



PROJECT MUSE®

---

Negotiating Paternalism: Women and Canada's Largest Department Stores,  
1890-1960

Donica Belisle

Journal of Women's History, Volume 19, Number 1, Spring 2007, pp. 58-81  
(Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press  
DOI: 10.1353/jowh.2007.0004



► For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/211696>

---

# NEGOTIATING PATERNALISM

*Women and Canada's Largest Department Stores, 1890–1960*

Donica Belisle

*This article explores Canada's largest department stores' relationships with female shoppers and employees between 1890 and 1960. Showing that these giant retailers made paternalism central to their operations, it explains how they enforced broader hierarchies of gender, race, ethnicity, and class. This article contributes to historical understandings of women's relationships with mass retail by illuminating not only Canadian department stores' treatment of women, but also women's responses to such treatment. It also offers new perspectives on contemporary antiretail movements by revealing areas of division and solidarity among shoppers and wage earners.*

Published in 1986, Susan Porter Benson's *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890–1940* remains one of the strongest works in consumer history. Written when feminist historians were only beginning to explore consumption, *Counter Cultures* presented a sophisticated analysis of managers, customers, employees, and their interactions.<sup>1</sup> Of its many contributions, two are especially significant. First, Benson demonstrated that the history of retail labor was central to the history of mass consumption. Second, she illustrated that women, as both consumers and laborers, helped shape mass retail's parameters. She acknowledged that "the structures of capitalism and gender relations ensured that neither the wealthiest customer nor the most competent saleswomen wielded the power of a manager," but she also demonstrated that women's divergent objectives in the department store disrupted managers' attempts to extract profit from large-scale commodity distribution.<sup>2</sup>

Following Benson's rich example, this article explores Canada's largest department stores' relationships with female shoppers and employees. Between 1890 and 1960, these giant retailers employed paternalism as their chief mode of social organization. In customer and labor management, they behaved as doting suitors and patient fathers who were responsible for white female customers' and employees' needs. Paternalism provided some shoppers with lavish services and some employees with welfare benefits, but it also had negative consequences. Crucial to the operation of paternalism was an assumption that women, minorities, and wage earners were inferior to affluent Anglo-Celtic men. Although department stores portrayed themselves as benevolent paternalist overseers, owners' and

managers' assumptions of superiority encouraged them to treat women, minorities, and employees in disempowering ways.

After investigating department stores' enforcement of racial, ethnic, gender, and class hierarchies in Canada, this article examines different groups' responses to paternalism. Some shoppers and employees accepted notions of feminine delicacy, while others rejected gender inequality. Yet even as customers and employees challenged gender discrimination, their responses to issues of class were complex and varied.<sup>3</sup> Many customers viewed themselves as department stores' class allies and applauded department stores' paternalist treatment of women workers. Many employees, in contrast, rejected suppositions of inferiority and joined labor actions against retailers. Customers' and employees' racial and ethnic allegiances further complicated their responses. Non-Anglo-Celtic shoppers and workers resisted racialized and ethnic discrimination, but Anglo-Celtic customers and employees sometimes identified with assertions of Anglo-Celtic superiority.

The purpose of this article is to enhance understandings of Western women's relationships with mass retail. Women's positions within the gendered political economy of democratic capitalism have made them responsible for household tasks and bodily ornamentation. As the mass consumer marketplace developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, many women began seeking products that would aid them in these endeavors. Also beginning in the late nineteenth century, women in need of wages turned to retail. Department stores were among the most visible employers of women, and those who met retailers' preferred racial and ethnic profiles embraced pink-collar retail work. Several researchers have examined women's experiences within department stores, offering important insights into women's consuming and wage-earning activities.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, women's responses to mass retailing's gender, racial, ethnic, and class discrimination remain underexplored. Drawing not only from Benson's *Counter Cultures* but also from the pioneering work of Canadian historian Cynthia Wright—who has investigated gender, ethnicity, and nationalism at Eaton's, Canada's largest department store—this article shows that before 1960 mass retailers consciously worked against the creation of social equality.<sup>5</sup> It also demonstrates that although certain female customers and employees supported racial, ethnic, and class hierarchies, others struggled to make mass retailing more accountable to women, minorities, and wage earners.

## Paternalism and Canada's Big Stores

In his study of the world's first department store, historian Michael Miller put "paternalistic relationships at the center of [his] analysis." In arguing that the Bon Marché in Paris employed paternalism to ease the French public into the modern age, he has shown that the Parisian department store built a reputation for philanthropy and employee benevolence so as to deflect critics' charges of monopolism, materialism, and anonymity.<sup>6</sup> When they arose across the West in the late nineteenth century, department stores were indeed controversial. The first retailers to experiment successfully with mass merchandising, they were among the largest and most visible symbols of the new industrial, capitalist, and bureaucratic era. Among their most virulent critics were small shopkeepers, who argued that department stores represented unfair competition. Labor leaders, meanwhile, condemned the stores' working conditions, and moralists decried the employment of women and the distribution of decadent advertising.<sup>7</sup>

By the turn of the twentieth century, major department stores were present not only in France, but also in Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, Australia, the United States, and Canada.<sup>8</sup> Canada's biggest stores were in Toronto, a city fast becoming the nation's financial and industrial center. In 1896, the Robert Simpson Company of Toronto had 500 staff and a massive mail-order operation. The T. Eaton Company of Toronto was even bigger; with 2,475 employees and the most profitable mail-order business in the country, it was Canada's largest merchandiser.<sup>9</sup> In 1905, Eaton's opened a department store and factories in Winnipeg. It also introduced the Santa Claus Parade, a public relations event copied by international department stores. By 1907, Eaton's in Toronto had 125 selling departments and 9,000 employees, and by 1911, Eaton's annual sales were \$45,613,000. Its revenue was comparable to that of the American company Sears, whose 1907 income was \$50,000,000. Eaton's was larger than the Chicago retailer Marshall Field's, whose sales in 1906 were \$25,000,000; the New York retailer Macy's, whose sales in 1911 were \$16,575,590; and the English retailer Harrod's, whose sales in 1902 reached \$5,000,000.<sup>10</sup>

Over the next two decades, Simpson's and Eaton's built mail-order offices, factories, warehouses, and branch stores throughout the country. After the Great War, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) appeared as a major competitor. Founded in 1670 as a British fur-trading venture, during the 1910s and 1920s it established major department stores in western Canada.<sup>11</sup> As elsewhere, the Great Depression hampered Canada's big stores. Pouncing on department stores' weaknesses—lack of credit, high overhead, and limited stock selection—chain and discount stores began stealing department stores' clientele. While the big retailers survived both

the Depression and World War II, by the 1950s Eaton's, Simpson's, and the HBC were only three merchandisers among many.<sup>12</sup> Their fall from ascendancy paralleled that of department stores in Britain, France, the United States, and Australia.<sup>13</sup>

When they were climbing the rungs of Canada's retailing ladder, Eaton's, Simpson's, and the HBC encountered criticisms similar to their international counterparts. In part following examples set by international corporations, and in part following their own preindustrial traditions, they used paternalism to solve their woes.<sup>14</sup> They predictably treated employees paternalistically, but they also treated customers and members of the general public in familial, benevolent ways. Portraying the stores' owners and executives as affectionate and fatherly overseers of employees, shoppers, and Canadians, the big stores countered charges of exploitation, greed, and materialism. Public visibility and generous philanthropy were crucial to their paternalism. The Eaton family became widely known as "Canada's Royal Family."<sup>15</sup> Founding owner Timothy Eaton was nicknamed the "Governor," and his son John received an English knighthood for his military contributions during World War I.

Aimed at smoothing public, customer, and labor conflicts, the ultimate purpose of paternalism at Eaton's, Simpson's, and the HBC was to help the retailers accumulate capital through large-scale commodity production and distribution. One of the chief functions of paternalism was, therefore, to justify and enforce the social hierarchies from which the stores drew economic power. Department stores depended on women's subordinate positions within the gendered division of labor. Knowing that women were barred from formal avenues of political and economic decision making, and recognizing that women were responsible for domestic labor and bodily beautification, department stores targeted women by both offering opportunities for socializing, leisure, and creativity, and selling products aimed at assisting women in homemaking and ornamentation tasks. Department stores also employed women more than men because women were considered less skilled, less committed, less expensive, and more docile. Furthermore, department stores depended upon racial and ethnic hierarchies because they justified Anglo-Celtic owners' and managers' sense of entitlement to decision-making and high-income positions. The HBC was particularly dependent upon racial stratification and justified its long history of trade with First Nations people as part of the "white man's burden." Finally, department stores depended upon the existence of propertyless people, from whom they purchased labor power, extracted surplus labor, and created capital.

In her study of paternalism in the United States in the 1970s, sociologist Mary Jackman has argued that paternalism is marked by a tendency

among the powerful to treat the less powerful in affectionate but patronizing ways. "The everyday practice of discrimination," she wrote, "does not require feelings of hostility, and, indeed, it is not at all difficult to have fond regard for those whom we subordinate." Only when paternalist relationships become threatened, such as when subordinates reject their naturalized inferiority, does it become necessary for those in positions of power to resort to coercion.<sup>16</sup> Relations between owners and managers, on the one hand, and those they deemed inferior, on the other, at Canada's department stores until 1960 conformed to Jackman's assessment.

Infantilizing views of non-Anglo-Celtics appeared in department stores' literature. The HBC's public relations magazine, *The Beaver*, often suggested First Nations people required guardianship. One 1922 article asserted, "The western Indian of to-day is still a child, literally speaking, and assimilation is slow. . . . [The] government has done wonders in educating [him, but]. . . . [h]e is still primitive."<sup>17</sup> When First Nations people patronized the HBC's stores, staff magazines reported on the occasions. A 1935 issue of Winnipeg's *Bayonet* carried a poem by correspondence manager Johnny Young. The poem asked, "Who is this strange fellow coming towards me, / Is he Blackfoot, Sioux, Iroquois or Cree?" Calling the man a "full blooded 'Injin,'" Young drew attention to "[h]is slight brown suit, badly crushed" and said it "looked out of place." He made fun of his "red socks, shoes and rubbers," calling them a "disgrace." The end of the poem sent a message to HBC employees: "If you come across an Indian keep quiet my son / If you don't it will be a duel between tomahawk and gun."<sup>18</sup>

In a similar manner, publicists for Eaton's viewed visits by people of African descent as newsworthy. As Wright has demonstrated, one Eaton's news item describing the 1930 opening of its housefurnishings store in Toronto pointed out that a woman and child of African heritage attended the event. "[I]t was one of the most representative gatherings Toronto has ever witnessed!" the item claimed. "Didn't we see a precious little black pickaninny, about three years old, battered sailor cap cocked over one ear, stockings hanging down-o, while he dragged on the skirt of his mammy?"<sup>19</sup> By drawing attention to the boy's unequal class and race position, this publication suggested that his cuteness was derived from his nonaffluent, non-Anglo-Celtic status. That the advertisement called his mother a "mammy," a term used to describe a female slave of African descent, indicates approval of discrimination against African Canadians.

Canada's largest stores did not treat white women in the same way as they treated racialized and ethnic minorities, but they did treat them as special beings in need of attention. In their younger years, department stores assumed the role of the male suitor. Historian Gail Reekie, writing about Australian retail strategies at the turn of the twentieth century, has

argued that retailers believed their task was to seduce shoppers. Through tantalizing displays and selling strategies, they tried to convince customers to purchase goods.<sup>20</sup> Like their international counterparts, Canada's big stores portrayed themselves as bountiful caterers to white women's needs. They offered lavish surroundings, complimentary writing rooms, restrooms, nurseries, parcel and coat checks, full-service restaurants, and a host of other services that suggested members of the delicate sex would be cared for properly. The 1887 Eaton's catalogue informed potential visitors, "Ladies, you come off the train . . . you feel unrefreshed; you don't wish to beg anyone to allow you to make your toilet in their rooms without paying them for it . . . you are getting disgusted. Listen! . . . [B]ring your parcels with you straight to Eaton's. . . . [Y]ou will find a nicely curtained waiting-room, a clean toilet room, with towels, soap, etc. We give you the invitation, and will be delighted with your acceptance."<sup>21</sup>

During the interwar years, international retail experts began arguing that psychology enhanced the selling process. Reekie has demonstrated that "[o]ne of the earliest applications of psychology to retail problems was the construction of theories of customer 'types'."<sup>22</sup> "Scientifically" determined types conformed to stereotypical feminine qualities: women were spend-thrift, emotional, and indecisive. Although this vein of sales theory was not distinctly paternalist, it was congruent with department stores' assumptions of women as inferior to men. A 1931 training pamphlet produced at Eaton's posited four kinds of customers: those "who come in early . . . in response to . . . advertisements"; those "who are shopping throughout the day and know exactly what they want"; those "who are shopping throughout the day but do *not* know exactly what they want"; and those "who may be with friends or who may be looking around." According to the brochure, the last two groups were the most profitable because they were susceptible to suggestion. "When we approach a customer who is looking at merchandise we will notice what . . . seems to interest her and proceed . . . by pointing out some selling points. . . . We thus stimulate her interest and avoid the danger of distracting her attention from the merchandise." As well, "If a customer gives us a price limit, should we show goods above the price stated? Oh, yes . . . If we explain the added value to her she will nearly always buy." The brochure instructed sellers not to provide the customer with too many choices, for they could "hamper her selection." If a particular item were not in stock the seller was directed to "show her the nearest we have" because she can "be sold" a different item.<sup>23</sup> Indecisive customers could be lured into buying, trainers suggested, if salespeople played to their vanity and kept the transaction from becoming too complicated.

Although Canada's giant retailers preferred to think of white female shoppers as affluent and docile, they knew not all customers fit that im-

age. In descriptions of female customers who sought bargains and knew exactly what they were looking for, retail literature portrayed shoppers as uncivilized. Reekie has argued that "the female customer was constituted in retail discourse as 'other': at best unpredictable and impetuous, at worst frigid, highly-strung, and primitive."<sup>24</sup> In 1938, the staff magazine at the HBC's Vancouver store printed a cartoon contributed by employee Bill Scarlett. Depicting a sales floor on the opening morning of a "Great Sale" with "Special Bargains," the illustration features a salesman wearing armor. He is bracing himself against a crowd of angry older women, about to burst through the department's doors (Figure 1). Unlike the naïve and helpless shoppers favored by big stores, these customers are assertive and dangerous. Turned fanatical by their desire for low-priced goods, they are the docile shopper's ominous counterpart.

If paternalism affected public and customer relations, it was even more apparent in department stores' labor management. To combat critics' charges of employee exploitation, Eaton's, Simpson's, and the HBC offered among the best workplace benefits in the Dominion. By 1940 these included medical and retirement plans, life insurance, paid vacations, sports teams and facilities, summer camps, semiannual dinners and dances, and arts and leisure clubs.<sup>25</sup> Although these programs were meant to enhance department stores' images, they were also intended to boost worker loyalty and docility. Implicit in all aspects of labor management was an assumption that employees were not entitled to manage their own affairs. Rather than being autonomous, employees were "children" of fatherly firms. In keeping with paternalist assumptions, women received infantilizing treatment more than men did. A joke in Eaton's Toronto staff magazine, meant to be humorous, is suggestive of the perception at Eaton's of youthful female workers. "Yes. It happened in a Toronto store, but NOT in EATON'S," it began. "A customer was looking at handbags. She fancied one with a smart modern metal ornament. 'I like this one,' she said to the salesclerk, 'but do you think the metal will tarnish?' 'Oh, yes, beautifully, Madam,' answered the helpful salesgirl."<sup>26</sup>

It is likely that staff members who were not Anglo-Celtic experienced significant workplace discrimination.<sup>27</sup> Prior to World War II, department stores were famous for their refusals to hire non-Anglo-Celtics. In Vancouver, anti-Asian sentiment was so strong that women of Chinese heritage did not even bother applying for work in department stores.<sup>28</sup> Eaton's and Simpson's preferred employees who were native-born white Protestants, but Eaton's did hire Anglo-Celtic immigrants from the British Isles. The company also hired francophones. Nonetheless, as Wright has pointed out, more Catholics, non-native English speakers, and people of Jewish and Italian descent worked in Eaton's Toronto factories than in Eaton's Toronto



Figure 1. Crazed Bargain Hunters, Cartoon submitted by D. R. Leslie. *The Bay Builder*, May 1935: 6. Reprinted with the permission of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba.

salesrooms.<sup>29</sup> This reflected Eaton's determination to keep its customer-service workforce anglophone, Protestant, and white.

Paternalist assumptions of feminine inferiority discouraged department stores from promoting women to decision-making positions. A 1929 chart labeled "Supervisors, Group Managers, Heads of Departments and Assistants" shows that out of the approximately 240 supervisory positions at Eaton's in Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Edmonton, only 1 was held by a woman. Women fared only slightly better in the "Department Head" category; 13 out of approximately 300 positions were held by women.<sup>30</sup> Assumptions of feminine inferiority also justified paying lower wages to women than to men. In 1896, female sales office staff at Eaton's received \$3.00 or less per week, and the company's "cash girls and bundlers" received "around \$1.50 to \$2.00 a week." Most of the company's married male employees, in contrast, received between \$6.00 and \$8.00 weekly.<sup>31</sup> On the eve of World War II, women in department stores still received less money than men. An HBC report reveals that regular male employees' average monthly earnings were \$89.50 while those for women were \$64.50.<sup>32</sup>

Paternalism enabled individual owners and managers to control individual employees' job security, pay, work schedules, benefits, and promotions. If certain managers were keen to cut expenses, if they believed certain employees were less entitled to pay and security than others, if they disliked a certain employee, or if they simply favored one employee over another, employees' social and material circumstances suffered. Timothy Eaton biographer Joy Santink has noted that "[a]dvancement [at Eaton's] was wholly dependent upon the whims of a departmental manager, whose own first concern was departmental profitability."<sup>33</sup> Managers' twofold ability to smooth or make difficult employees' experiences caused workers to live in fear of dismissal and other punishments. When they received promotions, pay increases, or praise they were supposed to interpret such things as favors and not entitlements.<sup>34</sup>

Paternalism toward employees aimed to prevent labor-identified employee solidarity. Female as well as male employees underwent punishment for collective action. In 1912, thirty-eight Eaton's female garment workers tried to convince management to raise piece rates. After management refused, they consulted with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). The ILGWU's Toronto leaders gave only limited support, but the women walked out anyway. Eaton's did not grant any concessions.<sup>35</sup> In management's view, the strikers were irrational; company officials stated that Eaton's facilities were the best in Toronto. "Employees are housed in a well-lighted building. . . . [with] well-ventilated, clean, well-kept washrooms, refrigerated drinking water, locker cloakrooms; excellent . . . lunchrooms . . . [and] a first class cafeteria." As well, "rest rooms for the use of the employees are maintained . . . recreation clubrooms are provided . . . there are athletic grounds . . . there is also the summer camp [and] a special discount on all purchases made in the retail store departments." Management's position was that welfare provisions at Eaton's made wage increases unnecessary; if only female employees would let Eaton's take care of them, they would not need to strike. Congruent with paternalist assumptions of feminine passivity, one manager blamed the strike on a hostile outside interest. "If Amy Tucker had not been in the department it would never have happened," he told Eaton's executives. "Her brother was in the C.C.F. [the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation was Canada's leading social-democratic party] and kept her stirred up all the time. I believe he attended the union meetings and made speeches to the girls."<sup>36</sup> In the aftermath of the lockout, Eaton's dismissed those strikers whom it believed were most recalcitrant.

## Customers Respond to Paternalism

Non-Anglo-Celtic customers chafed against department stores' anglophone and white identities. In her autobiography, novelist Gabrielle Roy has described childhood trips to Eaton's. She and her mother would leave their small francophone community in Manitoba and journey to Eaton's in Winnipeg. There her mother would ask to be served in French. If the few French-speaking salespeople at Eaton's were not around, she would "bring out" her English. Anglophone staff would hover around, trying to understand her mother's requests. "These confabulations were intended to solve our predicament," Roy wrote, "but to us they were pure torture." Though Manitoba was officially bilingual, Eaton's was clearly anglophone. Later in life, Roy moved to Montreal. There she "found things no different in that city's west end department stores." As Québec was predominantly francophone, she "was dumbfounded and began to feel there was no cure for the misfortune of being French Canadian."<sup>37</sup>

Saleswomen at Eaton's in Winnipeg were "good-hearted folk" who tried to "rescue" Roy and her mother.<sup>38</sup> Their condescension was hence subtle. Other shoppers suffered more overt discrimination. Wright has recounted the story of a "working-class southern Italian woman interviewed by [historian] Franca Iacovetta [who] 'recalled crying all the way home after being laughed out of a department store one day in 1949 when she could not make herself understood by the saleswomen.'"<sup>39</sup> Wright also has demonstrated that during the 1950s, the "New Canadian" committee at Eaton's found evidence of employee mistreatment of recent immigrants. According to one committee report uncovered by Wright, "Eaton's saleshelp . . . lack courtesy in their treatment of [immigrants] and are impatient with them because of the language difficulties and the reluctance of a New Canadian shopper to make up his mind as quickly as a Canadian."<sup>40</sup> Although these instances of ethnic and racial discrimination were not explicitly paternalistic, they were buttressed by the T. Eaton Company's overall paternalist approach to ethnic and race relations.

White women had mixed responses to paternalism. Many appreciated the services that were derived from assumptions of feminine delicacy. Complimentary lavatories, restrooms, and writing rooms offered semiprivate spaces where female customers relieved themselves and enjoyed repose.<sup>41</sup> Yet even while they took advantage of paternalist offerings at Eaton's, white female customers resented department stores' assumptions that female shoppers needed coddling. Over the years, they wrote hundreds of complaint letters to Canada's largest department stores. Their criticisms and suggestions indicate they valued efficiency, intelligent service, and low prices more than decorous, flattering treatment. Female customers

expected department stores to treat them as intelligent, busy, and in many cases hard-working human beings. They resented aspects of service that caused them to waste time, effort, and money. Deliveries and pickups, for instance, caused endless headaches. Eaton's Toronto delivery system was based on the assumption that women were leisured beings who were always available to await a house call from an Eaton's representative. Women who were expecting store deliveries and pickups, therefore, had to clear their calendars and book time off work to meet delivery drivers. When drivers failed to arrive, they became understandably frustrated.<sup>42</sup>

White women also expressed anger at male managers' assumptions of female depravity. In 1957, Mrs. E. Straiton of Toronto complained to an Eaton's Superintendent about "one of the most disgusting exhibitions I have ever seen in a store sale, which happened last night at Eaton's College Street Drapery Dept." She had arrived at the store, she wrote, interested in the "Dacron curtains advertised for the 7 o'clock special. . . . There were quite a few gathered waiting for 7 p.m." In her view, "[t]he Managers of the department could have handled the sale a little more business like. They just cleared off one of those low display bunks that are just off the floor and at 7 o'clock brought these curtains out and threw them over the people's heads on to the floor. Naturally, these people had to stoop over to grab the curtains and it was such a small area the people behind knocked the others all over the floor. It is a wonder someone wasn't seriously injured. . . . The Manager stood back with his arms crossed laughing. I told him I didn't think it was a laughing matter and I thought there could have been a much better system for those few curtains, rather than throwing them on the floor like bones to a bunch of dogs."<sup>43</sup> Although the shoppers' dignity received more injury than their health, this incident illustrates how entrenched beliefs about assertive customers' inherent weakness and baseness created oppressive shopping environments at Eaton's.

Individual complaint letters demonstrate that not all female shoppers accepted department stores' assumptions of feminine inferiority. Yet these were not radical responses to department stores' gendered hierarchies. In fact, stores' receipt of complaint letters enabled them to identify potential problem areas and further improve their selling tactics. As well, some shoppers who complained of treatment by one retailer simply transferred their business to another department store. One dissatisfied Eaton's customer, Gladys Munroe, "instructed" her lawyers to go after Eaton's for reselling a furniture set she had just purchased. In her complaint letter she promised that all future "furniture and decorating . . . for our new home . . . will not be obtained through the T. Eaton Co. but will be done by a more reliable firm."<sup>44</sup> Shopping in alternative stores did not threaten mass retailing's gendered paternalism. Shoppers' encounters with department stores' sexism

and profit-seeking attempts remained individualized, as did the protests that grew out of such experiences.

Radical, organized challenges by customers to department stores' sexism prior to 1960 in Canada have yet to be discovered. Canadian feminists appear to have been more reticent than British feminists, who in 1912, as historian Erika Rappaport has written, "struck nearly four hundred shop windows and did approximately five thousand pounds' worth of damage."<sup>45</sup> When asked to explain their actions, members of the Women's Social and Political Union, who were primarily responsible, said they acted to protest department stores' failure to back their demands for the vote. Thus, "they were not protesting consumer culture, the commodification of women, or women's pleasures." Instead they were using their public personas as shoppers, Rappaport has argued, to "reshape national politics and the public sphere."<sup>46</sup> Smashing windows did not challenge retailers' power, but it did indicate that some British feminists mobilized against department stores to secure support for greater gender inclusivity.

Some female Canadian consumers did reject department stores. As in other Western countries, Canadian working-class and socialist women built cooperative alternatives to mass retailing. Between 1930 and 1932 a female-managed Wholesale Society operated in Toronto. After it closed, its members started the Toronto Rochdale Co-operative Society, which remained open until the late 1930s.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, during the Depression, Canadian consumers who were strapped for cash turned away from the big stores, which did not offer generous credit, and started patronizing local merchants.<sup>48</sup> Despite these women's rejections of mass retail, a feminist critique of mass retailing's sexism was absent in Canada, as also in Australia, prior to 1960.<sup>49</sup> Canadian clubwomen's close ties with department stores no doubt augmented this situation. Such leading female philanthropists as Elizabeth Fudger and Lady Flora Eaton were married to Simpson's and Eaton's Presidents during the interwar years. As well, the Canadian home-economics movement depended upon assistance from the big stores. In the interwar period, Vancouver department stores sponsored cooking competitions for secondary students. Domestic science teachers also brought students to department stores to attend fashion shows.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, during the forties and fifties, the Young Business Women's Canadian Club, the Business and Professional Women's Club, and the Toronto Council of Jewish Women all raised money by selling tickets to Eaton's and Simpson's biannual fashion shows in Toronto.<sup>51</sup>

Even as some middle-class women were alienated by department stores' gender discrimination, they felt class-based affinities with the big stores. Improving working conditions for women was one of Canadian clubwomen's many causes during this period. The maternalist National

Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) applauded department stores' protectionist reforms. When Eaton's paid the medical bills of a female employee who had contracted typhoid fever in 1894, Mrs. S. G. Wood voiced her approval at the NCWC's annual convention.<sup>51</sup> Unlike labor activists, whose campaigns against department stores' working conditions centered on higher wages and union recognition, clubwomen supported department stores' paternalist promises to care for female employees. Preoccupied with white female employees' reproductive health and sexual innocence, maternal feminists viewed the campaign for higher wages as peripheral to moral concerns.<sup>52</sup>

Some bourgeois feminists felt affinities with the Anglo-Celtic character of department stores. Just before World War I, members of the Vancouver Local Council of Women, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, and the Vancouver Board of Trade met to discuss saleswomen's working conditions. They drafted a list of proposed amendments to the British Columbia Shop Act. Their recommendations included the following: "[R]egulat[ing] the hours of assistants," "Shops to be kept clean and well-ventilated," and "Seats for girls and women." The committee also stipulated that "[i]n no cases shall Caucasians be permitted to work in the same establishment as Asiatics."<sup>53</sup> This committee, composed of an alliance of bourgeois feminists, labor activists, and businessmen—whose interests might otherwise be divided along class and gender lines—came together for moral and race issues. In committee members' minds, Asians' presence in shops symbolized poor working conditions for white women. Thus, although white middle-class women in Canada might have complained about department stores' gendered paternalism, they were silent about, and in some cases supportive of, department stores' discrimination against racialized minorities.

### Female Employees Respond to Paternalism

Female employees' responses to paternalism were as varied as customers'. Some Anglo-Celtic women invested psychologically in department stores' familial and aristocratic atmospheres. "For single women especially," as historian Patricia Phenix has written in her history of Eaton's employees, the company "was not merely a part of their lives, it *was* their lives."<sup>54</sup> When asked by an Eaton's archivist to share the most exciting experience in her career, Lilian Poulter, a salesperson in Toronto from 1900 to 1952, responded that it was the "quarter century garden parties at Col. Eatons [sic] and R. Y. Eatons [sic] and the dinners and get togethers."<sup>55</sup> As well, some female employees responded with gratitude and loyalty to owners' and executives' individualized benevolence. Miss E. M. Giroux told an Eaton's archivist that "Sir John Eaton . . . was always so pleasant when going through the

store always smiling and bowing to the employees." She looked "back with Gratitude and Happiness over the years I spent with the T. Eaton Co. and can only say that I would want to do the same thing over again."<sup>56</sup>

Other female employees appreciated the practical benefits of paternalism. Department stores may have treated women in sexist ways, but they did offer welfare and recreation programs unmatched by other employers.<sup>57</sup> Some women, therefore, accommodated employers' paternalist treatment. As one self-described businesswoman told the Ontario Division of Industrial Hygiene in 1923, "To get a good, hot, well-cooked dinner in the middle of the day without any bother is a good thing physically and a better one psychologically—it saves time in the lunch hour and saves a lot of worry and fatigue."<sup>58</sup> Simpson's boarding house for women was especially appreciated. Historian Carolyn Strange has explained that "[w]orking women looked to boarding-homes for security, convenience, comfort, and companionship. . . . Facilities as basic as laundry basins were often absent in private rooms, but in subsidized homes women could enjoy the full use of amenities. . . . Regular socials, dress-up parties, and seasonal bashes added variety to the monotony of women's workaday lives."<sup>59</sup>

Even if they appreciated paternalism's benefits, many female employees were frustrated by its assumptions. Hostile to managers' and customers' expectations of efficiency and servitude, female employees developed their own acceptable workplace behaviors. Benson has argued that "saleswomen shared with millions of American workers an ethic of independence: they would work but they would not serve; hence their aversion to domestic service."<sup>60</sup> To assert importance and authority on the sales floor, Canadian saleswomen developed notions of "turf," or territory. "You will use the word 'We' instead of 'I' in all cases other than those of a strictly personal nature, as 'We have it in three styles,' not 'I have it in three styles,'" Eaton's Winnipeg trainers told sellers around 1920.<sup>61</sup> Rather than being unskilled, low-status employees, female department-store employees declared themselves skilled arbiters of taste who controlled stock turnover. Moreover, to demonstrate that they were on equal social footing with customers and to maintain control of their work, salespeople sometimes ignored customers. In 1933, Eaton's in Toronto felt it necessary to tell sellers, "If you are busy on some other work . . . do not appear indifferent and give the customer the impression that you're too busy to attend."<sup>62</sup> In a further assertion of social standing, saleswomen were often informal when interacting with customers. When a shopper looks like she needs assistance, reminded Winnipeg's staff magazine, salespeople were not to ask, "What is it, dear?" Instead they were to politely inquire, "May I help you?"<sup>63</sup>

Other women accepted retailers' treatment of employees as subordinates. Josephine Rist's experiences illustrate both the futility and the tragedy

of this response to paternalism. In March 1919, the Board of Directors of Eaton's received a letter from Toronto solicitor Edward Meek. It stated that "in or about the month of November, 1908," Rist "was in your employ as cashier in the basement cash office." One morning a customer had returned a shot gun. When a male clerk was handling the return, Rist was accidentally "shot in the face, eyes and arm." The "discharge was so near her, that the flash, shock, and powder nearly destroyed her eye-sight, and that it permanently injured the retina of her eyes." Her eyes were currently so weak that she "cannot perform any work with satisfaction." Over the years she saw numerous doctors, whose bills eventually made her destitute.<sup>64</sup>

When she was asked in 1919 why she had not told anyone about the incident, Rist stated that the firm's President had asked her to keep the matter quiet. Meek informed the company that on the day of the accident Sir John Eaton visited Rist at the hospital and took her home in his car. He "particularly cautioned her *not to mention the accident to anyone* and not to be interviewed by the reporters."<sup>65</sup> Eaton also bought her a one-way ticket to Winnipeg and arranged a light-duty position for her at his store there. She struggled for a few years but found she could not perform her reduced duties; she then moved to Toronto to live with her brother. In an effort to avoid bad publicity, Eaton had silenced this employee. For ten years Rist maintained her part of the bargain, not telling anyone of the accident even while enduring physical pain and loss of social prestige. When she finally decided to obtain legal assistance, she continued to play the role of supplicant in relations with the Eaton family. After being informed by her lawyer that Eaton's refused to consider her request for assistance, she wrote in a letter to Lady Eaton that she had "felt for years . . . that if [John] Eaton . . . really knew the actual facts . . . he would in common kindness . . . not . . . ignore them."<sup>66</sup>

Unlike Rist, not all female employees worked within paternalism's parameters. When they grew weary with disrespectful treatment, they expressed their dissatisfaction. Quitting was a common method of lodging discontent. Turnover was high in the big stores, and many girls and women held a series of jobs throughout their careers. Such was the case of Elvina Ralph, who by the Depression had worked in several offices and stores in Saskatoon and surrounding towns.<sup>67</sup> On rare occasions, a few groups of women quit en masse. After British Columbia established minimum wage laws for women in 1918, the HBC discontinued paying its female clerks \$8.00 weekly plus commission. It cancelled women's abilities to collect commission and started paying them the minimum wage of \$9.00 per week. Male clerks "continued to receive both a salary and a commission." Enraged not only by their loss in pay but also at their loss of status, a "number of female clerks [in Vancouver] quit their jobs in protest."<sup>68</sup>

Other employees turned to governments for assistance. In 1923, Elvina Ralph wrote to the Saskatchewan Minimum Wages Board to complain about the HBC in Saskatoon. Having lived on her own for fifteen years, she had always been able to earn enough to live "comfortably." During a recent sale at the HBC she obtained a contract position and agreed to work for less than minimum wage. After the sale she became a member of the regular staff; her wages, however, did not increase to minimum wage. She went to the store supervisor to ask for a raise. He told her that since she felt she deserved a pay increase she "could get out [as] they didn't want me around there. He said I was up against a big proposition when I took that stand against the Hudsons Bay and to go ahead and collect it if I could. He said the Hudsons Bay were a big Company and were well protected and advised me for my own good not to try anything like that as it would do them no harm and would only make it hard for me to get work elsewhere." He also stated that "he had lots of girls working below the minimum wage."<sup>69</sup> It is unclear whether the Board helped Ralph, but it is clear that some saleswomen did not hesitate to challenge unfair working conditions.

On rare occasions, female employees struck to obtain greater workplace entitlements. On 15 May 1919, 18 percent of Winnipeg's population went on strike. Half of those who walked out represented 94 of the city's 96 unions; the other half were not unionized.<sup>70</sup> Over 1,000 of the nonunionized strikers worked for the T. Eaton Company, and 485 of them were women. Departmental solidarity had a major influence on decisions to strike. Women in departments known as mail order clerical, mail order copying, mail order packing, factory work rooms, cash office, sales audit office, city inspectors' office, notions, women's lingerie and whitewear, china and glass, employees' cafeteria, soda fountain, Grill Room, infants' wear, farm and garden seeds, and fruits and vegetables predominated among female strikers. A few women braved ostracization and struck on their own, including Miss S. Harrison of mail order filing, Miss E. Jones of the fancy goods workroom, Mrs. W. Richards and Miss B. Kincaid of the drugs department, Miss Hall of the curtains department, and Miss J. Cruden of hairdressing. Eaton's remained open but operated at reduced capacity during the six weeks of the strike. When it ended, Eaton's held interviews with 615 of the strikers. The company allowed 272 to return to their former positions, but it fired 343.<sup>71</sup> In their struggle to make Eaton's a more equitable workplace, then, several female Winnipeg employees lost their jobs.

Union drives also occurred in Canada's largest stores. In 1943, the Retail Clerks International Protective Association (RCIPA) launched a campaign to organize 7,000 employees of Simpson's in Toronto. Women as well as men attended meetings and became union stewards. In 1946, the infant local applied unsuccessfully for certification.<sup>72</sup> Determined to see the

unionization of Canadian retail, in 1948 the Canadian Congress of Labour spearheaded a drive to unionize 9,000 of Eaton's Toronto workers. Due to many women's temporary and part-time statuses, organizers found them difficult to unionize. Nonetheless, stated head organizer Eileen Tallman, the "Eaton Drive" proved that "women can be quite . . . strong and committed [to unions] . . . despite their double workload. . . . Dozens of . . . women made the extra effort to . . . bring the number of women [union] members . . . to about half" (Figure 2).<sup>73</sup> After the Eaton's local applied for certification in 1952, Eaton's stalled the proceedings. When the Ontario Labour Relations Board finally put certification to a vote in 1953, slightly more than half of Eaton's employees voted against unionization.

Eaton Drive organizers challenged the firm's paternalist treatment of employees. One union broadside asked employees whether they wanted to maintain the old-fashioned "paternalism rut" or to instead embrace democratic industrial relations.<sup>74</sup> An analysis of campaign literature indicates, however, that male organizers and employees challenged Eaton's class paternalism but not Eaton's gendered paternalism. The union quietly supported unequal pay rates based on gender and marital status, and campaign literature portrayed the male breadwinner/female homemaker model as the postwar family ideal.<sup>75</sup> Other researchers have pointed to similar difficulties within organized labor's attempts to organize female retail employees. According to Benson, the RCIPA was "at best paternalistic and often outright hostile to the organizing of saleswomen."<sup>76</sup>

Given male laborists' hesitation to embrace workplace equity, it is all the more noteworthy that female retail workers in Canada seized unionization as a vehicle for gender parity. In 1949, Eaton Drive organizers hosted a radio show to publicize activity and increase support. One organizer asked union member and show participant Mrs. Mould her opinion about "equal pay for equal work." Mould replied, "There should be a rate set for a job, not for the person who does the job. What difference does it make whether it is a man, woman, or boy who does the job? . . . In Eaton's, many women salesclerks have as much responsibility as men, but get much lower pay."<sup>77</sup> Choosing to struggle within unionism's gendered parameters, Mould demonstrated her rejection of Eaton's gendered paternalism and her commitment to making labor-identified action more equitable. Her actions thus resembled those of Woolworth's female employees in Detroit, who in 1937 participated in a week-long sit-down strike. Historian Dana Frank has shown that during this strike male organizers with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees' International Union and the RCIPA represented the female strikers in negotiations with Woolworth's management. Nevertheless, the female strikers drew up their own demands, for which their negotiators successfully bargained.<sup>78</sup>



Figure 2. Although men dominated membership in the fledgling union at Eaton's in Toronto between 1948 and 1952, women workers also supported the "Eaton Drive." Unionization broadside c1951, Volume 1, Series B 31, Manuscript Group 31 (Eileen Sufrin Fonds), Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, ON, Canada. Reprinted with permission of the United Steelworkers.

## Conclusion

Exploring Canadian department stores' relationships with female shoppers and sellers prior to 1960, this article underscores the complexities of social relations within the age of consumer capitalism. Anglo-Celtic men of the propertied and managerial class justified their superior positions by belittling women, minorities, and nonmanagerial employees. Customers and employees responded to this treatment in varied ways, depending on their own gender, racial and ethnic, and class affiliations. Some female

shoppers and customers appreciated the concrete benefits of paternalism, but others chafed against its restrictive consequences. Class played a major role in customers' and employees' reactions. Shoppers sometimes expected subservient treatment from workers, and bourgeois feminists tended to applaud department stores' paternalist attitudes toward female workers. Female wage earners, in contrast, fought against both gender and class prejudices. Finally, non-Anglo-Celtic customers resented and suffered from racial and ethnic discrimination, and some white middle-class clubwomen supported exclusionary hiring practices. Certain white employees asserted racial and ethnic superiority over customers, and some made psychological investments in shared ethnic identities with their employers.

Differing allegiances among customers and employees within Canada's largest department stores prior to 1960 provide sobering reminders that customers and employees of mass retail have not always viewed their interests as aligned. In her historical overview of "consumer-worker alliances" in the United States, Frank has made a similar observation. Too often middle-class consumer activists have worked toward "obtaining justice 'for' the working people at the other end," instead of "helping working people do so for themselves." Moreover, some consumer movements have promoted racial hierarchies. In the interwar years, as Frank has shown, some white workers used the union label to "exclude Asian workers from the labor market." Although Frank cautiously supports contemporary alliances of middle-class consumers with workers, she warns activists to be aware of the "hierarchical dynamics often embedded in the very nature of consumer tactics."<sup>79</sup>

The history of paternalism within Canadian retail offers ample testimony of consumers' and workers' complicity within broader class, race, and ethnic power structures. Yet it also provides hints of protest against these hierarchies. Individual shoppers' complaint letters indicate the existence of widespread consumer dissatisfaction with gendered paternalism. Non-Anglo-Celtic customers' rejections of ethnic and racial discrimination show that department stores' disempowering treatment of racialized and ethnic shoppers did not go unchallenged. Employees' organized and unorganized attempts to gain workplace entitlements suggest thousands of female retail workers rejected department stores' gendered and class paternalism. Since mass retail continues to play a major role in women's lives, these past actions remain important. They underscore the many challenges facing the contemporary antiretail movement, but they also reveal potential areas for further mobilization.

## NOTES

Thank you to the Symons Trust Fund for Canadian Studies at Trent University and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding this research. Insights and encouragements from Joan Sangster, Franca Iacovetta, James Warren, and the anonymous JWH reviewers greatly enhanced this article.

<sup>1</sup>Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890–1940* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988). For reviews of *Counter Cultures*, see Elyce J. Rotella, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 499 (July 1988): 174–75; Bruce R. Kahler, *The Historian* 51, no. 1 (1988): 148; Veronica Strong-Boag, *Labour/Le Travail* 21, no. 1 (1988): 285–86; William Leach, *The Journal of American History* 74, no. 2 (1987): 537–38.

<sup>2</sup>Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 258–59.

<sup>4</sup>Benson, *Counter Cultures*; Theresa McBride, “A Woman’s World: Department Stores and the Evolution of Women’s Employment, 1870–1920,” *French Historical Studies* 10, no. 4 (1978): 664–83; Elaine Abelson, *When Ladies Go A-Thieving: Middle-Class Shoplifters in the Victorian Department Store* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Gail Reekie, *Temptations: Sex, Selling, and the Department Store* (Sydney: Urban and Unwin, 1993); Lisa Tiersten, “Marianne in the Department Store: Gender and the Politics of Consumption in turn-of-the-century Paris,” in *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850–1939*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 1999), 116–34; and Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London’s West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>5</sup>Cynthia Wright, “‘The Most Prominent Rendezvous of Feminine Toronto’: Eaton’s College Street and the Organization of Shopping in Toronto, 1920–1950” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1992); Cynthia Wright, “Feminine Trifles of Vast Importance”: Writing Gender into the History of Consumption,” in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women’s History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 229–60; Cynthia Wright, “Rewriting the Modern: Reflections on Race, Nation, and the Death of a Department Store,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 65, no. 1 (2000): 153–67.

<sup>6</sup>Michael Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869–1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 100–120.

<sup>7</sup>Crossick and Jaumain, “The World of the Department Store: Distribution, Culture and Social Change,” in Crossick and Jaumain, *Cathedrals of Consumption*, 1–45; and Donica Belisle, “Rise of Mass Retail: Canadians and Department Stores, 1890 to 1940” (PhD diss., Trent University, 2006), chap. 7.

<sup>8</sup>John Ferry, *A History of the Department Store* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1960).

<sup>9</sup>Joy L. Santink, *Timothy Eaton and the Rise of His Department Store* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 90–159.

<sup>10</sup>Edith MacDonald, *Golden Jubilee, 1869–1919* (Toronto and Winnipeg: T. Eaton Company, 1919), 178; William Stephenson, *The Store that Timothy Built* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1969), 84; Miller, *The Bon Marché*, 47. International companies' sales figures are drawn from Santink, *Timothy Eaton*, 266. She states the figures are in "dollars" and does not specify whether the sales are measured in Canadian or American currency.

<sup>11</sup>Mr. Burbridge, "Report on the Hudson's Bay Stores," 1912, File 2504, Series A.102, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, Canada, hereafter HBCA; *Victoria Daily Times*, "Hudson's Bay Co.'s Store," 19 September 1921; "Vancouver Store," *The Beaver*, December 1926, 10–11; "First Impressions," *The Beaver*, December 1926, 8–9; "New H.B.C. Store," *The Calgary Daily Herald*, 13 September 1921; Untitled, *The Beaver*, December 1920, 20–21; J. Prest, "From Pioneer Trading Post," *The Beaver*, March 1921, 4; H. T. Lockyer, "The Rise of H.B.C. Vancouver," *The Beaver*, December 1920, 20; and David Monod, "Bay Days: The Managerial Revolution and the Hudson's Bay Company Stores Department," 1986, PP 1986–10, p. 4, HBCA.

<sup>12</sup>Monod, "Bay Days," 24.

<sup>13</sup>Crossick and Jaumain, "The world of the department store," 16; Miller, *The Bon Marché*, 236; Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 290; and Reekie, *Temptations*, 159–60.

<sup>14</sup>Edith Burley, *Servants of the Honourable Company: Work, Discipline, and Conflict in the Hudson Bay Company, 1770–1879* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 2; McBride, "A Woman's World," 664–83; Bill Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1995), 119; Gail Reekie, "'Humanising Industry': Paternalism, Welfarism, and Labour Control in Sydney's Big Stores, 1890–1930," *Labour History* 53, no. 2 (1987): 1–19; and Andrea Tone, *The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997).

<sup>15</sup>Rod McQueen, *The Eatons: The Rise and Fall of Canada's Royal Family* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999).

<sup>16</sup>Mary Jackman, *The Velvet Glove: Paternalism and Conflict in Gender, Class, and Race Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 9–10.

<sup>17</sup>Jack Prest, "Alberta Indians," *The Beaver*, January 1922, 5.

<sup>18</sup>Johnny Young, poem in *The Bayonet*, July 1935.

<sup>19</sup>*The Eaton News*, 30 October 1930, Series 96, Box 2, p. 10, Fonds 229, T. Eaton Papers, Archives of Ontario, Toronto, ON, Canada, hereafter TEP, quoted in Wright, "'The Most Prominent Rendezvous,'" 195.

<sup>20</sup>Reekie, *Temptations*, 103–4.

<sup>21</sup>*Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1887–88 (Toronto: T. Eaton Company, 1887), 4.

<sup>22</sup>Reekie, *Temptations*, 53.

<sup>23</sup>A Little Chat About Selling (Toronto: T. Eaton Company, 1931), Series 162, Box 24, File 816, TEP.

<sup>24</sup>Reekie, *Temptations*, 61; also Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 202–4.

<sup>25</sup>Susan Forbes, "Gendering Corporate Welfare Practices: Female Sports and Recreation at Eaton's During the Depression," *Rethinking History* 5, no. 1 (2001), 59–74; and Donica Belisle, "A Labour Force for the Consumer Century: Commodification in Canada's Largest Department Stores, 1890–1940," *Labour/Le Travail* (2006): 107–44.

<sup>26</sup>"This Actually Happened," *Flash*, 16 September 1935, 3.

<sup>27</sup>It is true that Eaton's refused to negotiate with the predominantly Jewish garmentworkers who walked out of Eaton's Toronto factories in 1912, but Eaton's did not negotiate with any strikers at all, regardless of their racial and ethnic affiliations.

<sup>28</sup>Tamara Adilman, "A Preliminary Sketch of Chinese Women and Work in British Columbia, 1858–1950," in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia*, ed. Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro (Victoria, BC: Camosun College, 1984), 68.

<sup>29</sup>Wright, "'The Most Prominent Rendezvous,'" 208–10.

<sup>30</sup>"Supervisors, Group Managers, Heads of Departments and Assistants," June 1929, Series 162, File 764, TEP.

<sup>31</sup>Santink, *Timothy Eaton*, 188–89.

<sup>32</sup>*Report on Pensions*, 18 May 1939, Series A.102, File 1644, HBCA.

<sup>33</sup>Santink, *Timothy Eaton*, 188.

<sup>34</sup>Lillian M. Poulter, c1958, Life Story Recording Project, Series 162, File 901, TEP.

<sup>35</sup>Ruth Frager, "Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Eaton Strikes of 1912 and 1934," in Iacovetta and Valverde, *Gender Conflicts*, 217.

<sup>36</sup>*Report On Wages*, Series 9, Box 5, File F8 Matter, TEP.

<sup>37</sup>Gabrielle Roy, *Enchantment and Sorrow: The Autobiography of Gabrielle Roy*, trans. Patricia Claxton (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1987), 5–6.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>39</sup>Franca Iacovetta, "From *Contadina* to Woman Worker," in *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History*, ed. Jean Burnet (Toronto: Multi-cultural Historical Society of Ontario, 1986), 208, quoted in Wright, "'The Most Prominent Rendezvous,'" 207.

<sup>40</sup>Wright, "'The Most Prominent Rendezvous,'" 207.

<sup>41</sup>Letter to Charlie, undated, author's name illegible, Series 162, Box 17, File 614, TEP.

<sup>42</sup>Mrs. Manson to Eaton's, 24 February 1948, Series 69, Box 17, TEP.

<sup>43</sup>Mrs. E. Straiton to Superintendent, 29 March 1957, Series 69, Box 36, TEP.

<sup>44</sup>Gladys A. Munroe to Mr. John David Eaton, 8 October 1946, Series 69, Box 16, TEP.

<sup>45</sup>Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 218–20.

<sup>46</sup>Ian MacPherson, *Each for All: A History of the Co-operative Movement in English Canada, 1900–1945* (Ottawa: MacMillan of Canada, 1979), 141; and Reekie, *Temptations*, 124.

<sup>47</sup>Monod, "Bay Days," 24.

<sup>48</sup>Reekie, *Temptations*, 132.

<sup>49</sup>Barbara Riley, "Six Saucepans to One: Domestic Science vs. the Home in British Columbia, 1900–1930," in Latham and Pazdro, *Not Just Pin Money*, 176.

<sup>50</sup>See Series 151, Box 2, File 58, TEP.

<sup>51</sup>Santink, *Timothy Eaton*, 197.

<sup>52</sup>Alice Chown, *The Stairway* (1921; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 120; also Frager, "Class, Ethnicity, and Gender," 199–200.

<sup>53</sup>J. E. Wilton to BC Royal Commission on Labour, 1912–1914, Box 2, File 1, Fonds GR-0684, British Columbia Archives, Victoria, BC, Canada, hereafter BCA.

<sup>54</sup>Patricia Phenix, *Eatonians: The History of the Family Behind the Family* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2002), 2.

<sup>55</sup>Poulter, Life Story Recording Project.

<sup>56</sup>Miss E. M. Giroux, c1958, Life Story Recording Project, Series 162, File 901, TEP.

<sup>57</sup>Joan Sangster, "The Softball Solution: Female Workers, Male Managers, and the Operation of Paternalism at Westclox, 1923–60," *Labour/Le Travail* 32, no. 3 (1992): 180.

<sup>58</sup>As quoted in *Health Confessions of Business Women* (Provincial Board of Health of Ontario, 1923), 151.

<sup>59</sup>Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880–1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 179–80.

<sup>60</sup>Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 231.

<sup>61</sup>*Rules and Regulations* (Winnipeg: T. Eaton Company, c1920), Series 162, Box 23, File 799, p. 9, TEP.

<sup>62</sup>*Employees' Book of Information* (Toronto: T. Eaton Company, 1933), Series 162, Box 23, File 792, p. 41, TEP.

<sup>63</sup>"Twenty Sins of Salesmanship," *Contacts*, June 1933, 3.

<sup>64</sup>Edward Meek to The T. Eaton Co., 26 March 1919, Series 35, Box 1, File 22, TEP.

<sup>65</sup>Edward Meek to Messrs Donald, Mason, White & Foulds, 3 November 1919, Series 35, Box 1, File 22, TEP.

<sup>66</sup>Josephine Rist to Lady Eaton, 7 May 1919, Series 35, Box 1, File 22, TEP.

<sup>67</sup>Elvina Ralph to F. M. Molloy, Secretary Minimum Wage Board, 1 August 1923, Series LA-I.117, Department of Labour Fonds, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon, SK, Canada, hereafter DLF, SAB.

<sup>68</sup>Andrew Neufeld, *Union Store: The History of the Retail Clerks Union in British Columbia, 1899–1999* (Vancouver: United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 1518, 1999), 32.

<sup>69</sup>Elvina Ralph to F. M. Molloy, Secretary Minimum Wage Board, 1 August 1923, DLF, SAB.

<sup>70</sup>Mary Horodyski, "'That was quite a strike alright . . .': Women and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919," *Fireweed*, April 1988, 13.

<sup>71</sup>J. E. Robinson to Mr. H. McGee, 8 July 1919, Series 7, Box 1, TEP.

<sup>72</sup>See File 5, Volume 1, Series B 31, Manuscript Group 31 (Eileen Sufrin Fonds), Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, ON, Canada, MG 31, LAC.

<sup>73</sup>Eileen Sufrin, *The Eaton Drive: The Campaign to Organize Canada's Largest Department Store, 1948–1952* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1982), 152.

<sup>74</sup>"For a Happier New Year," January 1948, Series B 31, MG 31, LAC.

<sup>75</sup>Belisle, "Exploring Postwar Consumption: The Campaign to Unionize Eaton's in Toronto, 1948–1952," *Canadian Historical Review* 86, no. 4 (2005): 650–54.

<sup>76</sup>Benson, *Counter Cultures*, 269.

<sup>77</sup>Radio transcript, 1949, Series B 31, MG 31, LAC, quoted in Sandra Aylward, "Experiencing Patriarchy: Women, Work, and Trade Unionism at Eaton's" (PhD diss., McMaster University, 1991), 225–26.

<sup>78</sup>Dana Frank, "Girl Strikers Occupy Chain Store, Win Big: The Detroit Woolworth's Strike of 1937," in *Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century*, Howard Zinn, Dana Frank, and Robin D. G. Kelley (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 109.

<sup>79</sup>Frank, "Where Are the Workers in Consumer-Worker Alliances? Class Dynamics and the History of Consumer-Labor Campaigns," *Politics & Society* 31, no. 3 (2003): 365, 367, 364.