# *Chez Fadette: Girlhood, Family, and Private Space in Late-Nineteenth-Century Saint-Hyacinthe*[1]

*Annmarie Adams and Peter Gossage*

***Abstract:***

***The histories of domestic space and domestic life have been written relatively independently in Canada. This article describes the preliminary results of an interdisciplinary project intended to narrow that gap. Based on both textual and non-textual evidence, the discussion turns on relationships between familial change and physical space in a bourgeois household in late-nineteenth-century urban Québec. The house is the childhood home of prominent journalist Henriette Dessaulles, known widely by the pseudonym Fadette. Ultimately, the authors make two distinct but inter-related arguments: First, that the built environment (the house) functions as a primary source in the larger study of family dynamics. And second, that important transitions in domestic life, such as remarriage, inspired women to take greater control of their own spaces.***

***Résumé:***

***Les histoires de l'espace domestique et de la vie domestique se pratiquent de façon relativement indépendante au Canada. Cet article dévoile les résultats préliminaires d'un projet interdisciplinaire dont le but ultime est de réduire cet écart. Fondée sur des sources écrites et non-écrites, la discussion porte sur la relation entre les changements familiaux et les espaces physiques au sein d'un ménage bourgeois du Québec urbain vers la fin du dix-neuvième siècle. Il s'agit de la maison de la jeune Henriette Dessaulles, la journaliste bien connue sous son nom de plume, Fadette. Enfin, les auteurs font valoir deux arguments distincts mais complémentaires. D'abord, on souligne l'intérêt de l'environnement bâti (la maison) comme source de base dans l'étude plus large de la dynamique familiale. Et ensuite, on affirme que d'importantes transitions dans la vie domestique, le remariage par exemple, inspirent les femmes à prendre un contrôle plus important de leurs propres espaces.***

To most she was known simply as "Fadette," the author of the popular weekly column for women published in *Le Devoir* from 1910 to 1946 (Figure 1). In this, Henriette Dessaulles excelled. The lively column — she published more than 1700 articles — offered Montreal women a potpourri of advice on such matters as men, education, marriage, children, feminism, religion, death, love, and beauty. Fadette's writing career, however, did not begin when her cousin Henri Bourassa invited her to contribute to his influential new daily. Even as a young girl growing up in Saint-Hyacinthe, she kept a detailed account of events in her family and social life. Indeed, her personal diary for the years 1874–1881 projects a vivid image of her home town during the early years of its industrial expansion.[2]

Henriette was born in 1860, twelve years after the arrival in Saint-Hyacinthe of the Saint Lawrence and Atlantic railway (later the Grand Trunk). She was a girl of fourteen when she began writing the four surviving notebooks of her journal in 1874 (these are all that survive; she destroyed her earlier diaries). At the time, Saint-Hyacinthe was already a major market town and an important centre for civil, religious, educational, and other services. Its industrial history had begun a decade earlier in 1865, with the establishment of the Louis Côté shoe factory. Industrial and urban expansion continued as Henriette grew into a young woman. By 1891, when she was 31, the town had a population of 7,000, a large proportion of whom survived on wages earned in the city's leather, boot and shoe, and knitted goods factories.[3]

*Figure 1: Henriette Dessaulles as a young woman. From the 1985 exhibition,* **Hommage à Henriette Dessaulles.** *Courtesy Jean-Noël Dion, Société d'histoire régionale de Saint-Hyacinthe.*

Henriette was one of the privileged few who would never need to worry about basic survival the way her working-class contem-

poraries did. Her class position also provided her with access to the best educational opportunities available to Quebec girls in this period. Henriette attended school at two nearby convents run by the Soeurs de la Présentation de Marie. She began her education in 1870, at the *Couvent de Lorette*, and she graduated in 1877 with a diploma in French and English literature from the newly built *Pensionnat des Soeurs de la Présentation*, where she had been a boarder for eight months.[4] During these years she was able to satisfy her taste for literature and to hone her considerable talent for writing. Her diary from this period offers a rare glimpse into the daily life of a young Quebec *bourgeoise* during these tumultuous decades.

Using Henriette's journal, her letters from the same period, and the extant house, this article explores how social change affected physical space in late nineteenth-century Saint-Hyacinthe. It is part of a collaborative effort between an architectural historian and an historian of the family, in which we examine the dynamics of family life and domestic space. Did the ever-changing composition of the late nineteenth-century family express itself in physical terms? What impact did family transitions such as remarriage have on room use? And how were such shifts perceived by the parents, children, and other family members who experienced them?

This case study uses the house at 750 rue Hôtel-Dieu,[5] constructed between 1854 and 1857 for André-Augustin Papineau,

*Figure 2: The Dessaulles house early in the 20th century. Société d'histoire régionale de Saint-Hyacinthe.*

a prominent notary and the brother of the famous Patriote leader (Figure 2). Donated by Papineau to his son Augustin Séraphin Camille in 1859, it was sold a year later to Georges-Casimir Dessaulles, Henriette's father, and one of the most prominent members of Saint-Hyacinthe's francophone bourgeoisie (Figure 3). Georges-Casimir was mayor of the city from 1868 to 1880 and from 1886 to 1897. His first marriage, to Émélie Mondelet, produced three children, including Henriette.

Our study, however, focuses on the architecture of this house during the critical period of Georges-Casimir's second marriage, to Frances Louise (Fanny) Leman, celebrated in January 1869. It is partly inspired by Peter Gossage's continuing interest in remarriage, in the negative stereotypes surrounding stepparents, and in the complex social and legal relationships which were produced as a consequence of what might be called "stepfamily formation."[6] But it is also part of Annmarie Adams' ongoing investigation of domestic architecture and particularly of the critical role of women in defining and regulating their own spaces, rather than responding to male prescriptions (architectural, medical, husbandly, or otherwise).[7]

Despite its obvious class bias, the Dessaulles house at this time is ideal for the interdisciplinary investigation we propose. The house and its occupants figure in a variety of sources. Henriette's diary records her tense relationship with her stepmother Fanny, among other things. Her notes include rich accounts of contested territory within the house itself. On July 31, 1877, for example, she wrote, "as I entered my room yesterday I met Mama who was just coming out of it. What was she doing there? She hardly ever goes there, maybe once a year. What was she looking for ... my secrets?"[8]

***Figure 3:*** ***Saint Hyacinthe City Council in 1886, with Mayor Georges-Casimir Dessaulles in the centre. Reproduced from* St. Hyacinthe Illustré – Illustrated *(Montreal: George Bishop Engraving and Printing Company, 1886): 7.***

Other sources are also useful. The Dessaulles house was visited by census enumerators at ten-year intervals from 1871 to 1901. It appears on the Hopkins insurance map of 1880 and can be traced in municipal evaluation rolls (Figure 4). Since the family was so prominent in the social life of Saint-Hyacinthe, many photographs of family members and the home were taken. And marriage contracts and other notarized deeds provide important insights into the Dessaulles' changing material environment.

In addition to our respective fields of architectural and social history, our methodology has also been inspired by the recent interpretation by literary critics of the "architecture" designed by prominent American women novelists, particularly Edith Wharton, who used space extensively in her narratives of turn-of-the-century New York, and the critical re-assessment of reformer Charlotte Perkins Gilman, author of the powerful short story of

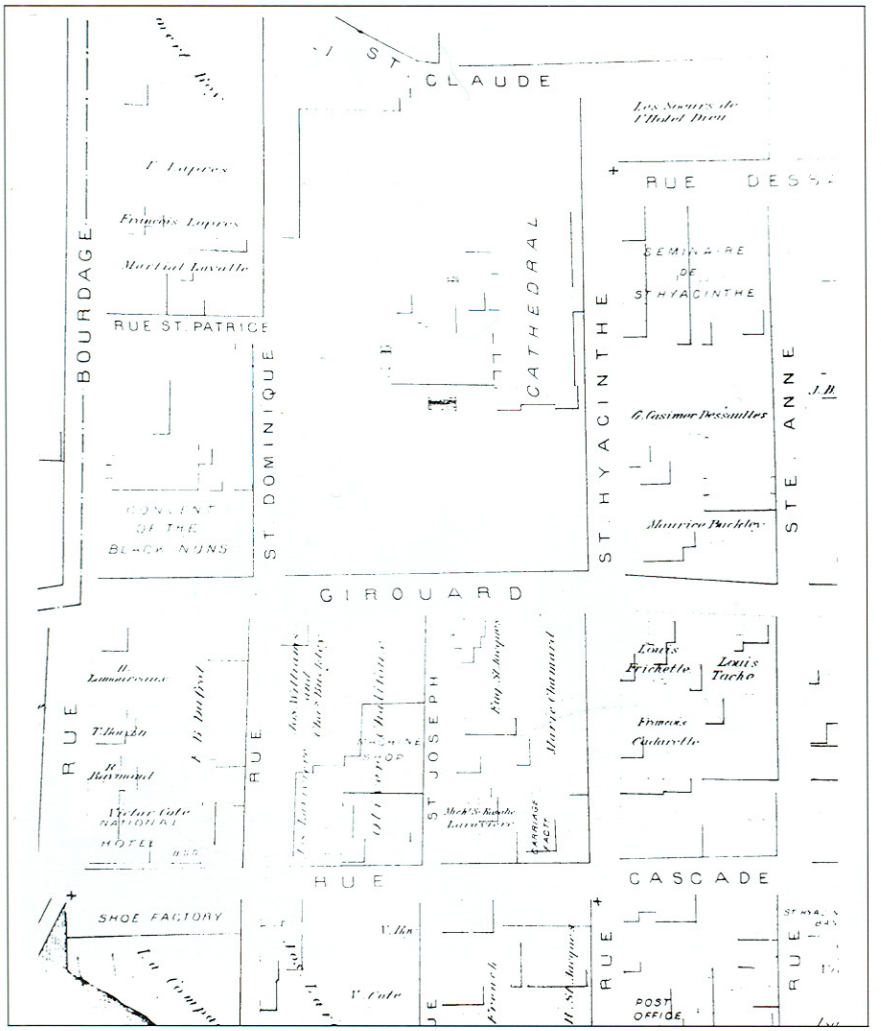


*Figure 4: The Dessaulles house is on lot 552 of this 1880 insurance map. Reproduced from H.W. Hopkins,* **Atlas of the City and County of St. Hyacinthe, Province of Quebec** *(Provincial Surveying and Publishing Company, G.M. Hopkins, Manager, 1880): Plate C. 19.*

her own confinement, "The Yellow Wallpaper" of 1892. This recent work by scholars such as Marilyn Chandler shows how women's narratives — even fiction — can be used as a means to locate and thereby reinterpret women's position in domestic and urban space.[9]

In the end, our article asserts two distinct but inter-related arguments: First, that the real built environment (the house) functions as a primary source in the larger study of family dynamics. And second, that important transitions in domestic life, such as remarriage, inspired women to take greater control of their own spaces.

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Saint-Hyacinthe is located 50 kilometres east of Montreal at a sharp bend in the Yamaska River, at a point — known as "Les Cascades" — where the river was dammed for its hydraulic power early in the nineteenth century. The town that emerged there was two-tiered, both geographically and socially. The low lying alluvial plain near the river was settled by the popular classes, who built wooden houses similar to those in the surrounding countryside. By the 1870s, this area was fairly densely settled by people working in local trades, in Louis Côté's shoe factory, in the Dessaulles' mills, and, soon, in a range of other industrial establishments. The precarity of life in the lower town was amply illustrated in September 1876, when two thirds of the buildings in the area — including the Côté shoe factory — were destroyed by a devastating fire. But the area was soon rebuilt and, as industrial development accelerated in the 1880s and 1890s, housing density increased and wooden houses with their steep-pitched roofs gave way to the multi-family dwellings — often duplexes and triplexes — typical of Quebec's urban working class in this period.[10]

In contrast, the houses of the local bourgeoisie and the town's many religious, educational, and other institutions stood on higher ground, above the ridge that rises from Cascades Street — the main commercial artery of the lower town — to Girouard Street in the upper town. Saint-Hyacinthe had become the centre of both a Catholic diocese and a judicial district in the 1850s, shortly after the arrival of the railway. The new cathedral and the courthouse were both sited on the high ground above the ridge, as were the city hall, the post office, the railway station, the Hôtel-Dieu hospital, and the classical college founded by Abbé Girouard in 1812. This was also the most sought-after residential space in town, protected as it was from floods and, to a lesser extent, fires. Local lawyers, doctors, and merchants built imposing houses in a range of styles on sites located a few steps from the courthouse, the cathedral, and, by the 1870s, Dessaulles Park: a full city block of green space on the site of the former seigneurial manor.

Henriette Dessaulles' girlhood home was located in the heart of this upper tier of Saint-Hyacinthe, across the street from the cathedral and a block away from the park named for her family. The house is both typical and unique in the history of Victorian architecture (Figure 5).[11] It was a rather grand, three-storey, red-brick mansion built on a fieldstone foundation; the original building as constructed in the 1850s comprised the main south-east block, a three-bay structure with a handsome mansard roof. The central entry was a classically-inspired wooden vestibule, which supported a small balcony accessible from the

*Figure 5: The Dessaulles house today, photograph by Annmarie Adams.*

second-storey central window (Figure 2). The mansard roof was punctuated with three dormer windows, capped by classical pediments; all the windows were curtained and framed by heavy wooden louvred shutters. The original house was symmetrical and regular, and at the time of this photo was set back from what was then rue Saint-Hyacinthe by a white fence and an inviting stairway. Architectural historians concerned with stylistic labels would describe the Dessaulles house as "Second Empire." Such buildings, like the Legislative Assembly in Quebec City (1877–87) and the City Hall of Montreal (1874–78), made a conscious nod to Napoleon III and Baron Haussmann's radical restructuring of Paris and were extremely popular in late nineteenth-century Quebec as an overtly "French" expression.[12]

The actual plan of Henriette's family home, however, was less typical of the period and even today is quite mysterious. The date and function of the major addition to the north-west, which included a second entrance from the street, remain unknown. We initially speculated that it may have been constructed during 1880 because of a sudden 38% increase in the municipal tax evaluation between December 1879 and November 1880.[13] However, Henriette makes no such mention of renovation in her diaries for that period and the addition shows clearly on the 1880 Hopkins insurance map.

It seems more likely that Georges-Casimir added the extension shortly after he bought the house in December of 1860, in preparation for his family's move from the seigneurial manor. In her 1939 memoirs, Henriette's cousin Caroline Béïque implies as much.[14] And the family was still living in the one-storey stone manor in the spring of 1861 when the census was taken, even though they had owned the new brick house for several months.[15] Perhaps they delayed their move until the addition was completed.

Even so, the question of how the extra space was used remains. The extension may have been intended as additional family quarters or as space for the family's domestic staff. The one existing study of the house's architectural history cites a

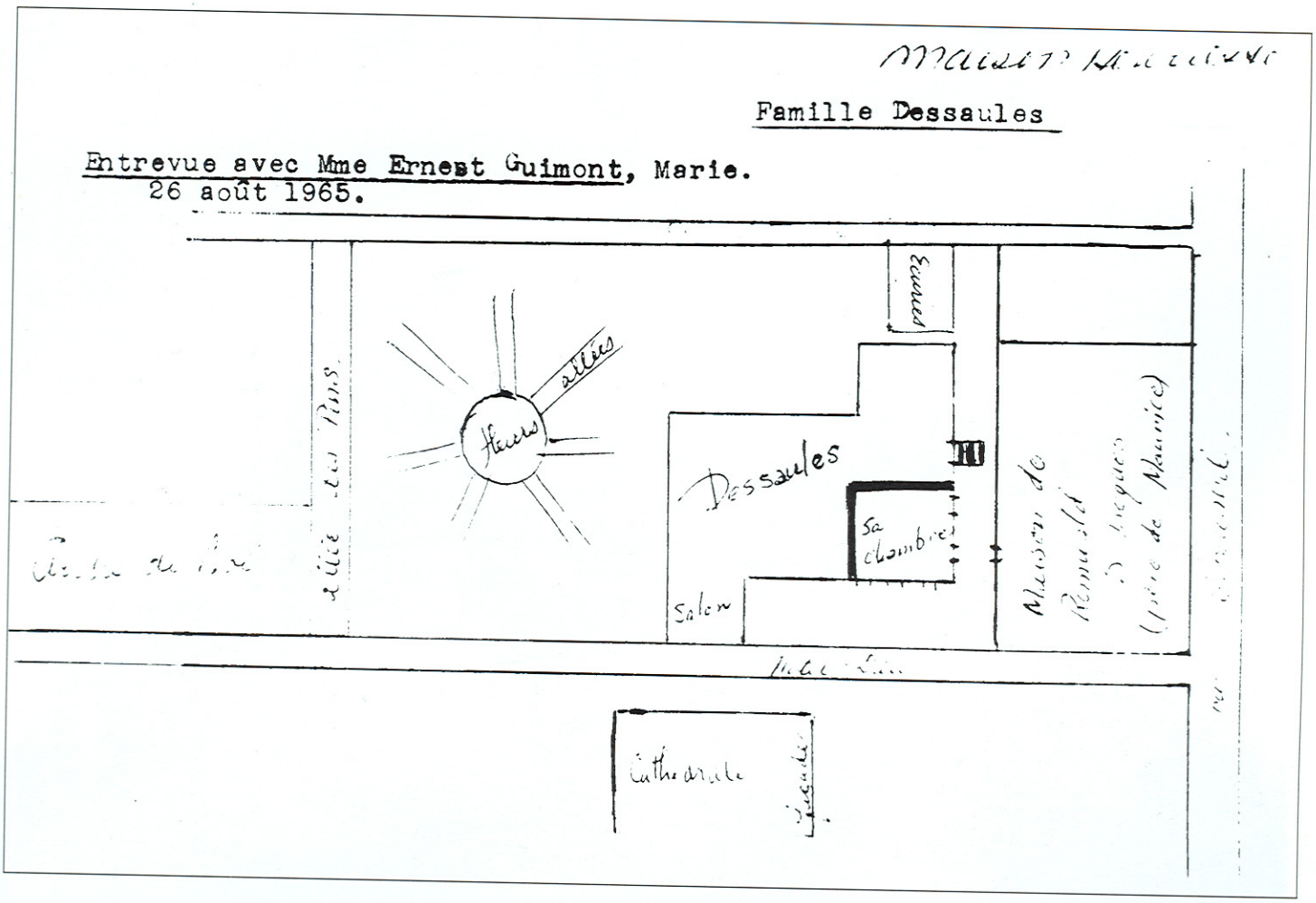


*Figure 6: Plan of the Dessaules house sketched by Madame Marie Guimond during an interview with Soeur Janine Couture, 26 August 1965. Anne-Marie Aubin, personal collection.*

neighbour who believed that the extension had been used to house the staff.[16] In 1871, the census records two servants; twenty years later, in 1891, there were three: Walter and Léa Savaria, a recently married couple who served as general servant and chamber maid respectively, and Virginie Larouche who cooked for the family.

The plan in Figure 6 was drawn in 1965 by Marie Guimond, who had visited the house as a child decades earlier. As the image shows, Guimond remembered the north-west addition as having contained the Dessaulles family's *salon*, rather than domestics' quarters. From historic photographs, we know that like most Victorian mansions, the Dessaulles house featured a series of formal public rooms with ornate wallpapers and textiles and finely carved furniture (Figure 7). Only fragments of these spaces remain today. The house has been divided into a number of rental apartments and notaries' offices occupy the entire ground floor.

Completely invisible from the exterior, even in its original state, are the unusual pair of staircases in the Dessaulles' house, both shown in the photograph in Figure 8 of Fanny Leman in a wicker chair on the second floor of the house. According to the current resident, Gilles Giard, who also owned the house from 1965 to 1995, the open stair with the wooden railing shown in the foreground of this photo went from the ground floor to the second floor only. The stair from the second to third floor — again, according to M. Giard — was housed in this cylindrical enclosure which ran through all three floors of the house. In the basement and ground floors it was used for the furnace and storage.

The Dessaulles family moved into the house some time in the early 1860s. In 1862, their household consisted of Georges-Casimir, his wife Emélie Mondelet, their three young children Arthur, Henriette, and Marie-Alice and a number of servants, including a young Irish woman in her early twenties, Kate McGinley.[17] Late in the summer of 1864, tragedy struck the family.

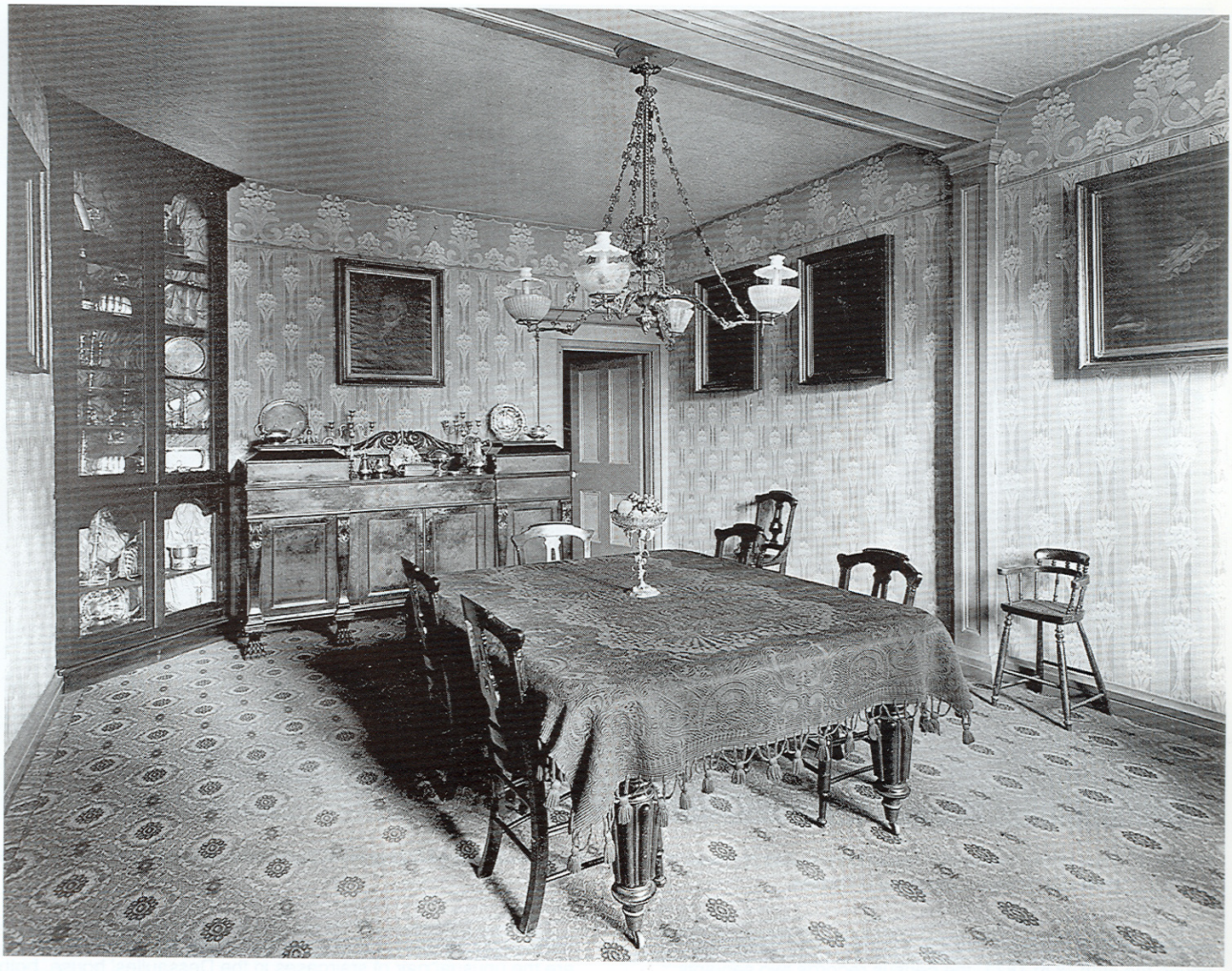

***Figure 7:*** ***Dining room of the Dessaulles house. P010-J/019.3, Fonds Dessaulles, Textual Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal.***

Emélie Mondelet, aged only 28, died. The local newspaper, *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, while silent on the cause of her death, paid tribute to her generous spirit:

> The death of Mme Dessaulles was felt painfully by the entire town. Our society has lost in her a woman distinguished by the most congenial qualities; our charities a zealous defender; the poor, a generous and compassionate heart — they perhaps more than many others will regret her passing forever.[18]

Shortly after his wife's death, Georges-Casimir asked his widowed cousin Honorine Papineau Leman to move into the house to manage his household, which included three children under seven years old (Henriette was four when her mother died). His cousin — a woman in her mid forties — had a daughter in her twenties named Frances Louise, known as Fanny. Fanny also moved into the Dessaulles household some time after Emélie Mondelet's death, perhaps assisting her mother with household matters.

At this point, we are tempted to write: "one thing led to another ...." Georges-Casimir, now in his late thirties, and his cousin's young daughter began a relationship. They were married at the

***Figure 8:*** ***Second floor of Dessaulles house. P010-J/019.2, Fonds Dessaulles, Textual Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal.***

Saint-Hyacinthe Cathedral on January 14, 1869.[19] Over the next ten years, Fanny Leman bore five more Dessaulles children, three girls — one of whom died as a child of seven — and two boys. After the birth of her third daughter in February 1873, her cousin and brother-in-law, the famous liberal Louis-Antoine Dessaulles, chided her on her growing family. "Now," he wrote, "after I wished you, at your wedding, not to have a posterity as numerous as the grains of sand in the sea, here you are starting down along that path!"[20]

When census takers checked on the family in the spring of 1871, they found quite a complex group: Georges-Casimir, Fanny, the three children from the first marriage, Fanny's infant daughter Rosalie, her mother Honorine, and two female domestic servants, including nursemaid Kate McGinley.[21] Some time afterwards — one authority gives the date as 1874 — Fanny Leman dismissed the Irish woman, who had been extremely close to the children of the first marriage.[22] Henriette recalled the incident sadly several years later on the occasion of a reunion with the much loved servant:

> Good kind old Kate! How I sobbed my heart out when she left because *Mama didn't want her any more.* It was one of the great sorrows of my childhood and the one I tried hardest to hide, because I held it against Mama. It was among my first grievances against her. The fact is even now I don't quite understand why she deprived us of Kate's love and care.[23]

Henriette wrote this in 1879. In 1881, when census takers once more visited the house, Henriette was 21 years old and recently

engaged to be married. Although there were some new faces present, the basic structure of the household had not changed since the earlier enumeration. Georges-Casimir lived with his second wife (also his cousin's daughter), his mother-in-law (also his first cousin), the three children from his first marriage (now young adults), the four surviving children of his second marriage (aged from one to ten years) and three servants, all unmarried French-Canadian women under 20 years old.[24]

It was this complex household that provided the setting for the young Henriette's copious and impassioned journal writing. Henriette's bitterness about the firing of her Irish nursemaid introduces one of the strongest recurring themes in her diary for this period: her icy relationship with her stepmother, Fanny Leman. Historian Louise Dechêne, writing about the history of her own family, has suggested that:

> Their conflict mainly arose from the fact that Henriette's stepmother tried to impose her own strict, typically bourgeois sense of decorum and social position on Henriette. Our young diarist spent her free time reading, daydreaming, going for walks in the country with friends, and exchanging long visits with cousins from Montreal or with families of local squires.[25]

This conflict of personalities found frequent expression in the pages of Henriette's journal. "I am quite willing to believe that she loves me," she wrote in September 1874 at age fourteen, "but I would really like to see some *sign* of it!"[26] Just a few days later she pondered her stepmother's behaviour and her own reactions: "... she is sometimes so severe and her manner so harsh, it brings out all my defiance. I never talk back, the things I feel when I'm angry would be too ugly to say, besides I'm too proud to show how her harshness affects me."[27] The following February she confided to her diary that she was "... upset because Mama scolded me yesterday very severely for such a small thing, just an insignificant slip. She has been stern ever since, giving me harsh looks, and I am sad at heart all the time."[28]

The most serious issue to come between the two was Henriette's courtship with Maurice Saint-Jacques, the childhood friend and neighbour whom she ultimately married. Fanny's resistance may well have been based on the kind of obsession with decorum and especially social position to which Dechêne alludes. Another study suggests that Fanny disapproved of her stepdaughter's liaison with Maurice because "... the young man was not a member of the same social class. She preferred to invite the Papineau cousins, especially the famous Gustave, in order to consolidate the great family."[29] Fanny's interference extended to her forbidding Henriette to even speak to Maurice. This prohibition and the young girl's defiance of it resulted in several angry exchanges which she recorded in the diary.

The tensions between Fanny and Henriette can be read clearly in the architecture of the Dessaulles home. Two rooms in the house provided solace to young Henriette in the years following her father's marriage to Fanny. The key in both cases was the degree of separation of these rooms from the rest of the house.

The first was her father's office, presumably on the ground floor to the right of the main entrance, which is featured in Figure 9. The diary is filled with Henriette's longing for her often-absent father, "Papa is away so I can't go and hug him in the evening and put my head on his shoulder and know I'm his dear little girl whom he never hurts because he really loves her," she wrote in February of 1875.[30] Less than two weeks later she consoled herself:

> Fortunately I sometimes find Papa all alone in his study, and then I shower him with hugs and kisses, curl up on his lap and pretend to be asleep so he won't move. But if she arrives, that dear refuge is deserted in a flash and I hurry back upstairs as if I had no right to that dear father of mine.[31]

Henriette's principal refuge, however, was her new room on the third floor of the house, which she first occupied in mid-March of 1875.[32] The undated photograph in Figure 10 shows a corner of Henriette's room including her diploma from the convent, her writing desk crowded with nick-nacks and photographs, and assorted chairs, pictures, and a letter holder. On March 16, 1875, she wrote:

> I'm writing tonight in my charming new room. Oh, I am going to be so cosy here! I can finally breathe with my three windows that let me see the sky wherever I am in the room. Tomorrow I will arrange my books on the pretty shelves Papa had a carpenter build for me from a plan I drew up myself.[33]

We have no way of knowing whether the new room was Georges-Casimir's way of soothing his 15 year-old daughter, who was clearly traumatized by the new status of Fanny within the household, or whether the new room was Henriette's own idea. What is clear from the diary, however, is the association made by Henriette of the room with an escape from the tense relationship with her stepmother. By November 1877 she referred to the room as "a little world of my own" ("*un petit monde à moi*") and took full credit for both its creation and its continuous improvement. "That dear refuge is getting prettier by the day with its light muslin curtains, vases full of flowers, cosy armchairs, a bright fire, and shelves where often a new book, bought, or stolen from downstairs, comes to join the ranks of my old friends."[34]

There is clear evidence as well that Fanny only very rarely set foot into Henriette's "little world". One such occasion was October 31, 1875, when Fanny rebuked her stepdaughter for walking to school with Maurice. That evening, Henriette was confiding blissfully to her diary about the encounter when she was surprised by her stepmother:

*Figure 9: Georges-Casimir Dessaulles' office. P010-J/019.1, Fonds Dessaulles, Textual Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal.*

> A depressing interruption! Mama hardly ever sets foot in my room — once a year at most — but she has just done so to deliver a speech which can be quickly summarized: She knows Maurice is here [in Saint-Hyacinthe], that he walked to the convent with me, and she doesn't want this to happen again. [...] Angrily she left my room, with the words, "Don't you dare defy me!"[35]

Fanny, too, noted her stepdaughter's increasing absence from family activities. Several weeks before the confrontation just described Henriette recorded, "... Mama reproached me sharply for my unsociability. She is right, I live in my lovely big room and always find too many things to do there to spend much time with the family."[36] And Henriette is explicit about the room's sense of refuge within the house. "Whenever I feel gloomy, `out of sorts' as they say in English, the first thing I want to do is take refuge in my room. As soon as I'm there, I always feel less miserable instinctively reaching for my diary to start writing."[37]

Henriette's absolute need for solitary confinement within the house was underlined during periods when her privacy was compromised. The Dessaulles' annual fall house cleaning, for example, "unsettled" the young diarist. "I feel lost in all this chaos — even my cosy nook looks like an auction sale. No carpet, my books piled up in a corner on the floor, large bare windows letting the stars peer in like nosy busybodies."[38] At the same time, her sense of despair over the chaotic state of her room was mixed with her anguish over a stepmotherly scolding. Clearly, Henriette by this time equated the condition of her room

***Figure 10; Henriette's room. From the 1985 exhibition,*** **Hommage à Henriette Dessaulles.** ***Courtesy Jean-Noël Dion, Société d'histoire régionale de Saint-Hyacinthe.***

(and her control of this) with the state of her relationship with stepmother Fanny.

> Please, my darlings, close your pretty eyes, don't look too closely at the bad little girl who writes so she won't stamp her feet and cry with rage. She is bad and mean and wicked, you see — she has just been told so in a shrill voice and in no uncertain terms. And she believes all these terrible things about herself she is now so unhappy she wishes she were dead, yes, finished forever![39]

There were several other interesting features of the room, prophetic of Henriette's future. One window, for example, looked out to the Saint-Jacques house, the home of her beloved Maurice. This orientation towards the south was noted by Maurice the day after Henriette's initial occupation of the room: "Maurice told me that one of my windows looks out on his, so now we are nearer to each other than ever!"[40] The following September 9, Henriette was astounded to find Maurice and her brother Arthur in her private domain when she arrived home from school. She reported in her diary, "Maurice thought my room was surprisingly large with its three windows, and fresh and charming, `It suits you perfectly.'"[41] To the young Henriette, Maurice's approval of the room went far beyond superficial appreciation.

There is evidence, too, that Henriette saw the control she exerted over her own space extending to other rooms on the third floor of the Dessaulles house, especially through her regulation of the heating and ventilation systems:

> The only good side of the downpour is that it has given me an excuse to set the firelogs ablaze in my little stove. I have been going at it so enthusiastically that the whole top floor of

> the house has become like an oven so now I've just opened my three windows very wide to get rid of some of the heat, which would surely draw screams from the more sensible residents of this blessed house, if they happened to come up here. Go ahead and scream, all you sensible people, as long as you don't stop me from listening to the merry crackling of the logs and from watching how the reddish glow from the flames transforms my room into a fairy-land. Oh, it's so good to feel carefree and merry again, rather than crushed and miserable as I did.[42]

* * *

Henriette Dessaulles' girlhood experience, then, shows how remarriage brought about the renegotiation of domestic space in a bourgeois household in nineteenth-century Quebec. In addition to the complex social and legal relationships caused by stepfamily formation, evidence from the Dessaulles household shows that new spatial relationships were also created. Struggles for control over private space may have been a principal way in which older stepchildren attempted to negotiate the trauma of parental loss and remarriage, at least in bourgeois households where there was private space to gain.

In a proposed larger project, we intend to look at other kinds of familial transitions and other nineteenth-century houses with an eye for these same kinds of changes. We have already begun to identify houses which can be studied using this approach, including the Colby house, Carrollcroft, located in Stanstead in the Eastern Townships. Well preserved and well documented, Carrollcroft was also the home of a prolific young diarist, Jessie Maud Colby, whose private papers include rich material on the ways an unmarried woman affected her private space in the late nineteenth century.[43] Without personal texts and images, the greatest challenge in this enterprise will be to extend the analysis to Quebec's growing working class, in places like Saint-Hyacinthe's lower town. But linking extant buildings to the more traditional sources of social history (like the census, evaluation rolls, parish registers, and notarized contracts) should nonetheless allow us to explore these questions for less privileged people than the Dessaulles and the Colbys.[44]

The analysis of the Dessaulles house, finally, left us with a nagging question: whether increased control of domestic space was liberating or limiting for women.[45] Henriette's delight in her new room (her "own little world") predates Virginia Woolf's emancipatory call for "a room of one's own" by more than four decades.[46] Did the spatial experiences of women and girls allow them to compensate for their disadvantaged position in society? Or, did their control over certain spaces only serve to confine them within an increasingly narrow realm as the nineteenth century drew to a close?

Further study will allow us to develop answers to these intriguing questions as we continue our attempt to locate and delineate the intersection of architectural history and family history — in the world of home.

## *Notes*

1. The authors are grateful to the McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women, which supported this paper with a Faculty Seed Grant in 1996, and to research assistant Thierry Nootens. We also acknowledge the assistance of staff at the McCord Museum Archives and of Jean-Noël Dion at the Société d'histoire régionale de Saint-Hyacinthe. The Giard family welcomed us into their home in the former Dessaulles residence and Gilles Giard gave us an extensive tour of the house. Versions of this paper were presented at the Canadian Historical Association and the Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française in 1996. Comments by conference participants on both occasions were helpful, particularly those of Peter Ward, who chaired the session at the CHA.

2. Several versions of this famous diary, including an English translation, have been published. The original is in the Fonds Dessaulles in the Textual Archives of Montreal's McCord Museum of Canadian History. There is also a complete photocopy of the manuscript at the Archives of the Société d'histoire régionale de Saint-Hyacinthe, which we consulted extensively. See *Journal d'Henriette Dessaulles, 1874/1880* (Montreal: Hurtubise HMH, 1971); *Hopes and Dreams: The Diary of Henriette Dessaulles 1874–1881*, Translated by Liedewy Hawke (Willowdale: Hounslow Press, 1986); *Journal*, Édition critique par Jean-Louis Major (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1989).

3. For overviews of Saint-Hyacinthe's industrial and urban development in this period, see Ronald Rudin, "The Development of Four Quebec Towns, 1840–1914" (Ph.D. diss., York University, 1977); Louise Voyer, *Saint-Hyacinthe: de la seigneurie à la ville québécoise* (Montreal: Éditions Libre Expression, 1980); Peter Gossage, "Family and Population in a Manufacturing Town: Saint-Hyacinthe 1854–1914" (Ph. D. diss., Université du Québec à Montréal, 1991).

4. Anne-Marie Aubin et Jean-Marie Dion, *Hommage à Henriette Dessaulles, pionnière de l'écriture et du journalisme féminin* (Saint-Hyacinthe: Regroupement Littéraire Richelieu-Yamaska, 1985): 153. This volume is the catalogue for an exposition prepared in honour of the 125th anniversary of Henriette Dessaulles' birth in 1985.

5. The address in the nineteenth century was 48 rue Saint-Hyacinthe.

6. Peter Gossage, "*La marâtre*: Marie-Anne Houde and the Myth of the Wicked Stepmother in Quebec," *Canadian Historical Review* 76:4 (December 1995): 563–597; "Tangled Webs: Remarriage and Stepfamily Conflict in 19th-Century Quebec," paper presented at the Montreal History Group's April 1996 workshop, *Power, Place, and Identity: Historical Studies of Social and Legal Regulation in Quebec*, forthcoming in Edgar-André Montigny and Lori Chambers, eds., *Family Matters: Papers in Post–Confederation Family History* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1998).

7. Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, and Women, 1870–1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); "The Eichler Home: Intention and Experience in Postwar Suburbia," in *Gender, Class, and Shelter: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture V*, eds. Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995): 164–78; "'The House and All That Goes On In It': The Notebook of Frederica Shanks," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 31 (Summer/Autumn 1996): 165–72; "Building Barriers: Images of Women in the RAIC Journal, 1924–73" *Resources for Feminist Research* 23, no.3 (Fall 1994): 11–23; "Rooms of Their Own: The Nurses' Residences at Montréal's Royal Victoria Hospital," *Material History Review* 40, (Fall 1994): 29–41.

8. *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 165.

9. Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968); Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Writings*, with an introduction by Lynne Sharon Schwartz (New York: Bantam, 1989); Marilyn R. Chandler, *Dwelling in the Text: Houses in American Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

10. This overview is based on Voyer, *Saint-Hyacinthe: De la seigneurie à la ville québécoise*, Gossage, "Family and Population in a Manufacturing Town," and C.P. Choquette, *Histoire de la ville de Saint-Hyacinthe* (Saint-Hyacinthe: Richer et fils, 1930).

11. The literature on the history of Victorian middle-class and aristocratic domestic architecture is vast. Works which emphasize the social and cultural meanings of domestic space include: Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (London: Yale University Press, 1978) and *Sweetness and Light: The Queen Anne Movement 1860–1900* (London: Yale University Press, 1977); Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873–1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
12. See Leslie Maitland, Jacqueline Hucker, and Shannon Ricketts, *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992), 64–71.
13. Archives de la Ville de Saint-Hyacinthe, *Rôle de Perception pour la Cité de Saint-Hyacinthe.* In 1879, the Dessaulles house was evaluated at $4,000; one year later its value was listed as $5,500.
14. We draw this inference from the following passage: "La maison fut plus tard achetée par mon oncle Dessaulles qui fit ajouter une rallonge considérable, et vint l'habiter quand il laissa définitivement le vieux manoir." Caroline Béïque, *Quatre-vingts ans de Souvenirs* (Montreal: Éditions A.C.F., 1939).
15. Manuscript census, 1861, City of Saint-Hyacinthe, District 2, page 2, rows 37–46.
16. "En 1903, toutefois, selon une vieille voisine, Mme Bois, la partie rajoutée, *qui avant servait à loger les domestiques*, est transformée en habitation privée et louée." Carole Durocher, "La maison Giard," unpublished paper, October 1979, p. 8 (Copy at the Société d'histoire régionale de Saint-Hyacinthe).
17. Manuscript census, 1861, City of Saint-Hyacinthe, District 2, page 2, rows 37–46; Textual Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Fonds Dessaulles, Dessaulles family genealogical papers.
18. *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, 6 September 1864, cited in Aubin and Dion, *Hommage à Henriette Dessaulles*, p. 37, our translation.
19. Archives de la Paroisse de Saint-Hyacinthe-le-Confesseur, Registre des Baptêmes, mariages et sépultures, 14 January 1869.
20. Textual Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Fonds Dessaulles, L.A. Dessaulles to Fanny Leman, 20 February 1873, our translation.
21. Manuscript census, 1871, City of Saint-Hyacinthe, Division 2, p. 11, rows 6–14.
22. Henriette Dessaulles, *Journal*, édition critique de Jean-Louis Major, p. 84.
23. August 14 1879; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 264. [Emphasis in the original.]
24. Manuscript census, 1881, City of Saint-Hyacinthe, Division 2, p. 38, rows 1–13.
25. *Hopes and Dreams*, Introduction, p.12
26. *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 16.
27. 17 September 1874; *Hopes and Dreams*, p.18.
28. 13 February 1875; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 29.
29. Aubin and Dion, *Hommage à Henriette Dessaulles*, p. 39, our translation.
30. 13 February 1875; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 29.
31. 26 February 1875; *Hopes and Dreams*, pp. 31–32.
32. On the architectural history of bedrooms, see Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "Sleeping Around: A History of American Beds and Bedrooms," *Journal of Design History*, 3, No. 1 (1990): 1–17.
33. 16 March 1875; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 34.
34. 18 November 1877; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 176.
35. 31 October 1875; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 81.
36. 7 October 1875; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 72.
37. 30 January 1877; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 197.
38. 22 October 1975; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 76.
39. *Ibid.*
40. 17 March 1875; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 35.
41. 9 September 1875; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 59.
42. 5 October 1877; *Hopes and Dreams*, p. 175.
43. See Aileen Desbarats and Elizabeth Brock, comps., "A Guide to the Private Papers of Jessie Maud Colby (1861–1958), Fonds Colby," (Stanstead: Stanstead Historical Society, 1997).
44. An important model to follow in the combination of spatial and textual evidence in the study of Quebec's working-class households in this period is the work of Gilles Lauzon. See his *Habitat ouvrier et révolution industrielle: le cas du Village St-Augustin* (Montreal: RCHTQ, 1989) and "Cohabitation et déménagements en milieu ouvrier montréalais. Essai de réinterprétation à partir du cas du Village Saint-Augustin (1871–1881)," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 46:1 (summer 1992): 115–42.
45. Feminist analyses of architectural space are presented in Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham, eds., *A View From the Interior: Feminism, Women, and Design* (London: Women's Press, 1989); Jos Boys, "Is There a Feminist Analysis of Architecture?" *Built Environment* 10 (1) (Nov. 1, 1984): 25–34; Cheryl Buckley, "Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design," *Design Issues* 3 (2) (Fall 1986): 3–14; Matrix, *Making Space: Women and the Man-Made Environment* (London: Pluto, 1984); Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Leslie Kanes Weisman, *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).
46. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (San Diego: Harvest/HBJ, 1957, 1928).