."19

The curriculum leaned heavily to basic literacy. Learning to read seemed, in the main, to be equated with learning to spell. For example, Ellen Bowes (whose classroom contained children as young as four) described her reading

17Ibid., file 31.

18Ibid., file 4.

19Ibid., file 53.
programme in the mid-1850's as follows: "The children began to read by learning the alphabet thoroughly. Then spelling words of two letters, then words of three letters and next four letters. The teacher pronounced the word "into" and the pupils spelled i-n-i-n t-o-to into or "fortunately", f-o-r-for t-u-tu fortu-n-a-t-e nate fortunate-l-y fortunately." The children were grouped according to their spelling ability. Bowes, following a certain logic, outlined her school organization as follows:

1st class. The beginners had words of one syllable. [sic]
2nd class. The next class had words of two syllables - the
3rd class words of three syllables.
4th class words of four, five or six syllables.
5th class names and meaning.
The 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes read from the spelling book and the
4th and 5th classes from the English Reader and the New Testament.

A model of the solar system in a box enlivened playtime for the pupils of William H. Scott when he taught east of Toronto in the late 1850's. "Tho' several of our planets had strayed from their home in the ark before I got charge of it, yet it was useful as a plaything for little children, to turn the crank and see the remaining planets move 'round the gilded sun." When close to half of his 100 pupils were in the first book or alphabet, D. Henry gave the younger pupils their lessons and sent them out to play "while the larger ones were writing their copies."

This is not to say that all school settings experienced by the youngest pupils were so gentle. Ellen Bowes inherited a school from a man "who kept [the children] all in order by vigourous use of a cane... they were as wild as

---

20 Ibid., file 5.
21 Ibid., file 62.
22 Ibid., File 29.
deer. While corporal punishment in schools was discouraged by prominent school promoters in both Canada and the U.S., the provincial authority in Ontario defended the application of what it described as "normal" corporal violence and left the definition of "excessive" punishment to the courts.

Bruce Curtis outlines violent incidents in classrooms prior to the 1870's, sometimes involving children as young as 6. Even if the smallest children were not the most common subjects of beatings, some, no doubt, witnessed their older classmates either fighting with or suffering at the mercy of schoolteachers who, for one reason or another, had lost their grip on appropriate discipline. Despite attempts, such as articles in the Journal of Education, to urge parents to support school discipline with similar practices at home, many objected to instances where teachers corrected children either because the punishment was harsh or because they did not want to delegate discipline to an adult outside the family.

How many small children - those under age 7 - went to local schools? The children under age 5 who were enrolled in and attended school are easily isolated because both sets of figures for that age group are tabulated separately in Department of Education Reports during this period. They were a tiny part

---

23 Ibid., File 5.


25 Ibid., p. 324.
of the school system and were overwhelmingly in the counties. Although attendance data indicate that the smallest children in city schools were actually in class more often than their rural counterparts, their numbers generally came to less than 10% of the total number of under-5’s enrolled throughout the province. The most likely explanation for this, the closer proximity and easier walks to schools in urban settings, is confirmed by Davey’s findings, previously stated, that parents in rural areas favoured spring and summer when sending younger children to school. This pattern persisted throughout the latter part of the 19th century.

There are different explanations for and estimates of the number of 5 and 6 year-olds enrolled in school, depending on the assumptions made about the number of 7-10 year-olds enrolled. An attempt at developing an enrollment profile is possible for the year 1871 because it was a census year as well as being one of the last years that 5-10 year-olds were a distinct column in Department of Education reports. Enrollment figures simply tell us the number of children who were signed up, not how often they went to school.

In 1871, when, for the first time, provincial legislation compelled 7-12 year-olds to attend school for at least four months during the year, 193,293 5-10 year-olds attended school in Ontario. The total number of 7-10 year-olds in the province was 186,298. All of the children in this age group were supposed to have been enrolled in school and if we assume that they were, irrespective of how often they actually appeared at the school door, then

---

26ARUC. Statistical Reports. The number of 0-5 year-olds in counties was greater both in terms of real numbers and in proportion to the total student population throughout the 1870's '80's and '90's.


28Census of Canada 1871, Vol. II, Table F-1.
10,995 5 and 6 year-olds went as well. Adding the 2,291 under 5 year-olds (0.45% of the total student population) who were also enrolled that year gives a total of 13,286 pupils under 7 years of age or only 4% of the 325,635 0-6 year-olds in the province and 2.17% of the total school enrolment of 489,615.

However, applying Michael Katz's findings from census manuscripts in Hamilton to the rest of the province results in a higher (although still minority) estimate. Katz's findings indicate that 85% (rather than 100%) of 7-12 year-olds went to school in Hamilton in 1871. Just over half of the 5 and 6 year-olds were enrolled.29 Assuming the same incomplete enrollment for 7-10 year-olds province-wide gives us a lower figure (158,353) for that age group and a correspondingly higher one (34,940 - just over 37% of the age group) for the 5 and 6 year-olds. In this instance, the under 7 year-olds would have represented 11.43% of that age group in the population and 7.13% of the total school population - still the junior partner.

Furthermore, Katz's data show that the percentage increase between 1851 and 1871 was lower for the 5 and 6 year-olds than that of their older elementary school counterparts.30 This would seem to indicate either that a growing system prioritized the older children or that that parents were cautious about enrolling their younger children - possibly both.

The youngest children who attended the local school in the 1850's and 60's had a mixed experience. If Hodgin's correspondents are typical, most teachers looked kindly upon their youngest pupils. They joined the community's scholars without a great deal of fuss and, in many instances, the teachers adapted the curriculum as best they could to meet their needs. The


30Ibid.
children were in settings that were almost always crowded, at times violent and not furnished for their size. However, they were in a social environment and, since the statistics on reading progress for 1851 don't show a drop-off in the numbers of children until the fourth book, they probably learned the rudiments of reading.\textsuperscript{31}

Nonetheless, the numbers do not indicate that most parents chose to send the youngest members of their family to the local school. It is quite likely that they took a look at the accompanying facts of school attendance - difficult treks and participation in a system that had all of the characteristics of underdevelopment - and decided that a little later was better.

\textsuperscript{31}ARUC 1851, pp. 74-75.
Neil Sutherland, in his book, *Children in English Canadian Society*, describes the effects of the rapid economic growth of the late 19th and early 20th century on the family. As the 19th century progressed, rising incomes created a larger middle class. As previously stated, the Canadian family changed from a unit where most members were involved in production located on the home site to one organized around wages earned outside the home and almost always earned by one member - the father. The new job opportunities that industrialization created for young, single women did not extend to their married counterparts who became almost entirely engaged in work of a reproductive nature (bearing and rearing children, providing service to the wage earner). Particularly in cities, the father's daily and in many cases, lengthy absence from the home meant that mother had greater responsibility where the children were concerned.32

By the turn of the century, two trends had become rooted in society. Day-to-day activities of the home, including the home-based activities of the children, had been almost entirely delegated to women. At the same time, childhood changed. Due to school attendance and organized activities in places like playgrounds, children's clubs, settlement houses and libraries, children, at least many who were older than 6 or 7 left home during the day. In many urban areas such as Toronto, children younger than normal school age spent part of the day away from home in kindergarten.

Sutherland states, "As English Canadians in the 1870's and 1880's went about their daily rounds, rearing their children in traditional ways, changes were already afoot in a society which would put into question many of their

---

32Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*, Pg. 14.
assumptions and practices." The economic changes (economic growth, increased family incomes and rise of the middle class, increased urbanization) were accompanied by the education and religious reforms described elsewhere in this thesis. These shaped a system of reform aimed at children that had its public manifestations in programs like curriculum reform, kindergarten, child labour legislation, child welfare laws, recreation programs in settlement houses, playgrounds and libraries and initiatives to improve child and family health. These initiatives were often led and sustained by middle class reformers, in many cases women who now had the income, skills and leisure to volunteer, as they saw it, for the good of society.

At the end of the 19th century, Canadians began to look at innovative ways of child-rearing. While we cannot really know the extent to which the articulation of the new approaches via such media as magazines or advice manuals actually changed practice, changes in the amount and content of information and advice directed at parents can be seen as an indication that families were either expected to or trying to change to accommodate the changes taking place in larger society.

The years 1880 to 1900 saw a shift in the advice to parents that appeared in four popular magazines, the Canadian Home Journal, the Ladies' Journal, the Canadian Queen and the Christian Guardian, which was the Methodist weekly magazine. The Ladies' Journal was published from 1880 to 1903. The Canadian Queen and the Canadian Home Journal lasted one and two years respectively in the 1890's. The Christian Guardian had an almost 100-year publication span - from 1825 to 1924. It is interesting because of the size of its potentially committed audience (in 1891, 30% of Ontario's population were

33Sutherland, pg. 12.

Methodist) and because Egerton Ryerson, the Chief Superintendent of Schools who oversaw the building of Ontario's school system, was its first editor.

The consensus that appears in all four of the magazines regarding physical care, discipline, play, relationships within the family and the need for kindness when raising happy and healthy children is an indication that these elements were consistent with the beliefs of the middle class in late-Victorian English-speaking Canadians, including reformers and the parents that they sought to influence.

Throughout the two decades, advice on childrearing increased significantly in all four magazines. The advice was part of the societal focus on children in that it did increase and that its content was consistent across the magazines as well as with the reform directions seen later in this paper in education and protestantism - most notably an emphasis on guidance and role modeling rather that force as the most effective means of molding youngsters along with a belief in the perfectability of human beings.35 Darwin was beginning to influence child-rearing and many experts believed that the personal characteristics that lent stability in society could be formed by providing the proper environment in childhood.

By 1880, the young child was no longer seen as inherently depraved, but pure, although open to corrupting influences. The parent was no longer the scourge of evil, but a gardener, rooting up weeds as they appeared. The notion of oppressing children for their own good gave way to a philosophy of providing a health environment and teaching by example. Mothers and fathers were advised that "a child's nature is too delicate to be worked upon a

---

sledge-hammer and gudge and pile driver,”36 and that, “children are apt to be echoes of their parents.”37

Corporal punishment met with general disapproval. In a poem entitled, “The Toys”, a father is remorseful, having spanked his children and sent them to bed.38 A slap on the ear was said to cause “a sudden and tremendous change in the attitude of the person boxed”, the implication being change for the worse.39

Spending time as a family was important. In 1890, the Canadian Queen stated, “Someone has once said, ‘it is not the things we do for our children that make them love us most, but the things that we do with them.’”40

The learning-through-play approach appeared in the Advice, “... let her go out with a shovel and a bucket and dig for diamonds and find wriggley worms and gather bits of wood and funny coloured stones and never come across a single diamond except that Kohinoor among them - good health.”41 The Canadian Queen concurred when it stated that, “it does not require toys or fine dresses to make children happy”, and goes on to recommend mudpies

37 Ibid.
40 Canadian Queen, Oct. 1890, p. 27. Cited in Mathien, p. 38.
41 Ladies’ Journal, July, 1891, p. 3.
and blackboards and, for girls, toy washtubs and baking utensils. This advice is consistent with the kindergarten philosophy seen in the newly implemented classroom programs for young children.

The religious attitudes of the time are reflected in advice to parents. Spirituality is linked to intellectual curiosity in the counsel, "Happy the child whose many inquiries are received with the consideration they deserve as, in spite of any seeming aimlessness, the instinctive outreaching of an immortal soul for an acquaintance with its yet unwanted surroundings." Intellectual self-sufficiency was promoted as well - "A mind incapable of thinking and acting on its own responsibility fails to win respect from others." Advice to mothers placed them squarely in the home. While early in the 20-year period, readers could find features on single, working professional women, as time went on, the four magazines placed an increasing emphasis on domesticity. By the end of the century, the role of wife and mother was offered as the most suitable and, often, the only option for intelligent women. Readers learned, in the Ladies' Journal, that "...the modern woman should say of her home, 'This is my diploma' and of her children, 'These are my degrees.'" Moreover, a girl's education for the household was to start early. The approaches associated with kindergarten, but applied to preparation for homemaking, appear in the 1891 piece titled, "The Girl Who Makes a Home":

42"About the Babies", Canadian Queen, April, 1891, p. 58. Cited in Mathien, p. 34.


This young girl was wise early, her mother was wise before her, she began to acquire knowledge of how to do work and that familiarity which robbed it of all that was formidable, when she has to mount a chair to roll out the bit of dough, and her toy wash tub and board had to stand on her own three-legged stool that she might reach it, and she stirred up all her little messes and baked her little pie all as a matter of play.  

We will see this combination of kindergarten philosophy and vocational training appearing slightly later in the education system as the success of kindergarten was borrowed to support the expansion of such programs as manual training for boys and domestic science for girls.

The increase and eventual salience of this type of childrearing advice coincides with the rise of feminism in Canada as well as demographic trends that some may have found disturbing. Female labour force participation was on the rise. By 1901, 20% of women (although only a tiny number of these were married) were in the paid labour force. At the same time, the decade between 1881 and 1891 saw a sharp drop in the marriage rate for the young. Although the birth rate was stable between 1880 and 1890, it had been on a downward trend since the beginning of the century.


47 Census of Canada, 1901 and 1921. In 1921, the first year that census data were collected on labour force participation of married women, 2.16% worked outside the home.

48 Census of Canada, 1891. Vol. 4, p. 410. Between 1881 and 1891, the marriage rate for 21 to 31 year-olds dropped from 531 to 328 per 1,000.

The concern about women in the labour force was sufficiently great at that point to warrant a special section in the 1901 census bulletin titled, “Wage Earners of Canada”. The author stated, “The growth of factory work among women has brought with it inevitably a weakening of home interests and a neglect of home duties. The home has suffered what the factory has gained.” Perhaps due to a perception of greater numbers of working married women than actually existed or an anticipation of future problems, the bulletin continues, “The exigencies of factory life are inconsistent with the position of a good mother, a good wife or the maker of a home. Save in extreme circumstances, no increase of the family wage can balance those hours, whose values stand on a higher qualitative level.”50 The bulletin exemplifies the nervousness felt in the face of rapid change. This unease was so significant that the national census, without data, produced dire warnings about a trend - mothers in the paid labour force - that did not yet exist.

The clear consensus appearing in both the popular media and a state document indicates that changes in the Canadian economy had impacts on family activity. The new emphasis on children, the makeover of childhood and the social reforms that followed, at least in part, as a result of those changes, were present in other areas of society experiencing change - for example, education and English-speaking Protestant thought.

In addition, in championing many of the reforms, the mainly urban, middle-class leadership, as Sutherland states, “used their new ideas not only as a guide to their own performance as parents but also the care received by other children in society... Prodded by the need to solve newly emerged, perceived or discovered practical problems, Canadians gradually sorted out various types of children who needed particular types of care. As they did so, they set more and more precise and increasingly high standards for various

phases of a "proper" childhood and proposed remedies for those who did not meet them. It was an ad hoc process with few precedents for anyone to follow."\textsuperscript{51}

Institutional religion, in particular the Protestant denominations, was an essential element in nineteenth-century social reforms. What came to be called "muscular Christianity" underpinned the new programs like Kindergarten and settlement houses. It was multi-dimensional - a result of new religious, philosophical and scientific thought combined with the Victorian unease with the rapid pace of change. Ramsay Cook describes this unease and its effect on Protestant theology and religious doctrine in Canada, Great Britain and the United States as a "crisis of belief". He states, "The critique of religious orthodoxy which eventually led to the 'social gospel' in English Canada, originated in the religious and social turmoil of the last third of the nineteenth century."\textsuperscript{52}

The new economy, with its very visible changes in what people did, how money was made and spent plus a new consciousness of social class, called into question the idea that the laws of economics were Divinely inspired. This challenge to orthodox Christianity was assisted by the work of British and continental economists and philosophers like Smith, Mill and Marx. A good deal of the original North American intellectual response to economic and social change was an attempt to define and set out a position that could be seen to be relevant without falling into the perceived godlessness of the European thinkers.

The other attack on religious and moral certainties involved an enormous shift in intellectual thought. Although the whole field of science

\footnote{Sutherland, \textit{Children in English-Canadian Society}, p. 20.}

\footnote{Ramsay Cook, \textit{The Regenerators. Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada}, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 8.}
raised questions about religious teaching and biblical interpretation, the work of Charles Darwin provided the widest area for contention. The debate was less scientific than it was theological, as churches and intellectuals either rejected Darwinism on the grounds that it ignored God’s role in creation, attempted to accommodate Darwin’s increasingly influential theories within a belief in Divine action or eventually travelled the road away from denominational Christianity towards secular ethics. Those attempting to merge Darwinism with Christianity arrived at a position that came to be known as the “new theology” - a theology which described, “the immanence of God in the universe and united it with the doctrine of evolution.”

Cook writes of Canada, “From the science and higher criticism came the demand for a rethinking of theology; the injustices of the industrial capitalist order necessitated a reformulation of Christian social teachings”. This combining of sacred and secular resulted, on the religious side, in an insistence that Christianity must be a part of modern society.

In Canada in the 1880’s, the term applied to Protestant reform movements was “regeneration”. Initially applied to the notion of individual salvation as society’s saviour, it came to mean social rebirth. Regeneration, with its roots in the mid-century revivalist Christianity that swept North America, was a forerunner of what came to be known as the social gospel, both in Canada and in the United States.

[53] Ibid., p. 16.

[54] Ibid., p. 229.

Children were a focus throughout the reform period. For example, Methodist leaders were involved in long debates regarding the appropriateness of infant baptism and childhood conversion. Although Neil Semple and Phyllis Airhart differ on the topic of the influence of revivalism on late-Victorian English-speaking Protestantism, they agree that the idea of the need to nurture child spirituality transcended doctrinal details such as age of conversion. Semple states that by the 1880’s, Methodists had “established a direct involvement in protecting the child by inculcating sound moral principles.”

Presbyterians believed both that “progressive education sought to train the child in closer relation to the community,” and that “the best nursery for social harmony was the home, but parents were not assuming their responsibilities for exercising authority and teaching the moral and spiritual values necessary to social stability and harmony.”

While not ignoring the external intellectual, social and economic influences that contributed to the rise of the social gospel (the same influences that contributed to the broader changes in education, social services and attitudes towards childhood and children), Richard Allen outlines the elements internal to churches, primarily, the impacts of the

---


revivals and awakenings on Canadian Protestantism:

By the 1890's...diverse religious and intellectual ingredients were being stirred together in various proportions: the revivalist emphasis on the need and possibility of radical change in life; an evangelical theology in the immanence of God in the processes of change; a belief that the application of Christian energy could arouse social repentance and the will to new life; the establishment or revitalizing of a host of new religious organizations creating a cradle-to-grave Protestantism at the very time that the churches were adopting a broader culture building role, developing a sense of national mission and anticipating the coming triumph of evangelicalism; the development of more hopeful views of childhood opening possibilities of secular reform; a belief that evolution itself not only affirmed the social graces but called men to new patterns of co-operative living; the renewal by higher criticism of the prophetic tradition that God required not burnt offerings but justice for his people; and the beginnings of a new appreciation of the positive uses of the state. 58

For our purposes, the six most important influences of those listed above are: the diminution of belief in predestination, the possibility of individual salvation at any point, an engagement with the idea that secular success did not necessarily depend on the circumstances of one's birth, the creation of national Protestant organizations which created the foundation for the national social service organizations that developed by 1914, the new doctrine that children were born in "original goodness" rather than original sin and the idea that the achievement of the kingdom of God on earth might require state intervention in the current, imperfect world. 59

58 Allen, p. 32.

59 Ibid., p. 22.
At the beginning of the shift from regeneration to the more reciprocal and collective social gospel, there was a distinction between Protestant Christianity and social reform.\textsuperscript{60} Nevertheless, in time, the movement to make religion more relevant to the changes in the broader society came to be identified with the belief that, not only would Christianity become stronger by engaging in the new scientific, economic and social order, it would die if it did not.

The new Christian direction found its articulation on the secular side in programs like kindergarten and later in the settlement house. Kindergarten, established for the first time in Canada in 1883, was promoted by James Hughes, a Toronto school superintendent and regenerator. Kindergarten advocates saw the program as a vehicle for individual salvation which, by extension, would support a collective moral reform. The settlement movement was, in its earliest inception, the presence of religion in urban reform.

The roots of the settlement house and the kindergarten are entwined. Both are concrete manifestations of the Victorian preoccupation with the relationship between the individual and society. Both also exhibit the hope and optimism in salvation combined with the concern and unease over change.

These elements clearly stand out in those international 19th century English-speaking social reform movements which had their beginning in the struggle to make religion relevant to society in the midst of the changes

\textsuperscript{60}Cook, \textit{Regenerators}, p. 176.
generated by science, industrialization and urbanization. Both kindergarten and the settlement movement were established in North America and became part of the secularization of social thought and social welfare that took place over the last two decades of the 19th century and into the early years of the 20th.

In Canada, by the 1920's, both religion and programs, emerged changed, although not in ways that the early regenerators had intended. Cook maintains that many liberal Christians confused theological and social challenges. In addition, he insists that the social side, with its greater prospect of secularization prevailed in the end over the spiritual. Cook states, “That union of the sacred and the secular, so ardently wished for by Christian social reformers wishing to the social order, unexpectedly acted as the accommodating midwife to the birth of a secular view of society.”

As revamped theology merged with the social sciences and became more like them, the reforms like kindergarten and settlement houses lost their regenerational or religious underpinnings. By the end of the second decade of the 20th century, Kindergarten had become a building block for curriculum rather than moral reform and the settlement house, although retaining “the Victorian cult of character”, had become an initiator of social science methods and had acquired “a heightened awareness on group work with young people and the habit clinics and child guidance concept of the mental hygiene movement.”

61Ibid., p. 231.


63Ibid., p. 9.
III

The reforms to education for young children that appeared in English-speaking Ontario in the last half of the nineteenth century were rooted in a series of interrelated trends: new ideas in paedagogy, the demands of an expanding school system, changes in the economy accompanied by changes in society, families and childhood and new approaches to Protestant Christianity. These combined to generate the idea of special treatment for the school system’s smallest pupils. In 1883, James L. Hughes, Superintendent of Schools for the Toronto Board of Education convinced the school trustees to establish public kindergartens. Toronto was a leader, the second public school board in North America to do so.

The last 50 years of the 19th century were a time when education in Ontario went from being a decidedly haphazard and very local affair to becoming a system. When Egerton Ryerson assumed the superintendency of schools in 1844, "The anarchy had become proverbial: virtually no two schools were alike; facilities were haphazard at best; the teachers untrained, pupils of all ages (and both sexes) were jumbled together and, worse still, each attended according to necessity or whim."64

Ryerson’s goal was a uniform elementary school curriculum, common to all children in Ontario. The strategies for achieving this goal included organizing the curriculum into subject areas with attendant texts and materials, the provision of standard textbooks and the use of such texts to grade and classify children. Curriculum reform was supported by new policies and regulations in the areas of teacher training and certification.

Throughout the 1850's and 1860's, Ryerson and his school promoters laid the foundation for his vision of a system of common schools. They started by building a cohort of trained teachers. The Education Act of 1850 stipulated that local school trustees hire teachers who were at least certificated through a County Board of Local Instruction. In 1852, the Normal School opened in Toronto and by the 1860's, teacher candidates wrote provincial exams to obtain teaching qualifications.

However, Ryerson's chief vehicle for the school reforms was a series of textbooks known as the Irish Readers. The books presented sequential, integrated and, for the time, age appropriate material that, if followed, would bring pupils from the very basics of numeracy and literacy to, at the advanced levels (which most did not reach), natural philosophy, algebra and geometry. Low cost and decent quality made the Irish Readers popular with school boards and wide use helped compensate for lack of qualified teachers and high teacher/student mobility. The readers also made possible classification of both teachers and students and separated literacy in schools from religious reading materials.65

The late 1860's saw a change in officially sanctioned classroom methods. Teachers were no longer seen as transmitters of large chunks of information to children en masse. Children were seen increasingly as individuals, eager to learn from the teacher who engaged their minds.

The school curriculum, bolstered with new classroom equipment such as globes and blackboards, was to transcend the basics of literacy and numeracy and include subjects like art, music and natural science - subjects that would give children an appreciation of their place in a larger and finer world.

65Houston and Prentice, p. 237.
Aesthetics, as typified in rituals like Arbour Day, became an important part of school life. Physical education was promoted as a means to strong physical and mental health. Object lessons were considered to be more effective than the repetition of letters, numbers and facts. Children were to be allowed to learn via investigation and discovery.

Throughout the 1870's, local school inspectors reported on their attempts to induce the teachers under their supervision to change their methods of instruction. Success and failure were duly noted. James McGrath, Esq. of Ontario County wrote in 1875, "It pleases me to be able to state that the work of improvement is gradually progressing." He goes on to exclaim, "Parrotage, blind and feeble is fast passing into the shades of oblivion and extinction. The intellectual system is winning its widening way to universal sovereignty. The intelligence of the pupils is made to pass through the judgement into the memory: hence their acquisitions are substantial and enduring. The fine gold may grow dim, but it is ever easily burnished."66

Concern about the presence of children under 7 years old in Toronto public schools surfaced for the first time in a major way at the same time that ideas about what to do with all children in school began to change. This concern started to appear consistently at a time when the public school system was exploding. Between 1850 and 1870, the development of the education system was accompanied by a growth in enrollment far outstripped that of the growth in the population. Despite a massive building and school improvement campaign, classrooms were horribly overcrowded. The official hand-wringing over low attendance rates ignored the fact that if everyone who was enrolled actually turned up at the same time, the system would not have withstood the onslaught.

66ARUC 1875, Appendix, p. 37.
Most of the worrying about children who, by the late 1860's, were considered too young to attend school was directed at urban dwellers, although as in previous decades, the larger number of very young children remained in the counties. It may have been a matter of scale. Instead of spending their day in a rural schoolhouse of one hundred children, younger pupils in the cities could find themselves in a classroom of eighty that was part of a school of five hundred.

The questions around the appropriate environment for small children arose at the same time as concerns about the suitability and effectiveness of rote learning. The nervousness about very small children in school was linked to the same concerns about the classroom experience of the whole group of under ten year-olds that generated the paedagogical reform implemented from the late 1860's onwards. Increasingly, this concern combined the sense that the presence of the youngest pupils may have been contributing to stress in the school system with more liberal ideas about child rearing and profound unease about changes in society and their effect on children to produce the notion that under seven year-olds could benefit from a special program tailored to meet their needs.

In 1869, seriously crowded schools forced the Toronto Board of Education to propose reducing class time for children in the Junior Division to a half-day. Despite a general concern about overcrowding, overwork and the resulting lack of exercise and fresh air, parent outrage prevented the adoption of this strategy and full-day schooling prevailed.68

67 Ibid., Statistical Reports. The number of under 5-year-olds in county schools is greater both in terms of real numbers and in proportion to the total student population throughout the 1870's, '80's and '90's.

In 1878, James Hughes, the Chief Inspector for the Toronto Board, reported that, "the teaching done in our Primary classes was not of a satisfactory nature . . . The classes are too large to be taught successfully, and the teachers, although Normal trained, have not uniformity or, in some instances, a clearly defined method at all."69 By 1881, Hughes felt it necessary to report to the school board on the measures taken in Toronto schools to prevent overwork in the lower grades as well as the success that the board had achieved in reducing the length of the school day by ending classes at half-past three.70

Since school enrolment was mandatory for children aged seven and up, the system had obligations vis à vis their education that didn't give it a lot of leeway in adjusting the school day either to relieve overcrowding or to deal with mental or physical fatigue. Attempted program changes, like instituting kindergarten teaching methods in the rest of the system (prior to the implementation of separate kindergarten classes,71) came to be seen as minor repairs to a serious flaw in the system.

The obvious temptation was to send the younger children home until they were seven. This proposal, if implemented, would have provided only a small measure of relief for schools that were bulging at the seams. In addition, it placed the school administrators squarely on the horns of a dilemma. Schools may not have been entirely suitable for small children, but they were an improvement on the city streets and it was assumed that children who were not in school would be in the streets. Even though he had no firm indication that preschoolers spent large amounts of time


71Ibid., Inspector's Report, 1878, p. 15.
unsupervised, John George Hodgins anticipated that teachers would have to work even harder to undo the less formal education that children would acquire if they were allowed to run loose.\textsuperscript{72} Hughes supported (in the obverse) the socialization that could take place in the kindergarten, when he stated, "It is possible for a child to obtain society on the street, but the risk is too great."\textsuperscript{73}

Hughes' determination regarding kindergarten was also part of his rock-solid belief that public education must attract all classes of children from the street arab to the upper class scholar. Hughes promoted this direction at a time when, "...there was some doubt as to how beneficial it would be to force even more children, by nature unruly, into already overcrowded schools."\textsuperscript{74}

Kindergarten was a discrete initiative - special program for the smallest scholars and a strategy to quell concerns about overcrowding and academic pressure. However, it also had a simbiotic relationship with broader curriculum reform. Curriculum reform gained momentum concurrent with the initiatives such as the introduction of graded reading programs and increased teacher qualifications. Curriculum became, in the eyes of the reformers, more child centred as the provision of education became more systematized. The systematization provided a vehicle for promoting curriculum reform, including kindergarten, at the same time as kindergarten was presented as a program that would assist reform.

\textsuperscript{72}Houston and Prentice, \textit{Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth Century Ontario}, p. 214.

\textsuperscript{73}TBE, Inspectors Report, 1882, p. 26.

The kindergarten, with its blocks, coloured balls, songs, stories and games, was in complete accord with the advice that parents received in the last decades of the 19th century. As we have seen, play was encouraged as beneficial to physical and intellectual growth. Kindergarten, tamed play and brought it indoors where it could take place under adult supervision that was benevolent but would leave nothing to chance.

Just as the cities were the sites of the economic, technological and scientific progress that so intrigued the Victorians, they were also the places that launched the initiatives to combat the problems associated with urbanization and industrialization. Toronto's kindergartens were an urban solution, not only to what was increasingly seen as a bad fit between the youngest children and the school system but also to the broader problems that inhabited the darker side of change. Part of the effort of both creating and harnessing social change was an attempt to guide the momentum as much of daily life (including the education of the young) moved from the private to the less predictable public sphere.

The reform movements that rose out of the nineteenth-century cities displayed this ambivalence. Kindergarten was only one of a number of initiatives that combined the reformers' desire to create new answers to education, health care and child welfare with a search for predictability and order. It was prominent in that it promoted an environment that integrated moral, intellectual and social training and was, very soon after its inception, available to almost all under-7 year-olds in the city. The "atmosphere of loving thoughtfulness" that was supposed to reign in the classroom would encourage generosity in the kindergarten child. Supporters saw the program as a sort of quality-control for early childhood that maximized the possibility

---

that children in the new society would grow up into stable, co-operative and dependable adults who would, in turn, be a force for good throughout the community. Kindergarten was an investment in social maintenance and control.

The kindergarten philosophy betrayed a kind of nervousness. There was a feeling that the new industrialism, while it brought with it a sense of prosperity and a hope for the benefits that a modern future might reap, had destroyed the social unity of previous ages. There was an additional fear that competition run rampant was dangerous to all. Kindergarten was remedial - "The Kindergarten games teach unity, and also self-denial, for each must do his part before the whole can be represented. . ."\(^7\)

Many social reformers, James Hughes included, brought their foundation of evangelical Christianity and its trust in redemption into the secular sphere. While the optimistic side of their social temperament gave them hope in the perfectability of humankind, the reformers' unease urged them to propose measures that they believed would protect children from the less positive aspects of the new order.

Hughes, who was a regenerator and therefore believed that individual salvation was essential for stability in society, sought to extend his views via the kindergarten classroom. The mix of the sacred and the secular was a recognition by many social reformers of the necessity of an interdependence between religion and progressive elements in society. Without this, they argued, religion would become increasingly less relevant and society would be morally bankrupt. What better way to set the course for future generations than to start with the youngest participants in a school system that, by this time, touched everyone for at least a time? The school system could provide

\(^7\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 8.}\)
a firm foundation for the future by exerting a civilizing influence on its participants, and if kindergarten meant an earlier start to this process, so much the better. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, kindergarten retained its regenerational flavour as typified in such statements as, “There is in each child an element of the divine which renders it possible for it to attain a marvellous development in even a single generation.”77 The Protestant reformers’ transition to social gospel while gradual, happened later and is more exemplified by initiatives such as the settlement movement.

These late 19th century preoccupations: a new outlook on childhood and an optimism about the future combined with a fear of rapid change, affected what happened in classrooms and, therefore, the experience of children. Kindergartens appealed to the late Victorian. While the program supported the promoted new gentleness in adult attitudes towards children, it was founded on order and self-sufficiency, with an emphasis on work, a job well done and the necessity of a spiritual element in life.

Kindergarten first took root in North American public schools in 1873 in St. Louis, Missouri. Based on the teachings of Freidrich Froebel, kindergarten had come to North America via German liberals who fled to the United States post the failure of the 1848 revolution. Froebel preached unity of the physical, the intellectual and the spiritual and the program was based on a holistic approach to all aspects of the young child’s development. These philosophical elements plus his counsel to avoid harsh discipline and encourage learning through play came to be consistent with both the ideals of the regenerators and the new approaches to child rearing seen in late 19th

century English Canada.

Kindergarten was promoted, not only as an education reform and an entity good in and of itself, but as a response to the increasing sense of depersonalization and moral ambiguity felt by people in the midst of the changes in a society passing from the end of a pre-industrial to the beginning of an industrial era. In her Kindergarten Guide of 1898, Lois Bates wrote, "It is this want of harmonious development of the threefold nature, moral, mental, physical, that causes the discontent and unhappiness of our race."\(^{78}\)

The kindergarten was based on the precept that, "in the early years of life, the word and the object must never be separated, the child must see that which it names and learns about."\(^{79}\) The mainstay of the program was adult-directed play with objects known as the gifts and the occupations - toys and materials that children observed and/or manipulated to learn such concepts as colour, shape and size. The gifts were objects and material that, once played with, could be returned to their original condition. The occupations were just that, the "work" of kindergarten where the child created a specified series of permanent designs and objects.

From gifts such as small, bright balls, the children learned to distinguish different colours. Creating objects out of small blocks of different shapes helped them understand relative shape and size and that the whole is composed of many small parts. The occupations consisted of tasks like paper folding, sewing and beadwork. Songs and stories supported the concepts gained through the use of the concrete objects.

Unlike the classroom program for older children, the subject matter in the kindergarten curriculum was to be highly integrated. If the subject at

---


\(^{79}\)Bates, p. 9.
hand was the farm, the children, led by the teacher, might discuss the farmyard and the farm birds. They might describe (prompted to do so in full sentences and assisted by examples of the real thing) the difference between a duck's and a hen's foot and why the duck could swim and the hen could not. The game of the day would be "The Farmyard" or "The Ducks".

The gifts and occupations would also follow the farm theme. Depending on their ages and levels of accomplishment, the children might build a trough or a farmyard gate out of blocks. The stick-laying activity would involve constructing a pigeon house, a haystack or a dog kennel. Some small pupils might draw a rake. Those who sewed would embroider a duck, a hen or a barn. Others might fold a trough or a duck out of paper or model a duck pond out of sand (with a soup plate to hold the water). The teacher, with a running commentary, was to demonstrate the correct procedure for each task. Children sat at special individual desks, which often had squares ruled on the top to assist with the correct organization of the task at hand.

In his initial report to the Toronto Board of Education, Hughes promoted the kindergarten as an integrated environment, providing the child with moral, physical (marching to music, games), mental ("to expand the mind rather than make it a storehouse of facts"), industrial (via the plethora of block-building, stick-laying and paper-folding activities) and social training. The latter was "closely allied with moral training" and considered necessary to the kindergarten content. Despite the popular messages regarding the importance of family and mother, Hughes stated that, "the home, in most cases, cannot afford the child the opportunity of associating with a sufficient number of children of his own age to permit the expansion of his social nature."\(^{80}\)

\(^{80}\)Ibid., pp. 19-26.
The Superintendent of Schools summarized the advantages of kindergarten with a single sentence, stressing the importance of dealing with all areas of child development as early as possible. He told the Trustees, "Recognizing the fact that children grow more rapidly morally, mentally and physically during the first four years of their lives than they do ever afterwards, Froebel tried to found a system which, while it sustained the interested attention of children, would continue in a systematic manner, but without formalism, the same methods of learning and development that they were accustomed to at home."\(^{81}\)

Whether or not the Trustees of the Toronto Board were as convinced of the power of kindergarten as their Chief Inspector, they voted to establish, with the assistance of the Minister of Education, one kindergarten, in September, 1883, in Louisa St. School. Hester How was Principal. She had just been involved in establishing the board's school for vagrant children and would, very soon, with Lady Moss, start Victoria Crèche, the city's first child care centre. The first "kindergartener" as the teachers were then known, was Miss Ada Marean, who had been trained in Froebel's methods by a Mrs. Kraus-Boelte of New York and had operated a private kindergarten in Toronto since 1878. Miss Marean would later become Mrs. James Hughes.

Once established, kindergartens were highly successful. An average of eighty children attended the Louisa St. School program throughout the year. Miss Marean was assisted by seven "young ladies" who worked in the kindergarten free-of-charge in exchange for training and, as it turned out, future employment in kindergarten classrooms as Toronto's system expanded.

\(^{81}\)Ibid., pp. 26, 27.
Expansion was swift, particularly early on. By 1900, the system boasted kindergartens in 46 out of its 50 schools. That year, the kindergarten enrolment was 4,488 or 15% of the total school enrolment.82 The greatest increase took place between 1888 and 1892 when the number of programs jumped from 10 to 35 - an over three-fold increase.83

One reason for the early popularity may have been that kindergartens were initially aimed, not at the poor, but at working-class or middle-class families. The Louisa St. program, despite its reported success, disappeared in the second year and didn't reappear until 1890. A kindergarten started in 1895 in College St. School for, "the little ones whose mothers are occupied away from home in earning money, and who necessarily have to neglect their children",84 closed a few years later. The schools that received the first permanent kindergartens were in socially mixed neighbourhoods. What were then inner city schools did not start to have kindergartens until 1890.85 At the other end of the economic scale, Rosedale's first kindergarten appeared in 1894.86

The material fee that was charged was likely a barrier for poor families. Starting in 1886, Hughes tried repeatedly to have the fee waived so that the,
"children who are most likely to have need of the kindergarten training", could attend and was apparently successful in 1892, when the board began to provide free textbooks and school supplies for all elementary school children.

It is also possible that Hughes and his colleagues wanted to ensure the success of the programs early on by establishing them in areas where parents would be more likely to choose or to be persuaded, first, to send their children to school early on and second, to choose kindergarten over the more academic, but full-day First Book classes. The earlier, flexible practices regarding the age at which children started school persisted at this point and, as we will see in later chapters, continued until just after 1900. In her unpublished work, "Kindergartens in Toronto, 1883-1900", Vandra Lea Masemann states that, in 1891, skilled workers were more likely than those further down the economic scale to put their younger children in the kindergarten rather than the First Book classes at Victoria School.

The establishment of kindergarten encouraged Toronto parents to send their under-5-year-olds to school. In urban areas, this was an entirely new phenomenon. In 1890, The Toronto Board's School Management Committee felt it necessary to recommend that no child under the age of 4 be admitted to kindergarten. Four-year-olds were the largest single group in the 1891 kindergarten class at Victoria School. The number of 5 year-olds in school

87TBHC, Inspector's Report, 1886, p. 15.


89Masemann, School Management Committee, Oct. 30, 1890, p. 18.

90Masemann, p. 17. The class included 3 children aged 3.5, 19 aged 4, 17 aged 5, 6 aged 6, 5 aged 7 and 1 aged 9.
appeared to increase as well. Although some of the 5's were children who would have entered the First Book class if kindergarten had not been available, the 1871 data indicate that these children would have been the minority and, therefore, most of the 5 year-olds who came to kindergarten would have been new recruits.

The enrolment patterns that exist today began with the initiation of kindergarten. When, in 1887, the province began to provide grants to school boards to establish kindergarten, the programs were intended for children ages 3-7. However, by the 1890's, kindergartens appear in the Department of Education annual reports as programs for children under 6. The custom of entering "real" school at age 6 had begun in the boards where kindergarten was available.

Although there is some discrepancy in the figures for Toronto in the Provincial annual reports and the city's own enrolment statistics, both sets confirm that, during the 1880's and 1890's, the enrolment in First Book decreased and that in kindergarten increased, both substantially. The increase in kindergarten enrolment was likely due to a combination of increased numbers of 4 and 5 year-olds attending school for the first time and children (probably age 5) who would have gone into First Book if kindergarten had not been provided either because their parents chose the less academic program or because, increasingly, schools felt that kindergarten was where they should be.

---

91 ARUC 1888, pg. xxxii.

92 ARUC 1897, p. xvii.

93 ARUC., 1888-1893.

TBE Inspector's Reports, 1891 on.

43
The official rationale for kindergarten changed. It was no longer promoted as a program designed to keep small children off the streets during the day. In 1893, consistent with his views regarding universal, public education, Hughes told the school board that kindergarten "should be a part of the school system, its foundation, its initial stage in which all children should remain for a period..."94 With 36 kindergartens across the city, it was time to offer it some protection by bringing it into the mainstream (in fact, quite likely what he had intended to do all along). Kindergarten was no longer an add-on and, for the first time, children under age 6 had a program that was officially a part of the school system. It was for all children, including the "slow", the "abnormally bright", the "child of the rich" and the "little Arab" because:

No other school process yet discovered accomplishes these purposes so naturally and so thoroughly as the Kindergarten. No other system so effectively bridges over the chasm between the home and the school by a union of the conscious concentration of the school with the freedom of the home. No other system lays so broad and true a basis for independent or assisted growth. No other system promotes the physical health of children so fully... No other system enlarges the wonder power of childhood... No other system preserves the spontaneity of childhood and defines individuality so completely; no other system cultivates the social instincts so thoroughly and widens individuality into co-operation so effectively as the Kindergarten.95

In addition, Hughes, in the spirit of social reform, weighed the benefits to the individual child at least equally with the benefits to society when he concluded his report with the statement that, "... perhaps the best lessons the

94Ibid.

95TBHC Inspector's Report, 1893, p. 27.
schools have learned are those connected with the discipline and management of children - that love is the strongest stimulus and the greatest controlling force in the world; that coercive and autocratic discipline necessarily dwarfs character; that obedience should not involve subserviency; and that all discipline is evil that checks spontaneity and prevents the freest development of the spirit of individual liberty as the foundation of personal responsibility and responsive co-operation.”

Toronto’s "experiment" soon spread across the province. By 1891, when provincial figures were first reported, 66 kindergarten programs enrolling 6,375 pupils had opened in Ontario schools. Fewer than 50% of the programs and less than one-third of the children were in Toronto, so it appears that the idea caught on in other areas in fairly short order. By the mid-1890's, the kindergarten teacher education, which started with Ada Marean training the "ladies", had become a separate entity, with its own set of qualifying exams, in the Normal Schools of Toronto and Ottawa.

By 1900, 10 cities, 12 towns and three villages had established 119 kindergartens with an enrolment of 11,262. A provincial average attendance rate of 41% indicates that parents still sent their younger children to school less often, likely due to the same kind of reasons as in past decades. The vast majority of under-5-year-olds in school (reported separately from the kindergartens) remained in the counties. These areas had no kindergartens. The rural schools were less likely to have the space necessary to provide the program and, even though rural parents had consistently been more likely to

---

96Ibid., p. 30.

97ARUC 1892.

98ARUC, 1901, Statistical Report.
send their younger children to school, city children remained the objects of concern.

Did kindergarten achieve its early goals of imitating an improved school program for young children, providing some relief to the stresses in a growing system and raising a better class of child who would grow up to become a force for good in a society encountering rapid change? In 1900, the results would have been mixed.

Kindergarten was likely, at the very least, to be more fun than the grade classes. While kindergarten classes were large by today's standards (usually over sixty and often over seventy), there were enough staff for one directress and at least two assistants per classroom. This compared favourably to the grades where the average pupil-teacher ratio was 70:1. And, if it is difficult to believe that a 4 or 5 year-old actually folded a paper windmill or embroidered a hen, there were music, games and conversation in the kindergarten, even if the teacher usually chose the topic.

Parents were much more likely than they had been in the past to enrol their younger children in school, and this increase in participation would mean broader impacts. However, the average rate of attendance for the under-6's was usually around 50% - less than the rest of the system which averaged about 70%. The attendance patterns continued to follow those of earlier times - more children came to school in the summer - and, interestingly, as enrolment increased, attendance declined. This not only

99TBHC Inspector's Reports.

100ARUC. Statistical Reports.
TBHC. Chief Inspector's Reports.

101TBHC Inspector's Reports.
shows that parents were still fairly casual about sending their younger children to school but that they were astute regarding physical barriers and health risks such as walks in cold weather and overcrowding and governed their children's school attendance accordingly.

The less than consistent attendance must have had an effect on program as well as the outcomes for the 4 and 5 year-olds. The activities in the Froebelian kindergarten were highly integrated and sequential. This type of program would not have been helped by the flexible approach to school attendance that families seem to have adopted. The sensible teacher would have had no option but to adjust her kindergarten accordingly, possibly compromising the full goals of the program.

The establishment of kindergarten provided a pressure valve for the school system in two ways: it removed the youngest children from the more crowded grade classrooms and made life easier for the very hard-working primary teachers. One primary teacher had stated that "she would be willing to teach for less salary if all her pupils had been previously trained in a kindergarten." 102

Finally, while we will never know whether kindergarten created a kinder, gentler child who would grow into adulthood able to engage in but not be corrupted by the changing society, we do know that it changed the nature of the school population and, for many small children, the experiences of early childhood.

---

102 Ibid., 1884, pp. 16-17.
Like kindergarten, in Canada and U.S., settlement houses were a visible, public example of the convergence of religious, social and education reform. Unlike kindergarten, the education reform element in the settlement houses, while in no way incidental, did not lead but flowed from the religious and social reform. Starting later than their counterparts in England and the United States, Canadian settlement houses first took root in Toronto, providing another example of the primacy of the city in Canadian social reform.

The settlement movement started in England in the 1880's and quickly spread to the United States. Although discourse regarding individuals, religion and society was current in Canada, settlement houses, as institutions, did not cross the border until 1902, and, in their early days, were caught up in the debates of the role and importance of Christianity in social reform. Phyllis Airhart states, "... twentieth century Protestants' divided their energies along the lines of support for the salvation of souls" or 'the social order.'" In all three countries, settlement houses were proposed as a solution to the perceived fragmentation of society. They were promoted as a means of encouraging class cohesion by providing opportunities for the "well-born" to acquire experience working with the poor. The settlement movement was seen by reformers as a vehicle for linking philosophy and religion to the reality of everyday life. It also developed ties to the Ethical Culture movement, "an autonomous, quasi-religious force." In time, settlement practice became the foundation for modern social work and social research methods.

---

103 Airhart, Serving the Present Age, p. 9.

104 Carson, Settlement Folk, p. 18.
Mina Carson writes, "the settlement appeal... represented one culmination of that strain in British culture that rejected Manchester economics and Benthamite utilitarianism in favour of an organic polity in which each individual conceived his or her life and work in relation to the whole". Carson goes on to state that the ideal of social organicism in that era had two faces: one that promoted "human brotherhood and social equality" and another that "offered a kind of license to philanthropists and politicians to exercise far reaching social control over those large and threatening segments of society outside the pale of the moral law and social codes that nominally governed the behaviour of the middle and upper classes." In the North American context of rapidly expanding industrialization and urban growth, the "large and threatening segments of society" meant the industrial working class and, in time, non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants.

First instituted in the sprawling, industrial slums of east London, the settlement house was a manifestation of the example of Arnold Toynbee and the teachings of idealist philosopher, Thomas Hill Green. Toynbee was an Oxford student who burned with a passion to serve the poor as a means of both unifying society and promoting individual salvation. Green combined religion, metaphysics and a commitment to ideas of citizenship. Toynbee, who died young (aged thirty-one) in 1883, had developed a class consciousness on visits to workingmen's pubs in East London.

Strongly influenced by Green who "made a credo of public service, resting on the moral imperative to pursue the social good over individual gratification" Toynbee returned frequently to Oxford to recruit young men who would spread the new idea of social service through the experience of

---

105 Ibid., p. 8.

106 Carson, p. 6.
living in poor communities and promote a new ideal of class harmony. Sara Burke describes as an additional goal: "the transference of university culture, in the form of art, literature and science to the working classes of London’s east end." As well, Toynbee believed that empirical research could be brought to bear in resolving the problems brought on by the dark side of industrialism.

The actualization of Toynbee’s desire to bridge, through a common understanding of citizenship, the economic, social and cultural gaps between English poor workers and the middle class came after his death. The Reverend Samuel Agustus Barnett, Curate of St. Jude’s Parish in Whitechaple (a particularly blighted part of East London), opened Toynbee Hall, the first settlement house, in 1894. Barnett, originally a protégé of Octavia Hill and her scientific method of charitable relief, broke entirely with the idea of philanthropy when he saw its limitations in improving the lives of his very poor parishioners. As Carson states, “By the 1880’s, the Barnetts were publicly advocating state responsibility not only for poor relief, but also old age pensions, improved housing and public libraries and galleries.” They called their approach to public welfare “practicable socialism.”

The philosophical and religious trends taking hold among intellectuals merged with the new economics, science (including psychology, which produced theories of personality and personal interaction) and Victorian ideas of increased democracy and citizenship. These generated new perspectives on the relationship between individuals and society - perspectives which provided the underpinning for much of the late 19th and

107Sarah Z. Burke, Seeking the Highest Good. Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888 - 1937, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 64.

108Carson, p. 5.

50
early 20th century social reforms. Carson describes the outlook behind the reforms as, "the Victorian understanding of the duty of individuals to promote the well-being of their fellowmen and the religion of character as the measure of personal 'wealth. . .'"\(^{109}\) The subjects of reform extended, in large measure, to those individuals and groups who were perceived as residing outside the social pale. Initially, this included the industrial working class, in general, but in Canada and the United States, soon shifted to a focus on immigrants.

Although the first Canadian settlement houses, beginning after 1900, were based in Christian evangelicism, from the outset, debate existed as to the appropriateness and utility of this foundation. The tensions were typified in the Methodist debate over whether, " 'souls' necessarily superseded 'the social order' as the primary (although not exclusive) concern."\(^{110}\) This was the beginning of the transition on the part of the leading edge of Protestant social reform from a regeneration context to one of social gospel and revolved in the settlement movement around the extent to which houses operated as missions or agencies for community service. It is important to note that, while the social gospel and settlement movement overlap, not all who adhered to the social gospel supported the settlement ideals and activities and not all settlement promoters were social gospellers - some were more traditional church adherents and others, especially after 1910, had moved into secular social welfare. Furthermore, there were individuals both in religious denominations and in the settlement movement who believed, for different reasons, that churches should stay away from on-the-ground delivery of social welfare programs.

\(^{109}\)Ibid., p. 9.

\(^{110}\)Airhart, *Serving the Present Age*, p. 77.
The establishment of the settlement house followed industrialization and took place first in England, then in the U.S and last, in Canada. In addition, settlement activists in all three countries shared instigating factors such as concern about the effects of the poor of the economic and social directions in the mainstream industrial economy. However, the influence of the other two cultures on the Canadian settlement movement was not sequential. The first settlement efforts (Evangelia House, 1902), which took place after the movement was well-established in both England and the U.S., sandwiched Canadian ideology and activities between her (at the time) main cultural influence, England, and her neighbour to the south, as both spiritual reform and community activism shaped the English Canadian, Protestant institutional response to changes in society.

Burke describes social gospellers in English-speaking Canada as believing that “individual salvation could co-exist with an enthusiasm for social redemption on a grand scale.”

Canadian social gospel, although it moved away from an emphasis on personal salvation, ran along a continuum from a more individual approach aligned to England and exemplified in figures such as William Lyon MacKenzie King to the collective vision of people like J. W. Woodsworth which looked more like the U.S. experience.

This continuum appears in relation to social gospellers’ relationship to labour. Mackenzie King, although he fell briefly under Jane Addams’ spell, was greatly influenced by Arnold Toynbee. In 1902, he wrote that, “the basic principle of the whole labour movement,” was that, “every man has a soul within him bursting with immortal life.”

\[111\] Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good*, p. 29.

Methodist church due to differences in direction regarding World War I but had, for the previous decade, searched within the institutional church for a more collective solution to the issues that he confronted daily as a pastor in downtown Winnipeg. His first step after leaving the ministry was to obtain work as a longshoreman on Vancouver's docks. Moreover, the different elements in the settlement movement reflected this continuum. For example, St. Christopher House was an evangelical instrument of the Presbyterian Church while Central Neighbourhood House was, from the outset, non-denominational.

The American settlement movement began after 1889, when Jane Addams, its founder, established Hull House in downtown Chicago. Addams and her companion and lifelong colleague, Ellen Gates Starr, visited Toynbee Hall on a European tour and believed that the settlement house would provide a foundation for two areas of social change: supporting the new class of low-income, immigrant industrial workers in their communities as well as organizing for broader social change.

Linked to their English predecessors by the influence of idealists like Green, the American settlement house movement also promised social coherence via interaction between upper classes and workers as a goal. Carson writes, "The persistence of the social concerns of philosophical idealism in the work of the prominent American pragmatists found a real-world expression in the ideological evolution of the settlement movement." One of the best-known of the pragmatists was John Dewey, an early and constant supporter of Hull House and the settlement movement in general.

---

113 Cooke, p. 221.

114 Carson, Settlement Folk, p. 89.
The emphasis in the early days of US settlement was, as in East London, person-to-person contact. Individuals were seen as being connected to groups - first the family, then the neighbourhood and then the state. Although religious principles were the main instigating factor for Addams and her initial supporters, one difference between the two countries was that the neighbourhood in America took the place of the parish in England. Although the founders of the American settlement movement saw their work as a manifestation of Christian practice, the principle of neighbourhood was the beginning of a secular direction that made the U.S. experience different from that of England.

The people living in the urban, American settlement neighbourhoods - the new immigrant workers and their families - were the primary reason for the differences in the English and U.S. institutions. While English settlement house residents worked with a native-born, English-speaking, working class clientèle - people with whom they would not have met otherwise due to the English class structure - their American counterparts often lived in neighbourhoods where they were separated from the inhabitants for reasons having to do with race, language and ethnicity as well as social class.

In both countries, settlements offered classes in how government and the state operated as well as basic courses in national history. Settlements in both places worked with adolescents and adults who, for whatever reason, had not learned to read or write in school. In addition, they introduced experience in democracy through clubs, councils and committees run by the users. However, the immigrant reception neighbourhoods in cities like Chicago and New York, with their potent mix of religious and ethnic differences led to different on-the-ground approaches than those employed in England. For example, while American settlement houses taught English and civics, the
residents tended to steer clear of any direct religious programs.

In addition, Carson states that the settlement movement contributed to the ongoing dialogue on immigration through "their insistence on viewing the immigrant as the victim as much as the cause of America's social and economic troubles." While founded, in part, on a perceived need to support immigrants through their transition towards integration into the American mainstream, the settlement movement, as we have seen, reflected broader concern in society about the effects of the driving economic and social forces in the mainstream. It was this perception of a troubled society that led to the duality in the approach of the American settlement activists. The idea of integration was the hinge that linked what were often two contradictory pieces of settlement practice - respect (although, at times, romanticized) for the societies that newcomers had left and concern about the society they had come to. At the same time, as Carson points out, "The settlement workers were among the first to appreciate the Old World cultural survivals in the immigrant colonies," and at times, saw their neighbours as representatives of a purer, simpler pre-industrial era. To resolve this dissonance, they "gradually refined their programs in ways that reflected both their received values and their own ambivalence toward the goals of 'Americanization'".

For example, Chicago's Hull House, based on a desire to support cultural pluralism and pride in heritage, a concern that immigrant generations were drifting apart and a somewhat Ruskinesque ideal of the integrity of old country customs, opened the Hull House Labour Museum. The museum, through classes, demonstrations and projects like a book bindery served to

115 Ibid., p. 102.

116 Ibid., pg. 103
highlight the art and crafts brought to America by newcomers and, over time, evolved into an articulation of a new definition of settlement.

By the turn of the century, supported by the educational theories of John Dewey and the pragmatism of William James, Addams began to describe settlement as a process rather than simply a social service - "an attempt to express the meaning of life in terms of life itself, in forms of activity."\(^\text{117}\)

Consistent with Dewey and as an example of life activities, traditional crafts such as textile production were displayed in the Labour Museum in historical sequence ending with the industrial processes of the time. This, "embodied a mode of education that recognized the connectedness of past and present, economy and society."\(^\text{118}\)

Partly due to the circumstances of clientele, the more recent experience of industrialism, new world philosophical influences and the ideals and personality of founders such as Addams, the American settlement movement worked, with varying success, to become involved in families, communities and broader society, including the economy, at a time when its British counterpart remained rooted in religious social service.

The labour movement provided another venue whereby the American settlement movement could avoid, "being merely the drudging machine of charity."\(^\text{119}\)

Although from early days, settlement houses in New York,


\(^\text{118}\)Carson, p. 107.

\(^\text{119}\)Robert Woods to Jane Addams, 26 June 1893; Robert Woods to Jane Addams, 5 May 1893; Charles C. Bonney to Jane Addams, 14 January 1893; James Reynolds to Jane Addams, 5 February 1893; Everett Wheeler to Jane Addams, 29 May 1893; Correspondence, Jane Addams; Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Cited in Carson, p. 122.
Boston and Chicago supported union organizing drives and provided resources such as space to meet, clothing and food during strikes there was a split in the early days between those in the settlement movement who believed that class struggle was the major impetus for improving the lot of workers and those who believed that class mediation would lead to progress. A broad alliance with labour at this point was, for this reason, controversial.

Hull House developed an early contact with the American Federation of Labour in 1890-91. This was the beginning of a relationship with labour that included providing activists with temporary living space, sponsoring the Bookbinders' Union and organizing a women's shirtmakers' union and a cloakmakers' union. The settlement house hosted strike committees for a number of unions. As they did with immigrant issues, the residents built middle class support for labour. Similar activities took place in settlement houses in all of the major U.S. cities.120

However, leading settlement organizations in all of the major cities went through a philosophical change after 1900. Their increasingly firm position that poverty was not due to individual deficiencies, but to the social, economic and physical environment led them to ally with labour at local, state and national levels and help build support for labour issues with middle-class intellectuals. In cities and neighbourhoods, settlement houses continued their material support for local labour causes. On larger stages, leaders in the settlement movement were among those initiating campaigns for stronger labour laws, especially where women and children were concerned. At times, the settlement movement joined with labour to organize around dual concerns, such as the founding, in 1908, of the Immigrants Protective League by Chicago's Women's Trade Union League.

120 Carson, p. 77.
and leaders from Hull House to address the specific needs of immigrant workers.¹²¹

Day to day, settlement houses provided a range of supports and activities for all members of the surrounding community. However, there was, from the beginning, a focus on children. This focus was framed within the concern, seen internationally in reforms aimed at children, about the effects of the evils of the modern urban environment.

Settlement workers were not alone in their belief that the pressures of a modern economy, whereby at least one parent earned money outside the home to support the family, had destroyed the coherence of the pre-industrial unit where children and parents lived and worked together. Armed with this belief plus the new philosophical approach to child rearing, more child-centred educational approaches, a real concern about physical safety in crowded tenement streets, a nervousness regarding the prospects for youth crime and a desire, on the part of the settlements to provide programs that met practical neighbourhood needs, workers developed a cornucopia of children's activities - many of which eventually were adopted by public schools.

Outside the school day, children could participate in clubs which provided an age-appropriate opportunity to socialize under adult supervision as well as lessons in the democratic process and justice, since the clubs were usually, at least nominally, self-governing. Both girls and boys were encouraged to take part in the various councils that planned activities and set rules. Settlement houses fielded sports teams. Day camps and supervised playgrounds provided activities during the summer holidays. Excursions and

“sleep away” camps took children and often their mothers out of steamy city to the countryside. These trips were not simply a respite, but afforded poor families the same opportunity as the middle class - the chance to remove children, even if briefly, from the risk of summertime diseases such as polio that the medical profession felt was more likely to exist in cities. More structured classes included opportunities to learn new arts and crafts, how to play a musical instrument and, for girls, how to cook, clean and sew. Boys had access to manual training workshops.

For the youngest children child care and, especially, kindergarten, were among the earliest and most frequently provided programs, again, in advance of public schools. In fact, many settlement houses in the U.S. had started as kindergartens and a number of workers were trained kindergarten teachers. Settlement workers shared with the kindergarten promoters a belief in the integration of moral, mental and physical aspects of life and the approach of learning through guided play. In addition to a philosophical convergence, kindergartens were practical solutions to a number of family needs. They attracted mothers and older siblings to the settlements when they accompanied preschoolers. The kindergarten history in settlements would prove to be of some importance in Toronto at a later date.

The daily focus on children was mirrored in the broader activities of the settlement movement. By the mid-1890’s workers in all major U.S. cities fought at local, state and federal levels for effective child labour and child welfare legislation. Their concern about the child’s right to play safely led them to organize at the municipal level for the establishment of parks and playgrounds through organizations such as the Outdoor Recreation League.

As with programs such as kindergarten and adult education, the settlement houses provided the "greenfield" experience in developing play spaces for children in that they showed how playgrounds could be implemented, worked to have public authorities involved and, eventually, either worked with governments or handed the initiative off to the public sector.

Reformers in Toronto sought out aspects of the settlement movement in both England and the U.S. when, after 1900, they initiated settlement houses. Both countries with earlier settlement movements had common themes: class cohesion, relief of poverty and Protestant Christian action. Differences in the industrial working classes of England and America framed the differences in approach. The English houses, serving an indigenous, English-speaking, Christian population remained parish-oriented and affiliated with organized religion. For the American movement, "settlement" took on a more complex meaning. Not only did the residents "settle" in the community in which they worked, their focus became integrating non-English-speaking newcomers into American, urban neighbourhoods and advocating for mainstream acceptance of immigrants.

Although based on the same religious and philosophical directions as the earlier houses across the Atlantic, for the settlement houses in the U.S., the parish was not the primary organizational entity. Initially, Torontonians were inclined towards the English, parish-based model. However, by 1910, tensions regarding the role of religion in social services started to surface among Christian activists. At the same time, immigration was starting to change the face of the urban working class. The communities where the settlement houses could thrive looked more like those in the U.S. than in England and the urban, Canadian Social Gospellers started along the road to the more secular, neighbourhood-based approach.
Although the first self-described settlement house in Canada opened in Toronto 1902, sabbath and night schools providing parish-based education, initially for young boys, had existed in the city since 1870, when the Dorset Mission was established under the auspices of St. Andrew’s Church situated downtown at King and John Streets. When the mission expanded to become the St. Andrew’s Institute, it added meeting and classrooms, a gym and a swimming pool. The program grew to include girls and adults and added early training in democracy when the boys elected a committee of nine of their own to manage the night school. Although St. Andrew’s was Presbyterian and the program included religious education, the institute was non-denominational Protestant in nature.123

A few years later in 1883, in Toronto’s east end, a similar mission began. This effort was resolutely Methodist and, in its early days, made religious study and temperance the emphasis of the program. Hart Massey ensured permanence when he funded a new building designed by E. J. Lennox, the architect of the then new Toronto City Hall. The institution was named the Fred Victor Mission after Massey’s son, a volunteer, who had died at age twenty-two. Under Massey’s guidance, while Methodism remained the primary influence, the mission adopted aspects of social settlement work when it added neighbourhood services such as visiting nurses and practical education in industrial and domestic training to its program.

Concurrent with these efforts, students at the University of Toronto came under the influence of the same idealist philosophy that earlier guided students at Oxford and Cambridge. W. J. Ashley, the first professor in the

university's Department of Political Economy was imported from England in 1888. He had graduated from Balliol College when T. H. Greene was at his most influential and studied under Arnold Toynbee. One of the new economists who parted company with the doctrine of laissez-faire, Ashley believed that, "the new political economy was to be above all an applied science - a discipline that could prove its utility by addressing the problems of industrial society." He also promoted the use of empirical research to assist in the resolution of social problems.

The idealist influence at the university, along with its practical manifestation in the settlement movement, became a source of tension between Protestant, Christian evangelism and social action - between those who linked idealism with evangelical Christianity and those who were already part-way along the road to a more secular approach. This tension helped to transform the relationship between the religious and the secular and, within the Canadian settlement movement, was, in large measure, a result of the convergence of British (university-initiated and parish-based) and American (social science and focussed on working class immigrants) influences. While this tension also existed in the two parent settlement cultures, it had been largely resolved, at least in the minds of the settlement leadership, by the turn of the century. In the U.S., this was a by-product of the new "science" of basing social change on the results of research combined with what came to be called cultural pluralism. By 1900, these directions had overtaken religion and charity (with or without evangelism) as the foundation for American settlement practice.

The Fred Victor Mission benefitted from large numbers of enthusiastic volunteers from Victoria College, among them J. S. Woodsworth, James M.

---

Shaver and Arthur H. Burnett. All three were, at the time, training for the ministry and would become leading social reformers in Canada. Woodsworth went on to become a pillar of democratic socialism and, in 1932, was among the signatories of the manifesto of the League for Social Reconstruction, the forerunner of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, better known as the CCF. Burnett had worked in the Whitechapel district, the home of London’s first settlement.

With social reform efforts positioned at that point clearly within Toronto’s religious communities, it is no surprise that Evangelia House, the first institution that called itself a settlement rather than a mission, was sponsored by the Presbyterian Church and the then-evangelical Y.W.C.A. The first Head Worker, Sara Libby Carson, was hired from the eastern U.S., where, in 1897, she had established Christadora House, a New York settlement serving new immigrants.

Evangelia House was originally envisioned as a settlement for young women who worked in factories in Toronto’s east end. Carson wasted no time appealing, with great success, to University of Toronto students for assistance with the new settlement. Despite the house’s religious foundations and a program that included regular Bible classes, participation in the religious aspects of the settlement was not compulsory. Carson, herself, went on to supervise the pan-Canadian Presbyterian chain of settlements which followed the church’s decision, in 1910, to pursue an evangelical settlement course. As of 1912, this chain included St. Christopher House in the west end of Toronto, its pilot project and training centre.

The real battle to establish the future of settlement in Toronto took place

---

125Burke, pp. 46-47
126Irving, Neighbours, pp. 25-30.
over the founding of University Settlement. Established by, rather than simply assisted by the University of Toronto in 1910, it originally operated in partnership with the University Y.M.C.A. The "Y" and the university, however, had different goals - mission work in the case of the former while the university wanted an institution which combined philosophical idealism with social work and research.

J. M. Shaver, the divinity student who had originally volunteered at the Fred Victor mission, was active in the campus "Y". He helped plan the opening of the new settlement and became one of its first residents. The Y.M.C.A./university alliance did not last out the year. Even though the settlement activities were in no way overtly religious, the combination of missionary work and idealism could not be sustained in a coherent model. Despite the popularity in the community of the boys' sports program and medical dispensery, the university was concerned that the program was neither culturally elevated nor sufficiently research-oriented. As a result, it took control of the settlement and eased out the "Y".126

The confirmation of the more secular model and the results of the University of Toronto student social surveys of 1909-10 encouraged three men - Arthur Burnett, also an early Fred Victor volunteer, George P. Bryce, son of a former city Medical Officer of Health and J. J. Kelso, journalist and social advocate - to establish a new settlement house in 1911. Burnett and Bryce had participated in the student surveys which were the social science part of a door-to-door evangelical canvass and provided a database on downtown Toronto social conditions. Although the men had strong ties to Methodism, the new settlement was established free of institutional ties, either religious or secular.

126Burke, p. 64.
By 1911, Central Neighbourhood House was in operation as a "social settlement in the central part of downtown Toronto" - an avowed non-denominational institution modeled more after Chicago's Hull House than its Toronto predecessors, which were usually run by local presbytery committees. CNH was a manifestation of, "influences which encouraged a social concept of man and underlined the social dimensions of the gospel, so that the solutions that appeared to be most useful were those which had an essential social character."\(^{127}\) Although ecumenical (the first board of directors included a priest and a rabbi), CNH was founded by Christian reformers who had made the transition from regeneration to the social gospel.

The settlement was the closest to the urban American model yet seen in Toronto. The organizers went straight to the U.S. For their first headworker, Elizabeth Neufeld was Jewish, a graduate of the New York School of Philanthropy and had worked with Jane Addams at Hull House. CNH was the first Canadian institutional example of social reform practice based more on secular ethics rather than religious belief. The fact that its clientele was primarily composed of newcomers to Canada lent credence to its founders' desire to build the settlement house's programs around civics and citizenship rather than doctrine. The founding of CNH also marked the beginning of what was to become the settlement movement's focus on immigrants throughout Toronto's west end.

The influences that provided the foundation for kindergarten - new philosophical and religious trends, education reforms, concern about the effects of industrialism and apprehension regarding uncontrolled change - persisted and, in the first years of the 20th century in Toronto, were the

\(^{127}\) Allen, Neighbours, p. 4.
impetus for settlement houses. Although there were major differences in organization, for example, kindergarten was part of a large school system and settlement houses were mainly independent units, albeit, at least initially, tied to churches, the two types of institutions supported each other in many ways. Both types of programs, by 1910, converged in the lives of many of Toronto's immigrant children
VI

In the autumn of 1911, Jenny Levy, aged 4 and Annie Starkman, aged 6, were registered in Kindergarten at Elizabeth St. School. Jenny lived at 42 Walton St. and Annie’s first address was down the street at number 25. Later, the family moved to 56 Hayter St. Elizabeth St. School was Jenny’s first. For Annie, the notation in the school register under the column "Previous School" was "Poland".

Jenny and Annie arrived at Elizabeth St. School at a time of transition for Canada’s and Toronto’s population. Between 1900 and 1912, Canada experienced its first large influx of non-English speaking immigrants. The greatest part of this early wave occurred between 1906 and 1911 and close to 20% of the newcomers settled in Ontario. Although Toronto had the fourth lowest percentage of foreign-born residents in the country’s 16 cities, the largest number of immigrants settled there.

The years 1901 to 1905 saw almost 7,000 foreign-born newcomers added to Toronto’s population. During the next five years, this number more than doubled as over 16,000 immigrants made their way to the city. By 1911, just over 38,000 people in Toronto or 12% of the population came from countries where English was not the native language. Between 1901 and 1910, 23,000 newcomers, mostly from eastern Europe, settled in Toronto, many in a part of the downtown known as The Ward.

\[\text{128} \text{Census of Canada, 1911. Special Report on the Foreign-born Population. pg. 9.}\]

\[\text{129} \text{Ibid., p. 34.}\]

\[\text{130} \text{Census of Canada, Volume 1, p. 92, Volume 2, pp. 248-9.}\]
During this period, the largest number of non-English speaking immigrants came to Toronto from Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{131} Variously identified as Russians, Poles, Austro-Hungarians or Jews, they were usually Jewish and comprised over half of all European immigration.\textsuperscript{132} In general, the majority of immigrants were over 21 years of age. However, under-21-year-olds were more likely to be found among Eastern Europeans. Almost 30\% of Russian immigrants were in this category.\textsuperscript{133} Although a number were likely adolescents on their own, it is probable that Eastern Europeans brought more children with them than did other immigrant groups.

Like many Jewish immigrants, Jenny's and Annie's families settled in a part of downtown Toronto known as the Ward. Located in the city's Ward 3 and bounded by Yonge, College and Queen Streets and University Avenue, the Ward had been an immigrant reception area for many years. In 1901, the Toronto Centre census district which was comprised solely of Ward 3 had the largest percentage of foreign-born residents in the city - close to 6\% as opposed to between 2 and 3\% in both Toronto East and Toronto West.\textsuperscript{134}

It is more difficult to analyze the population in 1911 because Ward 3 was spread over four out of Toronto's five census districts. However, the Ward likely located in the district named Toronto Centre. Again, the downtown had the highest percentage of immigrants and 32\% of the census district was

\textsuperscript{131}Census of Canada, 1901; pg. 349. Census of Canada, 1911; Special Report on the Foreign-born Population; p. 46.


\textsuperscript{133}Census, 1911, Special Report, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{134}Census of Canada, 1901; p. 434.
born in non-English-speaking countries. Fully 70% of the "foreign-born" designated themselves as Jewish.

At the beginning of the century, the Ward was changing as it fell victim to the commercial and institutional expansion in the downtown. Crowded and run-down, it was home primarily to the optionless or, as stated by the Bureau of Municipal Research in 1915, "... large numbers of poorly educated people with low standards of housing have, through force of circumstances, congregated in one district and have been allowed to claim it as their own." Five years later, the Annual Report of Central Neighbourhood House was a little less blunt when it described the area as being, "... made up of lodging houses, old dwellings converted into tenements and one-storey shacks. The neighbours are a mixture of Jews, Italians, Slavs, Chinese and Anglo-Saxons. This gives some idea of the numerous and varied problems which are presented to the neighbourhood worker."

Elizabeth St. School was located in the middle of the Ward where Walton and Elizabeth streets met. It was a small school (262 in 1901 up to 490 in 1911), even when we consider that, from 1903 onwards, the grades ended at Junior Second and the older children went elsewhere to complete elementary

---


137Bureau of Municipal Research, Report on the Ward (draft)Central Neighbourhood House Collection, (Toronto: City of Toronto Archives, 1915), SC5D Box 1, File 8.

138Central Neighbourhood House, A Brief Description and Annual Report, 1920, SC5D Box 1, File.
The school was renamed after the retired Toronto principal, Hester How in the 1912-13 school year and operated until 1954.

School registration indicates the changing nature of the neighbourhood. In 1901, only 24 out of the 178 children registered during the school year were last in school in other countries or had non-Anglo-Saxon last names. By 1911, only 20 out of the 240 children registered that year did not fall into those categories. Except for a small number of Italians and Germans, the children were from Eastern Europe.

There is some evidence that Ward parents exercised choices in their children's participation in the school system. Children were not obliged to attend school until they were 7 years old. However, parents could and often did send younger children to classes. As we have seen, this was by no means a new phenomenon and kindergartens had been started in part because of concern about the suitability of the grade classes for the youngest pupils.

Families in the Ward made especially extensive use of kindergartens. The kindergarten group in Elizabeth St. School made up about one-quarter of the school and was one of the largest in the city when taken as a percentage of the total school population.

In addition, early on in the decade, Elizabeth St. School had a large number of very young pupils. In 1901, approximately one-third of the under-7-year-old registrations were aged 3 and 4 years. Since there were very few foreign-born children in the school at this point and there is no indication in

---

139Toronto Board of Education Handbooks, 1901, 1903, 1911. Toronto Board of Education Archives.

140Registers, Elizabeth St. School, TBE Archives.

141Toronto Board of Education Annual Reports, 1901 to 1912, Toronto Board of Education Archives.
the school registers that non-English-speaking parents were more likely to enrol young children, this use of program is based on social class rather than race, ethnicity or language. By contrast, there were no 3-year-olds and very few 4-year-olds registered in nearby but very different Church St. School, located in a middle and upper-middle class neighbourhood.\textsuperscript{142}

However, parent choice in education for their youngest children became more limited at Elizabeth St. School over the course of the first decade of the twentieth century. By 1906, the number of 3 and 4-year-olds had declined to the point where they made up just 17\% of the under-7-year-olds and by 1911, there were no 3-year-olds and only four 4-year-olds among the new registrations.\textsuperscript{143}

The trend at Church St. was completely the opposite. Although only one 3-year-old was registered during the 1901-1911 period, the percentage of 4-year-olds in the under-6 age group rose to 18\% in 1906 and 21\% in 1911.

There is no indication that there were fewer 3 and 4-year-olds in the Ward. In fact, a look at the school enrolment and organization indicates a strong possibility that, as the decade progressed, the population of younger children in the neighbourhood increased. Between 1901 and 1911, the enrolment in Elizabeth St. School almost doubled while the age group within the school contracted since, after 1902, only children under age 10 attended because children in the third and fourth forms moved on to another school, probably McCaul St.

In addition to the narrowing age band, parents in the Ward lost some flexibility around the grade that their younger children attended. Prior to the

\textsuperscript{142}Registers, Elizabeth St. School, Church St. School, TBE Archives.

\textsuperscript{143}Registers, Elizabeth St. School, TBE Archives.
introduction of kindergarten, children started their public school career in the Junior First class. The presence of kindergarten classes did not prevent parents from continuing to enrol their under-7-year-olds at the Junior First level. Parents often registered 5 and 6-year-olds in Junior First and there is some evidence that lower-income families were more likely to do so.\textsuperscript{144}

Although the Junior First classes were perceived as (and probably were) less suitable for the younger school attenders, they had an advantage for poor families - unlike kindergarten, they lasted all day. Since mothers of young children worked only in the most difficult economic circumstances, only the very poor would be likely to need full-day school programs for child care purposes.

In 1901, 71 of the 75 under-7s in Elizabeth St. School went to kindergarten. The others were probably in the Junior First class. By 1906, the number of immigrant families in the Ward was taking off. They were often families who needed more than one income. That year, the number of under-7-year-olds who were not in kindergarten rose to 67 (43\%) with 86 registered in kindergarten. Five years later, in 1911, all of the under-7s were registered in kindergarten.\textsuperscript{145} During this period in Church St. School,

\begin{table}[h]
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
Year & Total Under 7 & # in K. & # in full-day \\
\hline
1901 & 75 & 71 & 4 \\
1906 & 86 & 67 & 19 \\
1911 & 96 & 86 & 10 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{144}Masemann, \textit{Kindergartens in Toronto, 1883 - 1900}.

\textsuperscript{145}The registers at Elizabeth St. School are not as exact as those of other schools. Until 1911, children are not designated as kindergarten pupils and even then, the notations do not appear to be entirely reliable since the number of under-seven-year-olds appearing in the register as going to kindergarten is slightly less than the total number of kindergarten registrations appearing in the Chief Inspector's Report, although the figures are very close. The number of younger children in kindergarten and full day classes respectively was arrived at by comparing the total number of under-seven-year-olds registered with the number of kindergarten children officially listed in the Chief Inspector's Report.
participation of under-7-year-olds in Junior First classes remained stable at around 12%.146

By 1911, parents in the Ward generally did not and possibly could not send their under-5-year-olds to school. As well, all of their under-7-year-olds were registered in half-day kindergarten. This decrease in flexibility was greater than that which occurred in the more affluent Church St. Neighbourhood. It also happened at a time when it could be argued that community needs were expanding due to the difficulties experienced as families established themselves in a new country.

This was a sign of a school under stress - a school that was dealing with a tidal wave children with needs that it had never before experienced. Church St. School may have been able to continue to provide options for families because it had fewer demands. Typically, there were about 30% fewer under-7's enrolled there. In addition, it may have been that very young non-English-speaking children simply were not coping with the fairly academic Junior First curriculum and were directed into kindergarten for what was seen to be their own good. Finally, agencies like Central Neighbourhood House emerged and began to lessen the pressure (and the corresponding need to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Under-7's</th>
<th>Half-Day Kindergarten</th>
<th>Junior First</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

146 Registers, Church St. School, TBE Archives.
react) on the school by providing out-of-school programs for pre-schoolers as well as for their older brothers and sisters.

Although the system was quite clearly reacting to the new urban population at the local school level, the central authorities were almost completely mute regarding the presence of large numbers of children who were very new to the country, the city and the schools and who, moreover, were not from the mainstream culture and did not speak English. The new students were not mentioned in either the Toronto Board of Education's Annual Report or the provincial Report of the Minister of Education until 1911, when the lack of ability to speak English was given in the city Medical Inspector's Report as one of the "causes of backwardness." 147

By the time Jenny and Annie started school, kindergartens had been a part of the Toronto system since 1881. Assuming that the teacher followed the approved Froebelian kindergarten syllabus, 148 the program that Annie and Jenny attended had not changed a great deal since the 1880's and '90's.

While the program content changed very little, the Ministry of Education's rationale after 1900 for kindergarten was very different from that expressed earlier by Hughes and his supporters in Toronto. The idea that the almost spiritual aspect of kindergarten philosophy would support the finer side of the child's nature was lost in the twentieth-century version of the perpetual debate on the nature and goals of education. Secularization took hold as the broad education reform rationale of creating better human beings via programs such as kindergarten gave way to curriculum reform based on the need to create a modern, industrial workforce.


The debate was articulated in the annual reports of the Minister of Education. It involved the examination and re-examination of the appropriateness of different types of education for different classes of children. The public schools had been founded on the ideal of a common course of studies for all pupils, regardless of background. The continuum of curriculum liberalization that included kindergarten had, by the 1890's, spread upwards to the elementary grades and was called the "New Education." In Ontario, it mostly, but not entirely, took the form of manual training.

Like kindergarten, manual training was initially promoted as a way of strengthening intellectual achievement through hands-on activities. From the beginning, the "New Education" was forced to defend itself from charges that it was composed of frills that took time away from the more substantive parts of the school program.

The Minister's reports contained first, arguments for keeping manual training as a part of every schoolchild's experience. Second, and more important was the discussion on the changes that industrialization had brought to society, the workplace and the home and the extent to which it would change education.

A large part of this debate consisted of arguments supporting differentiated schooling. These arguments appeared repeatedly and in different ways over the decade, but were generally as follows: the separation of home and work meant that vocational training was no longer given by the family; the old apprenticeship methods were not possible in the atomized organization of the new factories; the new industries were more complex and required educated workers; most students went from school into the industrial or agricultural workforce; work-related schooling would encourage
parents to allow children to stay in school longer; since schools were a
training ground for democracy and good citizenship, society had a vested
interest in a decent level of student retention.

As time passed, arguments contained in the Minister’s reports for
programs like manual training and kindergarten did not revolve around
their intrinsic good, but around their usefulness as a support to technical and
vocational training. By 1908, the discussion was complete and the secondary
school system was gearing up to allocate extensive resources in order to
provide industry with a trained workforce and, nominally, to provide
students with options. Kindergarten was seen as the first step in this process.
That year, the Inspector for Technical Education stated, "... if any effective
training of an industrial or vocational character is to be given through the
medium of our Public and High Schools the foundation will have to be laid
very low down in the school - in fact in the Kindergarten."149

It is unlikely that this shift in educational thought is related in a linear
fashion to the greater presence of immigrant children in schools. It cannot be
a complete coincidence, however, that the promotion of technical education
took place at a time when Canada was encouraging large-scale immigration in
order to build an industrial and agricultural workforce. It is also possible that
the change in emphasis from a common to a differentiated curriculum was
not generally popular and that, in the course of the selling, the promoters felt
compelled to align the rhetoric of their program to one that had public
approval - the kindergarten.

By the spring of 1911, when the group of social reformers met to establish
Central Neighbourhood House, the discussion regarding the role of industrial
training and its relationship to the broader economy as well as the link to

programs like kindergarten was in full swing. Central Neighbourhood House was to, "proceed along broad and non-sectarian lines," with the promotion of, "a high order of citizenship," and as its, "ultimate aim." As well, it would provide, "a contribution towards solving the problems of the modern city." The initial invitational letter sent by George Bryce and Arthur Burnett to many of Toronto's prominent social reformers contained a conscious reference to the new settlement house clientele when it proposed that the new settlement house should, "meet the people of the vicinity, Jews, Italians and others, as far as possible, on common ground."^150

Like its U.S. counterparts, the new settlement house prioritized programs for children and youth and this emphasis necessitated a relationship with schools and the school system. In addition, the school system and the settlement movement shared a philosophical support of kindergarten and manual training, although, in the settlement house, John Dewey's egalitarian principles were more likely to prevail than those of the differentiated curriculum.

Both the downtown schools and settlement houses worked with immigrant families and children. However, it is fair to say that, although similarities in approach to immigrants existed between the two institutions, by the end of the first decade of the 20th century, Toronto's newcomers had become the settlement movement's primary focus while they were but one concern of the public school system. The settlement houses, particularly Central Neighbourhood House, were new and did not possess the bureaucratic imperatives of a large school system. They were more likely to be able to meet immigrant needs head-on while schools, with a greater depth

^150 Central Neighbourhood House Collection, A Neighbourhood House for Central Toronto, City of Toronto Archives, Box 1, File 1.
of entrenched practices, were more likely to respond in ways that were self-protective, such as reducing the range of programs accessible to small children.

The efforts of both institutions were aimed at resolving the question of how best to insure stability and co-operation in what was perceived as a risky urban environment. Nervousness about the ever-expanding cities was nothing new. However, the emphasis on good citizenship (rather than the earlier musings about the need for everyone to get along in a more fragmented society) became much more explicit as immigration increased. As James, states, even at CNH, arguably the most progressive of the settlement houses, "the twin spectres of danger and duty" drove a good deal of the institution's activities and appeals to the public for resources. The danger was that of the unassimilated immigrant and the duty was the imperative to disseminate the Victorian ideals of citizenship and democracy, and, in the case of houses like St. Christopher, Protestant Christianity.\footnote{James, p. 281.}

Certainly, the population of the Ward represented a new kind of working class that was very different culturally from both the workers in previous decades and the groups that had access to the levers of power. Fear of strife between classes was never stated overtly but leaked out in statements like:

Industrial conflicts must be settled ultimately by reason; yet the endeavour is often made to settle them by force - that is to say by inflicting pecuniary losses, physical and moral injury, and spreading confusion and alarm. Education ought to be carried far enough to make men understand that such conflicts are to be settled by intelligence and not by force. Systematic education in this country stops too soon for millions of children; in cases of millions of adults, the method of earning their livelihood becomes automatic and mental growth is arrested. If popular education is to realize the expectations which it has awakened,
and to promote public righteousness and public welfare, it must be far more thorough. . .152

The mainstream Torontonians found it difficult to read what they called the "foreign-born" and this nervousness about the unknown bred suspicion. There seemed to be a feeling that teaching the newcomers about the rights and duties of citizenship might forestall undefined but very possible conflict. This perspective echoes earlier fears in the U.S. cities. Settlement house workers tried hard to deal with the result of those fears - the anti-immigrant opinion within mainstream society.

While Central Neighbourhood House exhibited some aspects of this unfamiliarity with new, European immigrants ("A good deal of family work has been (sic) among the Polish and Russian people who seem to find it harder than any other race almost to get Canadianized"),153 like its American predecessors, it also stressed the need to respect the customs and beliefs of different cultures. In addition to emphasizing that it was not a mission and involving both a Rabbi and the local Catholic priest, the settlement went out of its way to avoid the appearance of prosletizing Jewish children to the extent that, for the first few years, there were no Christmas celebrations in December, but rather, a large holiday party in January.

The organizers believed that the non-sectarian nature of the new settlement house and its emphasis on citizenship attracted children and adults who would not have approached a church-run institution for fear of


153Central Neighbourhood House, Headworker's Report, 1913.
However, this direction plus the fact that Elizabeth Neufeld was Jewish spelled trouble in other quarters. In November, 1912, Toronto Alderman, John Wanless, stated that the basis for complaints about CNH was "the belief that the settlement is Judaicizing, is no more non-denominational than the work of the Presbyterian Church and is preventing the people of the Ward from becoming real, pork-eating Christians."

Elizabeth Neufeld, began almost immediately to forge links with other institutions and agencies. Over time, and more than any of the other settlement houses, CNH played a large co-ordinating role with the organizations such as the school board, the developing web of social welfare agencies and the Toronto Playground Association. It was the only Toronto settlement house to have an active association with labour.

The Toronto Board of Education was one of the first organizations that Neufeld approached. Soon, with the co-operation of Chief Inspector Hughes, Elizabeth St. School was the location for CNH evening English classes, lectures, concerts and physical education activities. The settlement provided pressure for extended community use of schools. The board's co-operation in allowing the settlement to use the school was essential since the agency's own space was always limited. Use of school facilities increased over the next few years and, in 1915, programs were expanded across University Ave. to McCaul St. School.

---

154 CNH. Box 1, File 1. Headworker's Report, January, 1912.

The relationship with the school board was solidified in the settlement’s first years of operation as the two institutions co-operated in implementing a wide range of programs for children and adults. The settlement house provided continuing academic education for youth who had left formal schooling and the school board paid instructors for adult English classes. The settlement house, by providing manual and vocational training, supplemented the board’s classroom programs. By the spring of 1914, CNH and the school board had collaborated on the organization of a “model flat” located in the settlement house to teach domestic science to adolescent girls during the school day.156 As we have seen, concern existed regarding the effects of employment on women’s engagement with hearth and home. In the case of the settlement house, this concern was compounded by the perceived need to instil appropriate North American methods of child rearing and housekeeping in newcomers and if language and custom were to provide barriers to working with the mothers, themselves, why not begin with the daughters?157

Neufeld built such a firm collaborative relationship with the school system, possibly, because she believed strongly that settlement houses should not replace those operated by public institutions. Although most Toronto settlements agreed, many offered kindergarten for their smallest members and at least one had a First Book class, as well. Neufeld criticized this type of


157James, p. 198.
duplication in a paper that she presented in 1914. It may have been that Neufeld had a more sophisticated analysis of the difference between public service and private charity than did her more church-oriented counterparts.

If Jenny and Annie joined Central Neighbourhood House, they would have been able to attend the settlement kindergarten during the afternoon as a supplement to the morning school kindergarten. The Headworker reported that, "Games, story hours and songs are welcomed by the little ones. They come to look upon the House as their own in the afternoons when the kindergarten teachers make their appearance." The kindergarten was intended for children ages 2 to 8 years. Despite the program’s popularity, perhaps because of the concern about public/private duplication, it was not available daily, but two or three days a week. As well, Annie and Jennie could have taken part in the Children's Hour between 4:00 and 5:30.

Many of the other settlement activities organized specifically for young children focused on child and maternal health. Summer heat brought a rise in infant mortality in the slums. Day trips to beaches and parks and, in later years, week-long journeys to the country removed mothers and children from hot and crowded houses and flats. After the "ravages of summer" in 1913, CNH, with the Hospital for Sick Children, started a pure milk depot and baby-weighing station.

---


159Central Neighbourhood House Collection, Box 1, file 2, Yearbook, 1913.

160CNH, Box 1, File 4.
By the 1912-13 year, the children in the Ward could take part in a wide variety of clubs and activities at CNH. The reading room and library (equipped with donated books, some from the Toronto Public Library) were open three afternoons and two evenings a week. Girls could take part in such programs as the Primrose Club (ages fourteen to sixteen), the Good Obedient Club (ages 10 to 12), sewing, cooking and pierced brass classes and Physical Culture and Folk Games. The clubs that did not impart a specific skill were social and recreational in nature. Activities included crafts, games, story-telling, songs and snacks. Boys had access to boxing classes, Scouts and various types of athletics. Older boys could run for election in the model parliament and, later on, could join the young men’s debates and lectures. Piano and violin lessons were available as well as time to practice on the house piano.

Citizenship training and civics pervaded all activities. As James states, “The ultimate goal of all settlement clubs was to demonstrate the principles of democratic citizenship and to provide the means to allow members to practice the skills necessary for the fulfilment of their obligations.” All clubs for adults and children were self-governing, operating under Roberts Rules of Order at weekly meetings. The club executive rotated among the members over the course of the year. CNH sponsored guest lectures on citizenship and special topics such as public health and political economy. Even the curriculum employed in the adult English language classes, known as the Roberts method, was based on the premise that “citizenship training was fundamental to to the whole process of teaching English.”

---

161 James, p. 177.

162 Ibid., p. 209.
Although there were certainly calls for measures to preserve immigrants' pride in their roots, there is no indication that any of the Toronto settlements developed the extensive ethno-specific programs and facilities like those seen at Hull House. At Central Neighbourhood House, clubs for children were divided according to gender with some mixed social activities for youth. Adult clubs were also gender-specific but organized according to ethnicity. The more popular were the women's clubs which, in 1915, were four in number - one Jewish, one British and two Italian.

While special events like the annual Spring Festival were well-attended, the program did not seem to include activities from members' countries of origin but was more likely to feature performances of children dancing Sir Roger de Coverly. In fact, the festival was described at one point as, "the culmination of a winter's efforts to learn Canadian ways of fun and amusement." It is not clear whether this approach was a deliberate assimilation strategy, whether lack of resources prevented expansion of ethno-specific programs or whether the settlement house was treading lightly as a reaction to opinions like those of Councillor Wanless, lest it encourage increased anti-immigrant feeling among Torontonians, some of whom may have been real or potential donors. Perhaps all three rationales were involved.

---

163 Ibid., p. 277.

164 CNH, Headworker's Report, October, 1915.

165 Ibid., May, 1913.

166 CNH, Box 1, File 4, Minutes, July, 1914.
If the Central Neighbourhood House organizing committee expected that lessons in citizenship would be confined to model parliaments, they selected the wrong person as their first headworker. Neufeld was a social activist and served on the executive of the Canadian Welfare League with J. S. Woodsworth. Her assumptions regarding the duties of the citizen often must have exceeded what many Torontonians of the time would have considered appropriate.

Unlike other settlement headworkers, Neufeld developed links between CNH and labour. In February of 1912, she reported, "It seems a very hopeful sign that the people who are part of the Eaton Strike turned to the Settlement for advice. There seemed to be a feeling that the Settlement was vitally interested in the welfare of the working people." Neufeld served on the Minimum Wage Committee of the District Case Conference and tried to initiate a survey on the industrial life of women. There is no evidence, however, that the Toronto settlement movement had the extensive relationship with the labour movement that developed in the U.S. or, in fact, that any of the other settlement houses had even the relatively weak ties that CNH was able to forge.

Neufeld's activism extended to children's programs. The fact that Dr. Helen MacMurchy, a prominent Toronto public health physician participated in the CNH organizing committee may have set the stage for the settlement's

---

167CNH, Headworker's Report, February, 1913.
prominence in areas such as the provision of pure milk and child and maternal health care. Neufeld and MacMurchy agreed that poverty was the greatest cause of infant illness and death.\textsuperscript{168} In addition, MacMurchy was active in the Toronto Playground Association, which advocated for safe, supervised playgrounds for city children. From the outset, and with Neufeld's support, she ensured that the TPA and Central Neighbourhood House worked together.\textsuperscript{169}

Safety and healthy physical development were not the only reasons to promote playgrounds, at least one Toronto Playground Association member, J. H. Fenton, saw them as a means of assimilating the "foreign children who do not know how to play". Fenton continued, "... in the excitement and fervour of strenuous play ... the boys and girls who were accustomed to fear taunts, jeers and slurs hurled at them because of their race and tongue, are delighted to be received on terms of absolute equality. So the Slav, the Jew, the Italian or the Armenian is given a new sense of his own worth, and soon he loses the furtive manner with other boys, and life in Canada becomes to him really happy and worth while."\textsuperscript{170} There is no sense whatsoever in this article of the obligations of an immigrant reception community and, to be fair, there is no indication that Neufeld or any of the CNH Board agreed with this perspective in the depth that it appears. Nevertheless, it is an example of the thoroughness of the assimilationist point of view in pre-war Toronto, even among those involved in social reform.

\textsuperscript{168}James, p. 266.

\textsuperscript{169}CNH, Box 1, Board of Director's Minutes, Letter from Bryce to MacMurchy, April 25, 1911. Cited in James, p. 228.

Much of CNH's support of safe, supervised play revolved around improving the outdoor amenities at Elizabeth St. Playground. Not only was it the neighbourhood playspace, because CNH was so dependent on school and other public space for implementing its programs, expanded school or playground facilities were a bonus to the settlement house. Municipal contributions started in 1912 with loads of sand trucked to the CNH backyard for the younger children's play. That same year, the settlement house began a campaign to have the city build a shelter with a gym and showers at Elizabeth St playground. The initial request was blocked by the settlement's nemesis, Councillor Wanless. Unwilling to accept defeat, Neufeld continued to press for the playground shelter and, in March, 1914, settlement staff organized a deputation of 200 children to appear at the Board of Control. The children's campaign was effective and the shelter was approved in April. The children received a valuable lesson in the democratic process, the neighbourhood had improved facilities and a tangible example of CNH success and attendance at the settlement jumped.

Agencies like Central Neighbourhood House represented a new relationship between Ontario's children and institutions. Since 1871, the schools had considered themselves the guardians of the major portion of the child's day. The turn of the century saw movement in towards organizing children's out-of-school time, as well. Many of these initiatives were spun off from the settlement movement, either in Toronto or from the U.S. experience.

171CNH. Box 1 File 1. Headworker's Report, October, 1912.

172CNH. Box 1. File 2. Headworker's Report, May, 1914
Most of the efforts centred around improving the lot of the city child. Voluntary playground associations badgered municipal governments to discourage children from playing in the city streets by providing fenced, equipped and supervised areas (although in Toronto, the equipment was removed on Sundays). The Ministry of Education funded public libraries in cities, towns and villages and travelling book collections for remote areas. Children's libraries did not simply loan books, but stocked puzzles, stereopticons and held story hour. Settlement houses and Y.M./Y.W.C.A.s provided recreation and what would now be termed informal education. By 1912, the Toronto Board of Education had initiated school-based summer playschools.

The arrival of the Levys and the Starkmans and the thousands of families like them had a profound effect on institutions in pre-World War I Toronto. Elizabeth St. School and Central Neighbourhood House reacted differently to immigrant children. Options at the school attenuated at the same time as those in the community expanded under the sponsorship of the settlement.

This is hardly surprising. The school operated under the aegis of the Toronto Board of Education and a provincial education bureaucracy which were large and slow to acknowledge a type of social change that most of those in charge had not experienced themselves. In addition, change at the board was dependent on the political will of trustees chosen by city electors.

Central Neighbourhood House was small, independent, new and established specifically to meet the needs of immigrants - albeit, at least in the initial stages, the needs of immigrants as perceived by the city's social work establishment. It could move quickly to serve the children of the Ward. However, the two were interdependent. Central Neighbourhood House
provided programs that the Elizabeth St. School did not and the school enabled the settlement to expand its activities by allowing the use of school facilities.

In addition, the two institutions did not differ a great deal in outlook. They shared many of the same concerns about the instability of the urban environment and much of the rhetoric around the need for co-operation and the importance of training for citizenship had the same ring. Although Jenny and Annie may have found a difference in form and content between their kindergarten class and the after-school Children's Hour, it is unlikely that they would have sensed a conflict in the beliefs of the sponsoring organizations.
Conclusion

The changes in intellectual, religious and scientific direction that took place in the latter part of the 19th century in English-speaking central Canada were various and shifting. However, they were consistent in both their cause and their effect. They were, in the main, a response to the changes instigated by the new, industrial economy - changes that, over the course of four decades, meant that over one-half of the population had shifted out of rural and agricultural living places and occupations to employment in cities and towns. These families were no longer self-supporting economic units as they had been, whether in farms or in cities, in pre-industrial times. Instead, one parent, almost always the father, worked outside the home and supported the family through wages earned from an employer.

During this period, economic and political liberalization and new scientific theory and method changed the way in which intellectual and religious leaders and, in time, those whom they influenced, saw themselves in relation to both God and the rest of society. Again, although the influences were varied, they were consistent in content and effect. The pace of change in all areas - social, economic and intellectual - was exhilarating, but was also the cause of a profound unease. This generated a search for order which appeared in the institutions, such as churches and schools, that existed at the time and in the new institutions such as missions and settlement houses that developed to fix the perceived flaws of the urban, industrial environment.

Initially, many reforms were initiated by organizations such as churches or by individuals with a religious/reform orientation as a means both of maintaining a spiritual element in a changing society and of encouraging organized religion to remain relevant. By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, the most radical reformers had started to move away from
religion as a base and some of the most activist churches, such as the
Methodists, had become somewhat more secular in approach and practice. In
some social reform settings, religious imperatives for action gave way to the
idea of ethics as a motivator. Perhaps as a result of this broader secular
direction, reforms such as kindergarten and settlement houses started to lose
their religious underpinnings and refer to secular rationales like curriculum
reform and social science as driving influences. In addition, by 1900, this
more secular direction coincided with, and was possibly helped by, a new
diversity in the English-Canadian population, as immigrants who were
neither Anglo-Saxon nor Christian arrived to challenge the energies of the
mainstream social reformers.

Children and childhood became major subjects of reform. The idea that
economic and natural laws were not immutable encouraged the belief that
children could be influenced for the better by society, their families and by the
institutions that they encountered. The hope that influencing the course of
childhood could help to create a more predictable adult population provided
some comfort to those concerned that change had destroyed the unity of the
past. And if new approaches to childhood were useful, why not make them
public in programs such as kindergarten and primary school and in vehicles
such as popular magazines that could communicate childrearing advice to
parents? The preoccupation with childhood and the content of the reforms
were, again, consistent. Parents, teachers and others who dealt with children
were advised to guide rather that coerce children, to develop intellectual
curiosity and creativity in their charges and to provide opportunities for
learning through play and socialization. Rote learning and "blind parrotage"
of facts were no longer seen as effective education methods. This direction fit
with the increasingly liberal trends in broader society.
Not surprisingly, in light of the intense scrutiny and attention, childhood, itself, changed. While the division between public and private was never rigid, it is clear that, throughout the decades of the late 19th and early 20th century, the childhood experience became less private and more public. Led by the newly-organized, universal and, in Ontario, compulsory for children ages seven to fourteen education system, childhood for all social classes became more organized and supervised by institutions other than the immediate family. By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, supervision during school hours had expanded to the rest of the day for many children in settings such as playgrounds and public libraries.

In addition, official (voluntary) participation in the school system started earlier in Ontario cities and towns as the age range in schools expanded downwards to include kindergarten. Under-six-year-olds were no longer add-ons, but had their own program in the mainstream education system. Reformers worked to bring other special populations such as working class or immigrant children into the economic and social mainstream through a differentiated curriculum in school and settlement houses during the rest of the day.

Not only did children spend more time in public settings, the consideration of the nature of childhood became a more public affair. Under the influence of theories, such as Darwinian thought, that spoke to the inevitability of change, many believed that, not only could people change for the better, but that good people and institutions could make others improve. This, of course, involved a public articulation of "good". Where childhood was concerned, social reformers, primarily middle-class, set the framework for acceptable methods of childrearing. These became the standards which drove many of the broader reforms and against which all children, irrespective of social class or ethnic background, were measured.
The legacy of these reforms is mixed. Simply in terms of social and physical infrastructure, kindergarten is firmly entrenched in Ontario’s publicly-funded school systems and, in many locations, has expanded to include four year-olds. The settlement house preschool programs live on in the network of community-based nursery schools and child care centres. As could Annie and Jenny, many children attend both kindergarten and a community-based child care centre over the course of a day. Many childcare centres and after-school programs use school space in ways similar to Central Neighbourhood House in 1912, although current provincial funding policies have put the community’s ability to access school space at risk. Playgrounds are no longer an innovation, but an expected community resource. In Ontario, milk is safe to drink, basic health care is accessible and serious communicable diseases are no longer a threat to children.

Kindergarten and other 19th century education reforms included the idea of age-appropriateness in programs for young children. Preschoolers were no longer accommodated on an ad hoc basis, an afterthought once the older students were dealt with. Although kindergarten activities were circumscribed, the curriculum was based on the play of childhood and supported by child-sized furniture and equipment. Language learned through songs, games and conversation was a large priority for English-speaking children, as well as newcomers who entered the classroom speaking another language. Kindergarten influenced and was, in the U.S. sometimes the impetus for settlement house programs. In addition, age-grading in schools spilled over into out-of-school programs, such as the clubs organized according to age that provided the foundation for many settlement activities.

However, the course of reform had some less positive aspects. As kindergarten became the only program available to under-6-year-olds,
Toronto parents lost the flexibility that the full-day (although probably less appropriate) First Book classes provided. As we have seen, there are some indications that parents in working class communities were the first to lose this option for their preschoolers. The differentiated curriculum, with its split between academic and vocational education, effectively developed into two systems within publicly-funded education - generally speaking, academic for the middle-class student and vocational for the working class. The foundation for a differentiated curriculum still enjoys strong support in the current system as evidenced by unsuccessful attempts to "de-stream" grade nine, the first year of secondary school.

The question as to whether "more public" really involved coercing parents to relinquish their youngest children to institutions in which they had no power is open to question. Kindergarten and settlement house programs were completely voluntary and children happily attended. Parents, at least in the initial years of kindergarten, enrolled their children and then had them attend as their health, the family schedule, the weather and the walk to school permitted. The turmoil over the organization of a publicly-funded system of schools with compulsory attendance was over by the 1880's in Ontario. Not only did parents not stage a widespread revolt at having to send children to school, in Toronto, they protested loudly at a proposal to shorten the school day.

The fact that parents and children used even the non-compulsory programs, often, by all accounts, with enthusiasm, begs the question of content. The middle-class, assimilationist philosophy and practices developed in the mainstream and seen in schools, settlement houses and public advice to parents not only assumed that the reform directions would be good for working class and immigrant children, but evidenced a fear that
the child untouched by them would be a danger to society - a society that, as we will recall, was already perceived as being under stress.

While we can, with the benefit of hindsight, be tempted to judge both reformers and the subjects of reform, the relationship between institutions and individuals is complex. An analysis of the presence or absence of coercion must consider the respective power of those involved, the voluntary or involuntary nature of participation in a particular institution, the benefits of participating, the disadvantages of or sanctions attached to not participating as well as the options for participating on one's own terms.

In addition, does participation necessarily mean wholesale (and/or forced) concurrence with the institutional content and culture? In the case of children over age six attending schools, parents and children had very little power over participation and could, realistically, not ignore content. During the period under discussion, the total lack of positive reference to immigrant students indicates that their needs as newcomers were not a part of the education discourse, except in discussion around differentiated schooling where references were more inferred than specific. The situation with younger children in school and children attending voluntary organizations such as settlement houses is less clear. Here, parents did have the power to restrict their children’s participation. Although Jewish and Catholic parents may have avoided the more evangelical settlement houses, children from all over the Ward came to CNH, despite the (modest) membership fee.

Kindergarten was enormously popular. It would appear that both programs met a variety of social, educational and care needs for young children and their families and that parents, if they had problems with the messages that they and their children received, either ignored the messages or dealt with them and sent the children anyway.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS


Burke, Sarah Z. *Seeking the Highest Good. Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888 - 1937*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.


PRIMARY SOURCES

Annual Report of the Chief Superintendent of Schools for Upper Canada
Archives of Ontario
Census of Canada
City of Toronto Archives. CNH Collection
Education Records of the Archives of Ontario
Toronto Board of Education Historical Collection