

Femininity and the Factory: Women's Labouring Bodies in the Moir's Candy Plant,
1949-1970

by

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For my parents, Bobbi and Don Mulrooney.

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Abstract

In post-war Canada, married women's labour force participation rose dramatically. Labour historians have studied this trend with a primary focus on married women's disadvantaged position in the labour market. This thesis examines female factory workers as manual labourers and asks how their bodies affected and were affected by their jobs, and how specifically female embodiment shaped their experience of work. Using the framework of job-related, cultural, and reproductive body work developed by sociologist Chris Shilling, this case study examines the experiences of eleven women who worked at the Moir's candy plant in Halifax between 1949 and 1970. Semi-structured interviews are the main source of research data for this study. This case study explores working conditions at Moir's, such as work on conveyor belts, the gendered division of labour, piece-work, and breaks, and determines the ways the women responded to and also shaped these conditions. The women's testimonies reveal that their embodied experience as labourers was based both in workplace conditions (such as company regulations) and in family responsibilities. There are three main findings. First, I argue that in the context of the Moir's factory, women's acts of sabotage (in the form of breaking the conveyor belts), use of make-work, and development of other coping strategies were intended to create needed leisure time in the workplace. Second, I challenge the common assumption in labour sociology that factory work does not require that employees carry out true emotional labour. I argue that feelings of pride and shame had a strong influence over the women's workplace dress and behaviour; managing these feelings were an important part of the women's occupation. Finally, I argue that in the post-war era, women's reproductive body work was directly connected to their paid labour because of the lack of public childcare and other reproductive labour resources available to wives and working mothers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For many, when thinking of a chocolate factory one iconic image comes to mind: the hilarious scene in the 1950s television classic “I Love Lucy”, in which Lucille Ball struggles to wrap chocolates as they fly by on a speedy conveyor belt. Try as she may, Lucy cannot keep pace and quickly realizes that the only way to make it appear as though she has wrapped all of the chocolates is to hide them in as many places as she can find, including her mouth. Like the fictional factory where Lucy tried to work, the Moir’s Candy factory in Halifax, Nova Scotia was a major employer of female workers, and working fast on the conveyor belt was indeed one kind of job those workers did. But a confectionary factory was a larger and more complex place than the Lucy vignette showed. The Moir’s factory was nine storeys high and each floor had its own unique purpose. There were conveyor belts not just for wrapping but also to sort, pack, examine and weigh the candy and there were other departments with different purposes. The pressure of the belt and its ceaseless speed was generally considered a mundane reality. Using one-on-one interviews, this thesis presents an analysis of the embodied experiences of eleven female factory workers at the Moir’s candy plant in the post-war era. Through

the use of the job-related, cultural, and reproductive body work framework developed by sociologist Chris Shilling, I argue that while the Moir's women were performing the tasks associated with their work, they were also performing various forms of body work. The women's body work was necessitated by a complex interplay between peer group and societal norms, and workplace conditions and regulations. Together, these factors defined appropriate behaviour regarding femininity for the Moir's women and possibly other female factory workers in the post-war era.

Separating the material body from discourse surrounding the body has been a challenge for historians and sociologists. In her chapter "The Body as Method? Reflection on the Place of the Body in Gender History," Kathleen Canning describes the complexity of "body history" and the divergent paths historians have taken to discuss the body as a historical actor. She outlines various types of historical bodies: social bodies, the rhetorical and textual representations of bodies; bodies as objects of regulation and tutelage; and bodies as sites of experience.¹ Despite identifying these categories, Canning asserts that "the recognition that invocation of 'the body' often blurs the difference among and between these distinct bodies makes the first step towards a more conceptually conscious and historically grounded use of the term."² Canning's acceptance of this blurring stems from her refusal of the view that discourse always constructs experience. However, she acknowledges that the two are often interconnected and difficult to separate. Canning believes that women's labouring bodies can be better understood in labour history when the material and discursive are no longer viewed as a

¹ Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class & Citizenship*
²Ibid., 169.

dichotomy.³ Joan Sangster also discusses the intertwined nature of discourse and embodiment in labour history. However, she warns that exploring experience through purely discursive means can “obscure the toll of human agency in subverting or choosing discourses, returning us to ‘high attitude thinking’ and a ‘disembodied subject.’”⁴ Sangster borrows from political philosopher Sonia Kruks who believes that a single experience can be understood “either as a discursive effect or as subjectively lived.”⁵ Kruks maintains that the nature of the research questions and goals will determine how an experience will be examined. Like Sangster, she believes that proper inquiry often shifts back and forth between discourse and subjective experience. Sangster acknowledges the difficulties in properly reconstructing women’s lived experiences but maintains that “this is not a convincing reason to abandon attempts to understand the minds and feelings of historical actors.”⁶

Sangster leads the charge for the recovery of women’s labouring bodies in Canadian labour history. Sangster’s “Making a Fur Coat: Women, the Labouring Body, and Working-Class,” attempts to bridge the gap between discussions of the labouring and libidinal body. Sangster explains that feminist history has been dominated by postmodernist theory, psychoanalysis and literary theory since the 1980s. These theories have enriched feminist debates and explained gender as a construct. However, Sangster believes that women’s physical bodies were lost amid this discourse. She maintains that women’s labour history would benefit from an in-depth analysis of women’s material

³ Ibid., 137-138.

⁴ Joan Sangster, *Through Feminist Eyes: Essays on Canadian Women's History* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2011), 357.

⁵ Sonia Kruks, *Retrieving Experience: Subjectivity and Recognition in Feminist Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 141.

⁶ Sangster, *Through Feminist Eyes*, 382.

labouring bodies. She asserts that “while feminist writing often pays homage to the diversity of bodies, edited collections completely neglect wage labour, leaving one wondering if bodies actually go to work any more to scrub floors, operate machinery, serve hamburgers, or care for other bodies.”⁷ In an attempt to alter this trend, Sangster examines the process of making a fur coat from trapping and skinning to the sales floor. She finds that women were involved at every step of this process and discusses their bodily experiences from skinning to purchasing. Sangster is eager to “avoid the dematerialized body of much postmodern theory” but also warns against “the existence of a pre-ordained, “natural” body.”⁸ Sangster’s commitment to the recovery of women’s labouring bodies is qualified by an acknowledgement that the body is not a primary determining cause of everything.

Like Sangster, Cynthia Comacchio believes that the materiality of bodies can be overshadowed and transformed by discourse. In her article on the industrialization in early twentieth-century Canada, Comacchio describes the tendency to define human bodies as machines. Comacchio states that “the most material of things, the ultimate boundary between self and world, the body has historically been invaded and transformed by subjective definitions that accord with particular sociocultural values and aspirations.”⁹ Comacchio points out that the boundaries of the material body are “invaded” by cultural norms, but Sangster warns that focusing too closely on these effects

⁷ Joan Sangster, “Making a Fur Coat: Women, the Labouring Body, and Working-Class,” *International Review of Social History* 52, 2 (2007): 244.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁹ Cynthia Comacchio, “Mechanomorphosis: Science, Management, and ‘Human Machinery’ in Industrial Canada, 1900-45,” *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 36

can rob workers of their agency and propensity for resistance.¹⁰ Finding the appropriate focus is the challenge these debates call us to address.

Comacchio discusses the changing nature of the discourse surrounding workers bodies and points out that women's labouring bodies have been defined in relation to their reproductive capacities. Industrialization meant the mechanization of labour, and as industries became increasingly reliant on machines, western medicine began to view human bodies as mechanised. Comacchio explains that modern industry drastically transformed workers' role in the production process. Workers were no longer expected to understand how the machines worked but were instead responsible for only a small part of production. Unskilled, repetitive tasks became the norm for factory workers and the pace of work was determined by the speed of machines. Producers began to develop programs to increase efficiency and maximize production. Comacchio describes the techniques of efficiency expert Frederick Winslow Taylor and his efforts to increase output and reduce "soldiering", which was the workers' attempts to establish their own work pace. Taylorist techniques were meant to eliminate any difference between worker and machine. Workers were to lose any sense of skill and autonomy and become mere extensions of the machines.¹¹ However, injured and unhealthy workers could not work indefinitely, and producers eventually realized that relying on human bodies to act as machines would not increase production in the long term. Producers began to consider human bodies as deficient machines.¹² Differentiations between men's and women's labouring bodies were based on women's potential as future mothers. Maternalism

¹⁰ Sangster, "Making a Fur Coat," 248.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

¹² *Ibid.*, 65.

became an important argument for reduced hours and improved working conditions for women who were responsible for providing future generations of labourers.¹³ Comacchio believes that twentieth-century preoccupations with scientific advancements in robotics and cybernetics are an attempt to eliminate human bodies as participants in all forms of labour.¹⁴

Sangster, Comacchio and Canning each point out the challenges involved in separating women's material bodies from the discursive constructs of gender relations and hierarchy systems involved in paid labour. Although human bodies seem to have defined boundaries, as Comacchio explains, these boundaries can be invaded by prevailing discourses concerning the body. The meanings and effects of these discourses are historically specific and change over time. At times, bodily boundaries can be invaded by discourse but, as I will show, in some instances the body does set limits on choice and some consequences to the body are not solely a matter of perception. It is very difficult to discuss the material body without an acknowledgement of the discursive frameworks in which bodies function. However, like Sangster, I believe that it is important not to lose sight of material bodies by focussing solely on discursive frameworks.¹⁵ Canning adds to this debate by emphasizing the convergence between the material and the discursive. Like Canning, I believe that the historical research surrounding the material body allows for a better understanding of the relationship

¹³ Ibid., 47-48.

¹⁴ Ibid., 67.

¹⁵ The debate surrounding embodied experience and discursive frameworks is not a new one. For further debate regarding experience versus discursive frameworks in feminist historical writing see: Joan W. Scott, review of *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence*, by Linda Gordon, *Signs* 15, 4 (Summer 1990): 848-851.; Linda Gordon, "Response to Scott," *Signs* 15, 4 (Summer 1990): 852-853.; Linda Gordon, review of *Gender and the Politics of History*, by Joan Wallach Scott, *Signs* 15, 4 (Summer 1990): 853-858.; Joan W. Scott, "Response to Gordon," *Signs* 15, 4 (Summer 1990): 859-860.

between the material and the discursive.¹⁶ I argue that in the context of the Moir's factory in the post-war era, female workers' bodies were the important site of a constant process of the women's accepting, modifying and rejecting company regulations and gendered class specific norms. Women's labouring bodies were ever present within these discursive frameworks. Although a true separation of discourse and embodied experience is difficult to ascertain, I believe that studying and recording experience is still valuable and important to the historical debate. My thesis reveals effects that have not been previously recorded in Canadian women's labour history, because there are relatively few historical studies on the impact or the perceived impact of factory labour on women workers' bodies and sense of embodiment. Employing oral history interviews allowed me to analyse in depth questions about bodily experience that would be difficult to study through other historical sources.

This case study is based largely on information obtained from one-on-one semi-structured interviews with eleven former Moir's employees who worked at the Halifax factory between 1949 and 1970. The purpose of these interviews was to determine the answers to several research questions. These questions were organized around Shilling's three categories: job-related body work, cultural body work, and reproductive body work. This study's main research questions are: What were the direct physical effects of these women's labour on their bodies? How did female embodiment specifically shape these women workers experience of factory work? How did the women cope with the repetitive and often tedious nature of their work? How important was their physical and feminine appearance in the workplace to themselves and their employer? Did their menstrual cycle

¹⁶ Canning, *Gender History*, 138.

or pregnancy make their jobs more difficult? How did marriage, motherhood and other familial responsibilities affect the women's experience as factory workers and vice versa? My research into these questions helped to reveal the multiple ways women's bodies affected and were affected by their manual labour.

These specific questions came in part from the ideas about body work that sociologist Chris Shilling has developed. Shilling believes that in order to understand the relationship between work and the body, one must consider two related issues. The first is "the *official* activities involved in, and the social context surrounding, waged labour".¹⁷ He explains that these activities and contexts include topics such as "clock time" and the creation of norms that produced workplace gender inequalities. The second issue is the "labour that people 'do' on and for their bodies in order that they can survive and function adequately" while at work.¹⁸ Shilling maintains that bodies do not simply go to work and perform tasks. There is a considerable amount of work that is performed on bodies so that they can function, cope and/or thrive while on the job. According to Shilling, "body work" consists of three different types of activities: job-related, cultural and reproductive body work.

Job-related body work consists of the "*unofficial* tasks involved in maintaining the embodied self as viable within the environment of waged labour."¹⁹ An example of job-related body work is "make-work," which is the act of appearing to work when a supervisor is present. Erving Goffman explains that workers often perform make-work when employers place specific production expectations upon workers. In these scenarios,

¹⁷ Chris Shilling, *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society* (London: SAGE, 2005), 73. Italics in original.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

where constant effort is required to reach daily production goals, employees must give supervisors the impression that they are working hard even when they are not.²⁰ In the case of assembly-line factory work, employees use make-work to cope with the demanding and repetitive nature of their jobs. Maintaining the guise of productivity in the presence of a supervisor allows employees to avoid reprimand for taking a break outside of their sanctioned break time.

The official activities and social contexts vary widely across occupations and have a strong affect on employees' perception of and response to their work. Although these activities and contexts define occupations, as Shilling points out, workers can employ various forms of job-related body work to assert agency, cope with, resist or alter them. In a factory setting, the pace and nature of bodily movements are determined by managers and producers. Typically, workers have little influence over the speed at which they can work.²¹ Sociologist Peter Freund explains the alienation caused by not having control over one's motions and rhythms. Freund believes that work pace can cause what he deems an "imbalance" that can either be an "overload" or "underload." An underload occurs when a person's work is controlled by machines and involves repetitive tasks at a set pace. Overload is more often associated with tasks such as piece-work in which an employee must work as quickly as possible to produce a suitable wage.²² Freund cites studies that found women to be more susceptible than men to illnesses associated with stress on the assembly line. However, he points out that the higher percentage of women experiencing these maladies is more likely to be the result of the increased likelihood of

²⁰ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 109.

²¹ Peter E. S. Freund and Miriam Fisher, *The Civilized Body: Social Domination, Control, and Health* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 97.

²² *Ibid.*

women being confined to the lowest status occupations in factory work.²³ During his two-month participant observation in a four-man department of machine operatives, Donald F. Roy found that “activity variation” helped the work day pass more quickly.²⁴ Working as a punch-card operator, he found his first two days of work tiring and monotonous. In order to avoid underload, Roy made a game of his work by punching different coloured pieces in varying orders. In this way, his repetitive task seemed to have greater variety. He was unable to rotate to another job in the factory and therefore attempted to provide his own with a sense of variation.

Another example of job-related body work is job-trading in which factory workers could find relief from their work by following the old adage, “a change is as good as a break.” Job-trading meant that workers could continue to work productively but also give themselves a mental reprieve from their assigned task. This kind of body work has come to be known as “self-care strategies.” For example, in her three-year field study of female flight attendants, Roberta Lessor found that many women adopted “self-care strategies” to avoid the negative health-effects associated with their job. For the flight attendants, such a strategy included asking to cut in the line for the bathroom when a small window of opportunity arose. Lessor associates the emergence of practising self-care strategies with the health and self-help movements of the 1970s.²⁵ But the category of job-related body work in Shilling’s analysis suggests that we might find such behaviour earlier, without the discursive framework of those movements.

²³ Ibid., 99-100.

²⁴ Donald F. Roy, *“Banana time” Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), 158.

²⁵ Roberta Lessor, “Consciousness of Time and Time for the Development of Consciousness: Health Awareness among Women Flight Attendants,” *Sociology of Health and Illness* 7, 2 (1985): 199.

Job-related body work can also include acts of sabotage. In his sociological study “Working for Ford”, Huw Beynon writes that the men working at the Ford automotive plant in Liverpool in the late 1960s quickly became disassociated from their work. Their feelings of boredom and helplessness caused them to shut down any emotional connection they had with their work. When Beynon observed and interviewed plant workers, he discovered that the employees had created their own means of control within the factory despite their apparent powerlessness to improve working conditions. Employees would knowingly sabotage their work to cause problems further down the conveyor belt.²⁶ In the context of this Ford factory, sabotage was used as a means to control the work pace and express hostility towards stewards and management. In this way, job-related body work can act as a coping mechanism and a means of resistance. Although coping and self-care strategies are often viewed as means of resisting working conditions, they can also be employed to avoid direct conflict with superiors. Many scholars have qualified these acts as rebellious. However, when workers are reasonably satisfied with their working conditions, these strategies may also be used, as I will show, to gain additional breaks and leisure time while at work.

Shilling described cultural body work as the manner in which “individuals present themselves in everyday life.”²⁷ Although he maintains that people employ cultural body work in the workplace he asserts that it is not “determined by economic considerations.”²⁸ The norms that result in the need for cultural body work are produced and perpetuated throughout every interaction an individual has. Cultural norms are

²⁶ Huw Beynon, *Working for Ford* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 131.

²⁷ Shilling, *The Body in Culture*, 74.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

created, conveyed, strengthened, changed and challenged by different mechanisms within society. These mechanisms can include but are not limited to government regulations and laws, religious practices, the mass media, employers, peer groups and the family; they have varying degrees of influence over how an individual performs cultural body work. Different occupations also have different expectations regarding the type of cultural body work necessary. In the workplace, employees may alter or maintain their physical appearance in specific ways for the purpose of their jobs. As Susan Porter Benson demonstrates, retail work forced women to work long hours while always maintaining a certain level of presentability and pleasantness.²⁹ Sangster also discusses the importance of maintaining physical attractiveness in sales associate positions.³⁰ Similarly, Lessor explains that female flight attendants in the 1960s were made to wear high-heeled shoes and go-go boots to ensure an attractive appearance.³¹ Physical attractiveness was important to many jobs held by women in the 1950s and 1960s. Woman's labouring bodies are likely not only to endure dress codes and weight restriction but are often also sexualized on the job. Dorothy Sue Cobble describes the sexual harassment many American waitresses endured as a regular part of their jobs.³² Similarly, Katherine McPherson discusses how female nurses were sexualized throughout the twentieth-century. The nature of a nurse's work meant that female nurses could at times find themselves alone with male patients. This caused concern that the women's morality was

²⁹ Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 194.

³⁰ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-War Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 143.

³¹ Lessor, "Consciousness of Time," 200.

³² Dorothy Sue Cobble, *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1991), 44.

at risk.³³ Female factory workers did not have to adhere to the same high standards of feminine beauty as women working in the service sector, but this does not mean that there were no requirements of presentability. Determining the types of cultural body work employed by female factory workers provide an interesting comparison to beauty standards present in many other feminized occupations.

In addition to cultural body work there can also be, depending on the job, emotional body work. Emotional labour is considered a type of body work because emotions are housed within the body and ultimately have affects on that body. For example, a retail employee must maintain a level of pleasant professionalism when dealing with customers despite the possibility of a genuine disinterest, indifference or frustration towards a customer's requests.³⁴ Arlie Hochschild explains that an occupation can be associated with emotional labour only if it meets three criteria: there must be "face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact with the public"; the worker must "produce an emotional state in another person"; and the employer must "exercise a degree of control over the emotional activities of employees."³⁵ According to Hochschild, factory work is generally not categorized as an occupation that involves emotional labour because "factory workers... do not on the whole have their personalities *as* engaged, their sociability *as* used, and their emotion work *as* closely subjected to occupational strictures..."³⁶ In this instance, she is comparing factory work to working as a flight attendant or bill collector. Hochschild believes that factory workers must "suppress

³³ Kathryn M. McPherson, "'The Case of the kissing Nurse': Femininity, Sexuality, and Canadian Nursing," in *Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada*, ed. Kathryn M. McPherson, et al. (Don Mills, Ont: Oxford University Press, 1999), 188.

³⁴ Shilling, *The Body in Culture*, 95.

³⁵ Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 147.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 154. Italics in original.

feelings of frustration, anger, or fear- and often to suppress feelings of any sort. This can be a terrible burden, but it is not in itself emotional labor [*sic*].”³⁷ Although factory workers do not engage in emotional labour in the traditional the-customer-is-always-right sense, they nevertheless have to maintain a seemingly conforming demeanour and avoid confrontation or disagreements with superiors and peers. Factory work may not qualify as true emotional labour, but as I will show, factory workers’ suppression and management of emotion is still an important part of their occupation and its relation to their embodied selves.

Shilling defines the third type of body work, reproductive body work, as not only the domestic labour traditionally associated with women but also “tasks undertaken by all who attempt to maintain a minimally functioning physical self. Washing, brushing one’s teeth, and seeking help from a doctor when necessary.”³⁸ In this way, Shilling sees reproductive body work as significant to both genders body work. Canning asserts that women’s labouring bodies distinctively represent the “hybrid character” of female labour.³⁹ Women cannot simply go to work and leave their reproductive body work at home. If a woman is pregnant at home she is also pregnant at work and there are consequences to these physical realities. Canning cites birthing on the factory floor as an example of the intertwined nature of women’s paid and unpaid labour.⁴⁰ Similarly, a women’s menstrual cycle may have effects on her working experience. Women’s primary role as caregivers for children and other family members also prevents a separation of but also relation between reproductive body work and participation in the paid labour force.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Shilling, *The Body in Culture*, 74.

³⁹ Ibid., 138.

⁴⁰ Canning, *Gender History in Practice*, 138.

Through the use of Shilling's job-related, cultural and reproductive body work, this thesis explores the numerous ways women's bodies affected and were affected by their labour and how female embodiment shaped their experience of work.

Recovering women's labouring bodies within the scholarly debate is not only essential for our historical understanding of how bodies affected and were affected by their work, but also helps us to understand why automation was more attractive to businesses than was changing the bodily nature of factory work. Comacchio fears a post-industrial society in which human rights are secondary to "technocratic power and corporate profit."⁴¹ She believes that manufacturing will continue to be mechanized until human hands no longer touch anything they make. Despite the seemingly endless possibilities in technological advancements in production, electronic manufacturing is only now beginning to fully automate manufacturing plants. Electronic products that are presently being made in China rely heavily on a large labour force and much of the manufacturing is done by hand. However, in an interview with journalist Ira Glass, Charles Duhigg, a reporter for The New York Times, explains that electronic manufacturers are becoming increasingly automated. Consumer and activist groups are applying pressure to many companies, labour standards are becoming increasingly strict and the new labour standards are beginning to resemble those that have long been accepted in the other industrialized countries. Under these circumstances, human labour is becoming an unattractive alternative when compared to automated robots. Duhigg, explains that the reason for this is simple: "there are no inhumane conditions for

⁴¹ Comacchio, "Mechanomorphosis," 67.

robots.”⁴² Rather than ensuring better labour standards for manual labourers, it is more financially advantageous to automate production. The automation witnessed by some of the Moir’s interviewees in their later careers is now being implemented in the production of electronics in China. The Moir’s women’s semi-skilled manual labour represents a disappearing form of labour. Discussing the Moir’s women’s embodied experiences while performing their semi-skilled manual labour provides an interesting point of comparison to the current debate surrounding the nature of manufacturing and automation.

Job-related, cultural and reproductive body work and the actions and meanings attached to each vary across time and place. Examining women’s experiences of embodiment in a factory setting in the post-war era is particularly historically significant given the many gendered contradictions within Canadian society at the time. The post-war period saw renewed commitment to capitalism; from many sources Canadian families were encouraged to improve their living standards through consumption. More and more families were aspiring to purchase their own homes complete with modern appliances and a family car to get men to work, women to the shops and to bring children where ever they had to go.⁴³ Canadian couples were marrying younger and having children earlier in their marriages.⁴⁴ Post-war Canada also saw the growth of various suburban lifestyles. The June Cleaver ideal that dominated American popular culture also infiltrated Canadian markets despite the reality that more and more married women were

⁴² Charles Duhigg, interview by Ira Glass, This American Life, “Retraction,” podcast audio, March 16, 2012, see longer version of interview, page 17

http://podcast.thisamericanlife.org/special/TAL_460_Retraction_Charles_Duhigg_extended_interview.pdf

⁴³ Joan Sangster, “‘Doing two jobs’: The Wage-earning Mother, 1945-1970,” in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 101.

⁴⁴ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-60.” *Canadian Historical Review* 72, 4 (1991): 473.

entering the job market each year. Veronica Strong-Boag explains that Canadian suburbs were not as homogeneous in terms of class and race as their American counterparts. Canadians did not feel the need to escape “urban dangers” the way many American families had.⁴⁵ Although some working-class and immigrant families were able to afford bungalows in the suburbs, many were not.⁴⁶

In the post-war era, there was a renewed commitment to the male breadwinner/female homemaker ideal. However, this middle-class ideal was not a reality for many Canadian women anymore than suburban affluence was and the increased labour force participation of married women is indicative of this fact. Between 1941 and 1971, Canadian women’s labour force participation rose from 20.7 per cent to 39.9 per cent. Despite this dramatic increase women remained confined to a small number of jobs across this 30-year period.⁴⁷ In a statistical analysis of Canadian women’s labour force participation, Pat and Hugh Armstrong found that women were not only confined to a small number of occupations but also dominated those occupations. That is to say, very few men were employed in occupations deemed feminine.⁴⁸ Between 1941 and 1961, women were heavily concentrated in the education, clerical, health and personal service sectors.⁴⁹ These jobs generally involved teaching, providing care and performing tasks that were identified as feminine in North American society. The segregation of women into feminine occupations allowed for the devaluation of their work within the

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 5.

⁴⁷ Hugh Armstrong and Pat Armstrong, “The Segregated Participation of Women in the Canadian labour Force, 1941-71,” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 12, 4 (2008): 371.

⁴⁸Ibid., 373.

⁴⁹ James G. Scoville, *The Job Content of the Canadian Economy, 1941, 1951 and 1961* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1967).

hierarchical structure of the labour force. Women's jobs were typically low-paying since Canadian women were expected to have a husband to provide the primary income. Women's wages were not raised to the rates of their male counterparts. Instead, women were kept in low status and low paying occupations.⁵⁰

Women's labour force participation rose in the post-war era but the gendered division of labour remained strictly enforced within factory work. In her examination of women's life-cycle stages and employment at a cotton factory in Valleyfield, Quebec, Gail Cuthbert Brandt found that by the late 1940s a shift occurred from the two-stage life cycle, in which women worked only until they were married, to a three-stage cycle, in which women returned to work after their children had reached a certain age.⁵¹ Brandt maintains that this trend became more widespread in the 1950s as women tried to have smaller families.⁵² Although more married women were re-entering the labour force, their job opportunities in the cotton factory were increasingly limited. Brandt attributes these limitations to technological advances in the 1920s and a sharper sexual division of labour and discrimination against female workers. Before this time, women were more likely to hold skilled positions in the factory.⁵³ However, as time passed and attitudes towards women's labour shifted, women were considered incapable of performing the skilled labour of a man. Brandt shows that women's life cycles were changing at the same time that the gendered division of labour in factories was reinforced. More women were returning to work after having children but their job opportunities were increasingly restricted by definitions of appropriate female work.

⁵⁰ Armstrong and Armstrong, "Segregated Participation," 377-378.

⁵¹ Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "'Weaving it together': Life Cycle and the Industrial Experience of Female Cotton Workers in Quebec, 1910-1950," *Labour /Le Travail* 7(Spring 1981): 120.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 126.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

The gendered division of labour limited women's job opportunities in factory work. Mercedes Steedman discusses female workers in the Canadian clothing industry between 1890 and 1940, and explains that gender and skill were intertwined.⁵⁴ Like Brandt, Steedman believes that sexual divisions of labour transform with social attitudes. In the clothing industry, women were assigned tasks that were considered natural to them and in line with their domestic duties in the home.⁵⁵ Women's work was considered unskilled and accordingly they were given a lower wage. However, Steedman points out that the official categorizations of skilled and unskilled labour did not match the actual practices on the factory floor. One female worker explained that more complex garments were always given to women because women were considered to be more conscientious in their work.⁵⁶ Suzanne Klausen also discusses the changing character and contradictory nature of gendered divisions of labour. In her discussion of the ALPLY plywood plant in Port Alberni, British Columbia, she found that the gendered division of labour changed drastically in relation to the availability of male labour between 1942 and 1991. The male labour shortage caused by Canada's involvement in World War II meant that when the ALPLY plant opened its doors in 1942, women held 80 per cent of the 350 positions.⁵⁷ During the war years, men were responsible for the "skilled" labour and women were responsible for the "unskilled" labour. The small numbers of male workers were mechanists, electricians and foremen. Women worked along the assembly line, controlled machinery, lifted veneer and layered it into sheets, repaired flaws in the faceboards,

⁵⁴ Mercedes Steedman, *Angels of the Workplace: Women and the Construction of Gender Relations in the Canadian Clothing Industry, 1890-1940* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 7.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Susanne Klausen, "The Plywood Girls: Women and Gender Ideology at the Port Alberni Plywood Plant, 1942-1991," *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 199.

bundled the plywood, and loaded boxcars.⁵⁸ However, when the war ended and soldiers returned to Port Alberni, female employment at the plywood plant decreased substantially. Married women were strongly discouraged from working at the plant and even single women who kept their jobs encountered strong negative attitudes from fellow employees and the town's population.⁵⁹ As the plant became almost entirely staffed by male employees, gendered divisions of labour began to transform. Men began to work along the assembly line and these jobs were no longer considered "women's work".⁶⁰ Klausen explains that by 1948, the only female jobs left in the plywood plant were dry-chain operator and veneer patcher.⁶¹ In 1959, ALPLY management began an unofficial policy against hiring women and did not hire any women until 1972. Although women had performed nearly every job in the ALPLY plant between 1942 and 1945, the return of the Port Alberni's male workforce meant that the women's skills were no longer recognized or required.

In the post-war era, women living in the Maritimes had limited employment opportunities. Unlike in Central Canada, post-war prosperity was slow to arrive to the east coast.⁶² The suburbs were also distributed unevenly across the country. Strong-Boag points out that the Maritimes had fewer and less affluent suburbs.⁶³ Clearly, despite depiction in popular media, many Haligonian women were not living a suburban lifestyle. Despite the slow growth of the economy, Haligonian women, particularly married women, entered the work force at a steadily increasing rate in the post-war era. This trend

⁵⁸ Ibid., 209.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 220.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 223.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Judith Fingard and Janet Vey Guildford, eds., *Mothers of the Municipality: Women, Work and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 11.

⁶³ Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams," 485.

was comparable to that in the rest of Canada. Between 1951 and 1961, married women's labour-force participation rose from approximately 25 to 50 per cent of female workers. By 1961, nearly 40 per cent of women in the Halifax paid-labour force were married and another 8 per cent were widowed, or divorced.⁶⁴ Although women were entering the work force at an increased rate, they occupied jobs that society deemed appropriate for female labourers. This trend was particularly accentuated in the Maritimes, where the economy was deeply rooted in resource extraction. The primary industries in the Maritimes at the time were mining, forestry and the fisheries, and employment in each of these sectors was highly gendered. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton maintain that these economic activities reinforced the male breadwinner/female homemaker ideology in the Maritimes more strongly than in other parts of Canada where women had more job opportunities.⁶⁵ Although women played an essential role in production in the fisheries, Morton explains that the Department of Fisheries launched massive campaigns to target women as consumers rather than active participants in the production process.⁶⁶ This strategy was used to erase the reality that women were not just homemakers but active members in the paid labour force. Such a reality undermined the importance of men as breadwinners and threatened middle-class ideals of appropriate gendered behaviours. In the Maritimes in the post-war era, women's job opportunities were heavily restrained by these contradictions.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 18. Of the total 17 818 women participating in the Halifax and Dartmouth labour force, 7 111 were married and 1 509 were widowed or divorced. The remaining 9 198 women were single. See Canada, 1961 *Census, Labour Force, Bulletin 3.1-7*, Table 12-1, "Labour force 15 years and over, by marital status, schooling, class of worker, and sex, for incorporated cities, towns and villages of 10, 000 population and over."

⁶⁵ Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, *Making Up the State: Women in 20th-Century Atlantic Canada* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Acadiensis Press, 2010), 12.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 161.

In the post-war era, the Moir's Candy plant employed large numbers of female workers. The Moir's company began as a bakery in Halifax in 1815. In the 1920s, a nine storey factory was built in downtown Halifax after the original plant was destroyed by a fire. Each floor in the new Moir's factory had a unique purpose. The ninth floor housed the nut room where nuts were sorted and packed. The eighth floor was for hard candy and starch sanding, the seventh floor was also for hard candy and the sixth floor was Fancy Packaging. Pot of Gold chocolates were packed on the sixth floor. The fifth floor was for enrobing and hand dipping. The fourth floor was called Standard Packaging. Here, people hand-packed various types of boxed chocolates along an L-shaped conveyor belt. The third floor housed the bakery as well as packing departments and the second floor was made up of offices, the nurse's station, and the mechanic's maintenance shop.⁶⁷ Finally, the first floor acted as a warehouse to store goods before they were shipped out.⁶⁸ There was an elevator in the plant that employees could use to get to their respective departments.

The labour intensive process of making and packing candy meant that the new plant employed approximately, 1000 people.⁶⁹ Many women worked at Moir's and filled the positions deemed appropriate for a female workforce. As a significant employer in Halifax, Moir's had a substantial impact on the local economy and in 1958, in an unusual act of showmanship, Moir's management decided to pay all of its employees in silver

⁶⁷ Moir's 1928- 2007, "Back in the Day..." Moir's Collection, Evergreen House Archives, Dartmouth Heritage Museum, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada. This booklet was presented to the Moir's employees before the plant closed down in 2007. I accessed a copy from the Evergreen House Museum Archives.

⁶⁸ This information was provided by a former Moir's employee. She had a written document, given to her by another former employee who worked at the downtown Halifax plant, which listed the function of each of the factories floors.

⁶⁹ Moir's 1928-2007, "Moir's History," Moir's Collection, Evergreen House Archives, Dartmouth Heritage Museum, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada.

dollars to demonstrate their importance. The circulation of silver dollars around the city acted as a tangible indicator of the importance the Moir's payroll within the local community.⁷⁰

Over the course of its existence, Moir's was owned by many different confectionary companies. In 1956, Moir's was under the control of a group of local businessmen who initiated an extensive modernization process.⁷¹ At the time of the takeover, Moir's employees were receiving below average wages with assistant foremen earning \$57.00 a week and foremen earning only \$61.25 a week.⁷² These low wages gave Moir's a reputation as being an undesirable employer in Halifax; parents reportedly warned daughters against quitting school by threatening, "If you quit we'll send you to Moir's to work!"⁷³ This statement had significant classed and gendered undertones. Although working at Moir's may not have been a desirable prospect for a middle-class woman, many working-class women were happy to work at Moir's and their families were encouraging. Women from working-class families considered factory work an appealing employment option. Moir's promised reasonably reliable work at a time when

⁷⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁷¹ These local businessmen were: J.C. MacKeen (Director and Chairman of the Board); F.M. Covert (Director and President); E. LeRoy Otto (Director, Vice President and General Manager); G.S. Cowan (Director); J.J. Jodrey (Director); J.H.M. Jones (Director); C.J. Morrow (Director); S.C Oland (Director); H.C. Schwartz (Director); E.A. Coolen (Secretary and Treasurer). See: "Moirs Limited History," 12 June 1957, page 3, Moirs Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1872, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

⁷² In 1956, men's average weekly salary in manufacturing industries in Canada was \$70.67. See: Statistics Canada, Series E60-68, "Average annual, weekly and hourly earnings, male and female wage-earners, manufacturing industries, Canada, 1934 to 1969."

⁷³ Moir's 1928-2007, "Moir's History," Moir's Collection, Evergreen House Archives, Dartmouth Heritage Museum, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada.

women's employment opportunities were very limited. The introduction of a union in 1956 promised improved working conditions and an increase in wages.⁷⁴

In 1968, Standard Brands Limited purchased the confectionary interests of Moir's and Ben's Limited purchased its bakery interests. A new modernized plant was built in Woodside, Dartmouth in 1975. The years that followed were filled with mergers and consolidations. Moir's changed hands from Standard Brands to Nabisco Brands and ultimately came under the control of Hershey in 1987.⁷⁵ In 2007, Hersey closed down the Dartmouth plant and moved production to Mexico. This move resulted in the loss of 600 jobs and was met with outrage and hostility from the local community.⁷⁶

Confectionary factories, like Moir's, employed large numbers of women because much of the labour was considered unskilled and appropriate work for women. Several Canadian labour historians have discussed female factory workers in the confectionary sector. Margaret McCallum's article "Family, Factory and Community: a Social History of Ganong Bros., Confectionery Manufacturers, St. Stephen, N.B., 1873-1946", effectively demonstrates the highly gendered labour process in a confectionery factory. McCallum emphasizes that women's work has always been considered less valuable than men's. Like Armstrong and Armstrong, McCallum asserts that Canadian women's labour force participation increased substantially in the post-war era, but these women had

⁷⁴ The 1956 union was a joint agreement with the Teamsters and BCTU. This was the first instance of two labour unions signing a contraction with the same company under joint certification in Canada. See: Moir's 1928-2007, "Moir's History," Moir's Collection, Evergreen House Archives, Dartmouth Heritage Museum, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada.

⁷⁵ Moir's 1928-2007, "Moir's History," Moir's Collection, Evergreen House Archives, Dartmouth Heritage Museum, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada.

⁷⁶ "Moir's Closes Factory, 600 jobs lost" Toronto Star, December 21, 2007, <http://www.thestar.com/business/article/287775--moirs-closes-factory-600-jobs-lost>.

limited employment opportunities and were mostly confined to pink-collar ghettos.⁷⁷ McCallum maintains that the Ganong Bros. adhered strictly to the socially accepted gendered division of labour. Within the factory, men were responsible for the candy-making, which was considered a highly-skilled craft. Women filled what McCallum calls “supporting roles” to the men’s skilled labour. These supporting roles included coating and decorating prepared centers as well as packing the finished candies. Despite female labour shortages, the company never considered hiring men for women’s jobs, such as hand-dipping, and maintained that resorting to such measures “just wasn’t done.”⁷⁸ Hiring men as dippers was not a reasonable alternative to female labour despite the fact that dippers piece-rate wages allowed them to earn wages comparable to those of the men. Ganong Bros. did not consider establishing a day-care facility so that young mothers could continue to work at the factory. Instead of hiring local men or married women, Ganong Bros. sought out young single female workers from neighbouring counties and provinces. In 1910 and 1911, representatives from the company were sent to Great Britain in search of suitable female employees.⁷⁹ Ganong Bros. purchased a large home to use as a boarding house for female workers from afar. These hiring practices were inefficient but adhered to the social norms that dictated strict gendered divisions in labour and that maintained women’s primary role in society was to bear and raise children.

Ian McKay writes about Moir’s Ltd. at the turn of the twentieth-century. By examining a published list of employees in 1891, McKay finds that the confectionary

⁷⁷ Margaret E. McCallum, “Separate Spheres: The Organization of Work in a Confectionery Factory: Ganong Bros., St. Stephen, New Brunswick,” *Labour/Le Travail* 24 (Fall 1989): 70.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

departments had a higher rate of female employment than the bakery. Additionally, he found that at that time, Moir's employed three fifths of Halifax's female work force.⁸⁰ McKay notes that at least until 1900, despite the high levels of female employment, Moir's did not offer separate bathroom facilities. McKay also discusses the health and safety regulations that were implemented at Moir's around the turn of the twentieth-century. He found that the introduction of machines helped to reduce respiratory ailments caused by dust that were previously very common among bakers.⁸¹ In *Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s*, Suzanne Morton briefly describes women's working experience in the Moir's factory in the 1920s. Although each of these works examined the highly gendered labour process, these works were not focusing on the effects of the women's manual labour on their bodies. Building on these discussions, my thesis explores how women's labouring bodies affected and were affected by their work at the Moir's Candy plant and how female embodiment shaped their experience of work.

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a better understanding of women's bodily experiences while working in the Moir's Candy factory during the 1950s and 1960s. Although there is a significant amount of historical writing concerning barriers to women's employment and the gendering of the Canadian labour market, little has been written on female workers' labouring bodies. That is to say, the existing historical scholarship is quite thorough in explaining women's disadvantaged position in the labour market but fails to examine the effects of their labour on their bodies. This thesis

⁸⁰ Ian McKay, "Capital and Labour in the Halifax Baking and Confectionary Industry during the last half of the Nineteenth Century," *Labour/Le Travail* 3 (1978): 87.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

complements the existing research by recovering women's labouring bodies and providing the current debate with an embodied materialist dimension. The existing writing in women's labour history will be enriched by a greater understanding of how women physically experienced the realities of labour force gender inequalities.

The primary source base of this thesis was obtained through oral history interviews. When using oral testimonies as historical sources, it is important to recognize the variety of challenges and problems these sources present. The interview process can create a dynamic in which the interviewer and interviewee are not perceived to be on equal footing. The interviewer steers the conversation and shapes the written account presented by selecting or ignoring certain points provided by the interviewee. An interviewee's present circumstances and attitudes can also shape how their memories are recounted.⁸² Raphael Samuel and Paul R. Thompson explain the similarities between memory and myth but warn that "[t]o say that memory can be structured like myth does not mean that it can or should be reduced to it."⁸³ Although a person's memories can never be truly objective, they should not be regarded as inaccurate. Memories are true to the person recounting them and how memories are recalled presents an interesting subject in and of itself. Oral history testimonies allow for insight into the ways people perceive and interpret their past experiences. Rather than pointing to possible inaccuracies in testimonies, it is beneficial to explore why a person recalls a memory the way that they do. Present circumstances and external factors may shape a person's memories, but the memories themselves should not be deemed fundamental inaccurate. Instead, memories

⁸² Klausen, "Plywood Girls," 201; Raphael Samuel and Paul R. Thompson, *The Myths We Live by* (London: Routledge, 1990), 8.

⁸³ Samuel and Thompson, *Myths*, 13.

should be understood as evolving sources capable of adding nuanced depth to our interpretation of the past. Memories recounted through oral testimonies can reveal feelings and opinions otherwise not found in written sources. In reference to her own use of oral narratives, Klausen points out that they “are equally valid – and problematic – a source as, for example, a census or union archive.”⁸⁴ The practise of oral history has been particularly important for feminist historians who use oral testimonies from diverse groups of women to recover voices that would otherwise be lost.⁸⁵ Like Klausen, I believe that oral testimonies are valuable historical sources. This is particularly true when the testimonies are provided by marginalized groups, such as working-class women, who are less likely to have their voices and memories represented in historical scholarship.⁸⁶

Oral testimonies were used for this thesis to recover the voices of working-class Haligonian women in the post-war era. In order to take part in the study, the participants must have worked at the Moir’s Candy plant in downtown Halifax for a minimum of six weeks between 1945 and 1970 and self-identify as female. The final study population consists of eleven women whose work experience ranged from eight weeks to forty-eight years between 1949 and 2007. After interviewing the eleven participants, I found that there was significant repetition in testimony and therefore while recruiting more

⁸⁴ Klausen, 202.

⁸⁵ Sherna B. Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 2.

⁸⁶ Sue Campbell explores the “memory wars” surrounding women’s recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse. She explains that these memories are classified by some scholars as recovered memories and others as false memories. Although Campbell asserts that she does not “claim that we should never distrust women’s memories of abuse”, she is concerned with the nature of the debate surrounding the credibility of women’s recovered memories of sexual abuse. She believes that the debate focuses on claims of suggestibility that “provoke an uncritical anxiety about women’s memories.” Campbell maintains that the debate “allows for the reinvigoration of stereotypes of women as incapable of truth-telling because of weak identities.” Campbell believes that the way the memory debate is framed represents a larger problem of gender inequality in which women’s memories are questioned and devalued. See: Sue Campbell, *Relational Remembering: Rethinking the Memory Wars* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 16-17.

participants could have provided additional information there would have also been considerable redundancy.⁸⁷ Although a larger sample would have allowed for the examination of statistical patterns and overall trends, a participant pool of this size still provided a group sufficiently varied in personality, life-cycle stage and family background at the time of employment to permit themes and grounds for comparison to emerge.⁸⁸ Furthermore, a small sample allowed for an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the women's individual responses and attitudes. This in-depth analysis and attention to detail would not have been possible with a larger sample given the time and financial restrictions of a Master's thesis. The information gathered from these interviews cannot be interpreted as representing all female factory workers in post-war Canada. However, the eleven women interviewed provide important information concerning individual experiences as female labourers at a specific moment in time.

For the purposes of this study, the women were asked to discuss only their time at Moir's' Halifax location between 1949 and 1970.⁸⁹ In order to find former Moir's employees, recruitment information was posted in a variety of locations throughout

⁸⁷According to Irving Seidman, there are two criteria to consider when determining appropriate sample size: sufficiency and saturation of information. Sufficiency refers to the sample population reflect a range of characteristics. For example: differences in age, gender, education. Saturation of information refers to the point in the interview process where the researcher is no longer learning new information from participants. At that point, a researcher can assume he or she has interviewed enough participants. For a discussion on appropriate sample size, see: Irving Seidman, *Interviewing As Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1998), 47-48.

⁸⁸ Attempts were made to find a racially and ethnically diverse sample of women. However, ultimately the sample is comprised of white women and therefore the historical conclusions drawn from this research are pertaining to white women's history in post-war Halifax.

⁸⁹ Initially, the time period that I meant to examine was 1955 to 1970. The end date of 1970 was established because it was believed that due to government policies and improved working conditions, women's working experiences in the 1970s would vary sharply from those in the 1950s and 1960s. The 1955 start date was initially established with the belief that finding participants who worked at Moir's earlier than this time would be extremely difficult. The start date was pushed back to 1949 because I was contacted by a participant who began working at Moir's in that year.

Halifax, Dartmouth and surrounding regions in Nova Scotia.⁹⁰ These locations included: community centres, cultural centres, retirement communities, religious institutions, public libraries and newspaper and internet classified ads.⁹¹ Once recruited, a number of participants gave the study information to friends they thought would also be interested in participating. Through this use of snowball sampling, a number of additional participants were recruited. Before participating in the interview process, the women were screened over the phone to ensure they met the study's requirements, understood the purpose of the study, and had enough time to participate. This interview process met the ethical standards as set out in the *Tri Council Policy Statement (TCPS) Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.⁹²

The women were asked to participate in up to three one-hour, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were guided by a list of pre-determined questions. This list was loosely followed to provide structure to the interview, but participants were also encouraged to recount memories and provide information that they felt was relevant to their working experiences. The questions were arranged in an order that ranged from basic contextual questions to more personal and complex questions about opinions and attitudes.⁹³ In three instances, only one interview was necessary. Only one participant was interviewed three times. The remaining seven participants were each interviewed twice. With the exception of one participant who was interviewed over the phone, all of the interviews were conducted at the participant's home or at Dalhousie University. The

⁹⁰ Copies of recruitment materials can be found in the appendix.

⁹¹ A list of locations where recruitment information was posted can be found in the appendix. In addition to these postings, interested parties took it upon themselves to pass recruitment information along to former Moir's employees and several participants were acquired in this manner.

⁹² A copy of the consent form can be found in the appendix.

⁹³ A copy of the interview guide can be found in the appendix.

interviews were then transcribed and participants were given the opportunity to review the sections of the thesis in which they were quoted so that they could correct, edit or delete statements. Each participant was given the choice to use her real name or a pseudonym.⁹⁴

The eleven women interviewed for this study varied in life-cycle stage and the length of time they worked at Moir's. June and Linda were young students working for the summer at one of their first jobs, had yet to complete high school and were still living at home with their parents. Verna was single and childless when she worked at Moir's and had her first child after she had left Moir's for another job. Dorothy and Millie were single mothers working to support a child on their own. Marion, Mary, and Muriel were married with children and adding to the family income in the hopes of obtaining a greater standard of living. Joyce was married for the entirety of her time at Moir's but only had children after she left her job. Lois married while working at Moir's and left her job when she was pregnant with her first child. Margaret remained single and had no children. All of the women were White and had grown up in Halifax or other parts of Nova Scotia.

These interviews provide insight into the daily working lives of female factory workers that could not otherwise have been reached through the use of archival sources. Although there are archival records for Moir's at both the Nova Scotia Archives in Halifax and the Evergreen House of the Dartmouth Heritage Museum, these records lack firsthand accounts of women's working experience. Without written accounts, the only way to determine how it felt to be a female factory worker in the 1950s and 1960s is to

⁹⁴ In order to ensure confidentiality, the interview recordings and transcripts are not available to the public. This practice is in accordance with the ethical standards agreed upon before the interview process began and is not intended to avoid academic transparency.

ask a woman who worked at this time. The women interviewed for this research acts as a case study of an emerging theme in Canadian women's labour history, namely the multiple ways women's bodies affected and were affected by their manual labour. The following chapters explore the multiple ways the women employed job-related, cultural and reproductive body work while working at the Moir's candy plant. I make three main claims. First, although the existing scholarship views workplace sabotage and make-work exclusively as a means of resistance, I maintain that the Moir's women also used these coping strategies to create leisure at work and avoid direct conflict with superiors. Second, I show that the women engaged in emotional labour in the factory and that an important part of their occupation was managing feelings of pride and shame. Finally, due to the limited nature of sources available to working wives and mothers in the post-war era, I argue that women's reproductive body work was completely intertwined with their work in the paid labour force.

Chapter 2: Conditions and Embodiment

In 1962, Moir's produced a small book entitled The Romance of Candy in which the candy-making process was summarized from beginning to end. The book lists many exotic ingredients such as cacao beans, pineapple and ginger and describes how the ingredients are harvested and shipped to the Moir's candy plant in downtown Halifax, Nova Scotia. The title alludes to the belief that the ingredients involved in the candy-making are inherently romantic because of their international origins. The author claims that "those of us who work in the making of candy are in close contact with the products from these countries and this is why we say that the making of candy is romantic."¹ None of the women interviewed for this study described their job as romantic. That being said, these women were not responsible for candy-making, which was considered men's work. Instead, the women sorted, packed, wrapped, shined, weighed or inspected the finished products. Good working conditions are positively correlated to job satisfaction. In the first half of the twentieth-century, Moir's had a bad reputation in Halifax and many people believed the plant had poor working conditions and even poorer wages. The

¹ Moirs Ltd., *The Romance of Candy: the Story of Moirs Chocolates* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Moir's Ltd., 1962), 2.

Moir's women were constrained by limited job opportunities and a highly gendered division of labour. However, the women did not view this division as problematic and most of the women did not believe they worked under poor working conditions. The women's working conditions and regulations played a significant role in determining the types of body work that were necessary in maintaining the women's embodied selves in the workplace. Although the women's perception of the plant's working conditions may have been influenced by their limited job opportunities, they were able to adapt and make the best of their jobs by bending and breaking regulations to ensure they had enjoyable work days.

The post-war era was a time when women entered the workforce at unprecedented levels. Despite this reality, the male breadwinner/female homemaker ideology continued to define, however inaccurately, Canadian society. At this time in Halifax, women did not have many job opportunities. As discussed in the introduction, Nova Scotia's dependence on primary industries meant that available employment was highly gendered. Like the rest of Canada, the jobs that were available to women in Halifax were those considered appropriate for female workers. Other than middle-class or professional positions, these jobs included clerical, domestic and factory work as well as occupations in the service sector.

There is often an emphasis on unfair, unsanitary and unsafe working conditions when discussing factory work. Factory work also has certain classed connotations. Although working at factory like Moir's was acceptable to women from working-class families, middle-class women were far less likely to work in a factory. Factory work, however, had some advantages over other occupations available to women at this time.

Susan Porter Benson discusses American women's department store work from 1890 to 1940. She maintains that these saleswomen were subject to many hidden labour costs. Unlike factory workers, saleswomen had shorter work days. This, however, was offset by having to work on the weekends and working unpaid overtime.² Dorothy worked at Moir's from 1953 until her retirement in the mid-1990s. Before starting at Moir's she worked in a pharmacy in downtown Halifax. She explained that she left the pharmacy to work at Moir's because at the candy plant she would have evenings and weekends off. Dorothy's son stayed with her mother outside of the city and so Dorothy wanted weekends off to spend time with her young son.³ To many women with family situations similar to Dorothy's, the benefit of factory work was that having evenings and weekends off allowed for time with family.

The experience of each woman varied substantially due in large part to each individual's attitude towards their job. But there were commonalities among their experiences because they all worked in a shared context. All were influenced by those around them: their co-workers, chargehands, foremen, foreladies and supervisors. Each department had at least one foreman or forelady who was responsible for keeping the employees working. Many of the women interviewed recalled their foremen fondly and their workplace antics were not intended to upset their bosses. However, a distinction must be made between those superiors who worked on the factory floor in the departments and those who worked in the offices. Although most of the women interviewed had good working relationships with their foremen, foreladies and

² Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 196.

³ Interview with Dorothy, 28 September, 2011.

chargehands, several women spoke less highly of the “big shots” in the offices.⁴ Many of the women found it hard to feel any personal connection to these supervisors; the women saw them as being ultimately most concerned about production and profits. Although the women did not create their working conditions, through the use of various forms of body work they were able to cope with, and alter some of the effects of these conditions.

Gendered Division of Labour at Moir’s

The labour process in the Moir’s candy plant was highly gendered. Margaret McCallum documented this trend at the Ganong factory in St. Stephen, New Brunswick and an almost identical division of labour was upheld at Moir’s. As noted in the introduction, at the Ganong factory, men were responsible for the “skilled” labour, such as candy-making, while women were responsible for the “unskilled” labour, such as candy decorating and packing.⁵ At Moir’s female employees were primarily responsible for sorting, packing, wrapping and weighing the candy. These jobs, along with many other tasks performed by women, were all considered unskilled. Moir’s maintained the tradition of hand dipped chocolates well into the 1960s. In a radio interview with a Moir’s manager in 1937, the interviewer asked why Moir’s continued to hand dip chocolates when an enrobing machine seemed to be performing the exact same task. The manager explained that chocolates coated by enrobing machine “do not have the appearance of the hand dipped article” and provided the interviewer with a sample of

⁴ Interview with Dorothy, 28 September, 2011.

⁵ Margaret E. McCallum, “Separate Spheres: The Organization of Work in a Confectionery Factory: Ganong Bros., St. Stephen, New Brunswick,” *Labour/Le Travail* 24 (Fall 1989): 86. Whether a job was categorized as skilled or unskilled was largely dependent on the gender of the individual performing the task. Definitions of skill have changed across time. Some occupations once performed by men and deemed skilled become categorized as unskilled when female workers are used instead of male.

each to see for himself.⁶ Women were responsible for all of the hand dipping at Moir's and were paid at a piece rate. These women were considered skilled-labourers but their skill lay somewhere between the unskilled labour of a female packer and the highly skilled work of a male candy-maker.

The eleven women interviewed for this study performed a variety of tasks while working at Moir's. Packing chocolates and candies was the most common job among the women. Every woman interviewed packed for at least for a short time and for the majority of women it was their primary job in the factory. All of the women interviewed worked on the assembly line in some capacity during their time at Moir's. Two of the women worked as chargehands but only for a brief time. Dorothy explained that being a chargehand "was a lot of responsibility and, you know, you had to be on the packers' backs all the time especially the ones who didn't put in their, do their work."⁷ Moir's hired women as supervisors or foreladies in several departments but none of the women interviewed expressed any desire to work as a forelady. When asked why, the women generally expressed a desire to avoid the added stress and complications associated with a managerial position.⁸ Joyce had married shortly before starting at Moir's and planned to quit her job when she had children and so she never considered a managerial job. She believed that her job at Moir's was only temporary. She explained, "[b]ut like I say I was only there a short time so I didn't have no interest in wanting to be a boss."⁹ Joyce also recalled that the female foreladies in her department were unmarried. This was a fact that

⁶ Henson, "Draft set of Questions for Radio Interview in Connection with a Broadcast to the Schools by the Department of Education, Friday Afternoon, May 14, 1937, from 3.15-3.30," Moirs Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1872, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

⁷ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

⁸ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁹ Interview with Joyce, 30 November, 2011.

she repeated nearly every time a discussion of female supervisor was raised. In the eyes of Joyce, these unmarried foreladies took on “career girl” status. They were unmarried and would not leave their positions to have children. They were able to commit to a managerial position because they did not have the same familial obligations outside of work as a woman who was married and had children. In *Bachelor Girl*, a history of single women in twentieth century America, Betsy Israel explains that career girls were plagued by the stigma that an unmarried working woman was lacking in femininity. Magazine and newspaper articles maintained that these single women were often left wondering whether they had missed out by putting their work before a family.¹⁰ Although Joyce did not voice these sentiments, she clearly associated a woman in a managerial position with being unmarried.

There was possibility for advancement for women at Moir’s. But in the eyes of the women interviewed, these promotions generally meant more stress and the need to tell employees what to do with no guarantee of their obedience. Verna worked along the assembly line at Moir’s from 1949 to 1954. She recalled filling in for a male superior who was frequently late for work in the mornings:

We had a boss and, one of the bosses, couldn’t quite be relied on to do his job. And his job was running the machines. And at one point he asked my sister and I to jump on to [the] belt just for a short time, you know? Because he didn’t show up when he should have... And so we did our best but we had to control the temperature of the chocolate, if you can believe it. The chocolate is going out into the world. How do you like that for responsibility? My sister and I worked together, she’s passed on now. She had breast cancer. We looked after it. No problem... You kept control from underneath... But as far as control the chocolates, it was like, ok did you ever see the underneath the faucets of the kitchen and the

¹⁰ Betsy Israel, *Bachelor Girl: The Secret History of Single Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: W. Morrow, 2002), 219.

bathroom? That kind of, you were just controlling it. You would turn it so far and that would make it just the right temperature. If you put too much or too less it would make it grey. When you see, we learned that, when you see chocolates with grey, you know grey like this instead of like that. See the difference? It's actually really almost that colour grey. When you see it like that it's either too hot, the chocolate that's been not tempered enough and is too hot, ok? Or sometimes they leave it on the shelves in the stores and it's old... That would be just a short while mind cause that was his job. But he had the habit of not showing up in the mornings sometimes. And you know, so he would ask us. Showed us how it went and we knew when he showed us how it went we'd have to look after it. And that's a responsibility.¹¹

In this instance, Verna and her sister were responsible for a skilled job but were not paid extra for their skill. Their actions were done strictly “to be kind to the person”¹² and they did not expect to be compensated in any way for their work at a skilled job. In the confectionary industry, like many other manufacturing industries, work on a machine or with a machine was generally considered a masculine job that required skill. As Sangster puts it, “[b]lue-collar women were likely to be machine tenders but not machine fixers.”¹³ In this instance, minding the temperature of the chocolate was a man's job, but these women stepped in when there was no other alternative. This example is in accordance to the trends Steedman outlines in her discussion of the needle trade in Canada. Tasks were officially gendered so that women's jobs were inferior to men's both in status and pay. However, on the shop floor, these distinctions might be ignored. When that happened, women were asked to perform men's work with no additional compensation.¹⁴

¹¹ Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

¹² Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

¹³ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-town Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 53.

¹⁴ Mercedes Steedman, *Angels of the Workplace: Women and the Construction of Gender Relations in the Canadian Clothing Industry, 1890-1940* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 2.

Men were also responsible for the heavy lifting in the Moir's factory. Joyce remarked that "they [men] done the harder work. We didn't have to do that. So that was not bad."¹⁵ The gendered labour process was maintained in the factory until the Moir's plant was moved to Dartmouth in 1975. Dorothy explained that the gendered labour process changed after they left the old plant. When Dorothy recalled men on the packing belt at the Dartmouth plant she laughed: to her, these changes were humorous.¹⁶ When asked if she thought it was alright to have different jobs for men and women, Dorothy explained:

That's the way they had it in the old building, yes. Men could only do men's work and the women do women's work. But no I never went in for that even when it turned over. I was a woman, that was it. But there we did have 'em down at the new plant, women doing men's work. Driving those big machines. Oh they could whip them around just the same as any man. [*laughs*] And they were getting men's pay too besides, they really put in for the men's jobs driving the big machinery and that. Yup.¹⁷

Margaret worked at Moir's from 1959 to 2007. Across the course of her forty-eight year career, she witnessed the gendered division of labour transform. She explained that at the new plant, after 1975, men began to do women's work:

It's when you start [to] hire men. Men more or less doing women's work. You had a full grown man sittin' beside ya doin' your work who should have been out pick and shovel. So they would come in and have a different attitude. So then it's like everything else. And I shouldn't be talking this way but this was my feelings...¹⁸

To Margaret, a man, who, because of his body type –“a full grown man”-, should be capable of heavy labour, sitting on the line packing was a serious offense. When asked if she thought it was fair for the men to be paid more than the women working at Moir's,

¹⁵ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

¹⁶ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

¹⁷ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

¹⁸ Interview with Margaret, 15 December, 2011.

Marion believed that it was fair as long as they were doing different jobs.¹⁹ None of the women interviewed questioned the gendered division of labour at Moir's, and those who worked in the Dartmouth plant, after the period being discussed here, disapproved of men doing women's work. In her interviews with women working at four manufacturing plants in Peterborough, Ontario between 1920 and 1960, Sangster finds that the gendered division of labour was a "taken-for-granted reality."²⁰ Canning explains that many jobs were considered women's work because the tasks required "the dexterity of 'female hands.'"²¹ In the same view, the women's comments suggest that their acceptance of the gendered division of labour at Moir's was largely based on their views about men's and women's bodies. Some of the men's jobs at Moir's involved heavy lifting, and these women believed men's body types allowed them to perform these tasks. Therefore, if a man was performing a job typically ascribed to a woman he was not living up to his abilities. From the point of view of the women interviewed here, men doing women's work was more displeasing than women doing men's work.

Piece-work

When a worker is paid a piece rate there is a conflict between the desire to produce, and therefore earn, as much as possible and avoid potential injury caused by fast and repetitive movements. Piece-work wages meant that a worker was paid a set rate for every item they produced.²² If there was little or no work, an employee would not earn any pay because they were not producing anything. Piece-work was first established in

¹⁹ Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011.

²⁰ Sangster, *Earning Respect*, 50.

²¹ Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class & Citizenship* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 161.

²² In place of gendered pronouns, such as he/she, and his/hers, I will consistently use they, their and them. This is in part to ensure added clarity in my writing but is also an intentional use of gender-neutral language.

large-scale manufacturing in Canada in the early 1930s.²³ Although piece-work was common for women in the needle trades, male workers were typically opposed to being paid a piece rate. Steedman explains that, while male workers fought against piece-work, women were not involved in these battles. She attributes this to women's short-term employment and younger age.²⁴ Marianne Herzog worked in factories throughout West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. She recorded her working experiences and they were later published and serve as a revealing account of women's lives as piece-workers. Herzog explains that 70 per cent of female factory workers in West Germany were paid a piece-rate. These women were considered unskilled labourers while men occupied the skilled positions within the factories. In the early 1970s, Herzog worked at AEG-Telefunken, a factory that produced radio and television tubes and semi-conductors. In this factory, men never did piece-work.²⁵ Herzog believed that women were forced into piece-work by an unjust system. She explained that many women had few employment opportunities and needed piece-work to survive:

These family and economic ties are why the women carry on with piecework. They are compelled into it because they are untrained workers and have no choice. Piecework is based on these ties, they lay the foundations for the ever-increasing exploitation of women workers through increasingly rationalized methods. And the most economically dependent workers, those who cannot change factories, are those who are the most exploited.²⁶

The working conditions Herzog described were unsanitary and unsafe. She demonstrates how piece-work was often used as a means to cut production costs by providing a marginalized labour force, in this case women, with starvation wages. Ruth Milkman

²³ Steedman, *Angels of the Workplace*, 129.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Marianne Herzog, *From Hand to Mouth: Women and Piece-Work* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1980), 43.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

explains that in the early nineteen-hundreds, the electrical manufacturing industry in the U.S. relied heavily on machinery and a piece-work system. This meant that the majority of employees in this sector were women and girls.²⁷ Historian Nan Enstad explains that in some U.S. garment factories in the early twentieth-century, women would make their own clothes when there were slow times. This allowed the women to make optimal use of their time at work despite the fact that they were not earning any pay.²⁸

There is an inherent struggle within piece-work in which a worker must try to produce as much as possible in order to make a decent wage while at the same time avoiding over-exertion and injury. In a vocational guide book for Canadian girls, published in 1920, Marjory MacMurchy encouraged girls to pursue piece-work in factories but warned them against pushing themselves too hard, “[w]ith regard to piece-work, the girl should have sufficient judgement not to force herself beyond her strength. She may lose her health by a few years’ overwork and become unable to support herself.”²⁹ According to MacMurchy, until a girl became a homemaker, piece-work could provide a good wage as long as she remained aware of her physical limitations. Tara Fenwick interviewed female garment workers who formerly worked in the Great Westerns Garment factory in Edmonton, Alberta. Many of the women interviewed worked for a piece rate and had to “learn how to sew as fast as possible without hurting oneself or making mistakes.”³⁰ Avoiding unnecessary strain and injury was an important

²⁷ Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 12.

²⁸ Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 67.

²⁹ Marjory MacMurchy Willison, *The Canadian Girl at Work: A Book of Vocational Guidance* (Toronto: T. Nelson, 1920), 7.

³⁰ Tara Fenwick, “Learning on the Line: Voices of Garment Workers at Great Western Garment.” *Labour/Le Travail* 59 (Spring 2007): 223.

part of piece-work but so was avoiding mistakes. If a woman improperly sewed a seam she would be forced to re-sew it with no compensation. Fenwick asserts that through this practice, “workers were learning to turn their bodies into machines feeding the mass assembly production.”³¹

Until the early 1960s, employees in several departments at Moir’s were paid a piece-rate. There is added stress for an employee when their wages depend on their production. Dorothy never worked for a piece-rate, but she believed piece-rate pay gave Moir’s a bad reputation within the community:

Moir’s plant did have a bad name, a very bad name because now this is going back to when I went there. And because of the wages and going back again to piece-work. You had to go in their early in the morning 7 o’clock and you had to work your fingers off to get a few cents pay. And things like that is what gave Moirs a bad name. Besides, besides having the plant sprayed and [*laughs*]³²

In a previous interview, Dorothy described piece-work at Moir’s as “slavery.”³³ But she herself never worked for a piece rate. Only two women interviewed for this study, Muriel and Margaret, were ever paid a piece-rate at Moir’s and both found the experience to be positive. The negative connotations, such as Dorothy’s, associated with piece-work stemmed from the belief that piece-rates prevented women from earning a living wage.

Although Dorothy believed piece-rates prevented women from earning a decent wage, Muriel was very happy with the money she earned as a piece-rate dipper. Muriel began working at Moir’s when she was 15 years old. She had worked one job before she was hired at Moir’s. She stopped going to school and began working to help contribute to her family’s income because her mother had recently needed to quit her job and her sister

³¹ Ibid.

³² Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

³³ Interview with Dorothy, 5 October, 2011.

was having a baby. Muriel worked at Moir's from 1951 to 1968 and performed a number of tasks within the factory throughout her seventeen year career. For the better part of the 1950s, Muriel received a piece-rate for her work dipping cherries that would later be coated in chocolate. The women in this department sat on stools at tables that contained heated pots that housed the cream for the cherries. They were able to control the heat of the cream using a dial that was found underneath the table. It was important to maintain an appropriate temperature so that the cherries would be evenly coated. If they were not, the dippers would be asked to re-dip their cherries without compensation.³⁴ Muriel explained that she was paid seventeen cents for every tray of dipped cherries.³⁵ She maintained that she was able to make twenty-two dollars a week which she considered a very good wage for piece-work in the early 1950s although it was in fact well below the Canadian average.³⁶ Similarly, Margaret was satisfied with her earnings on the piece-work rate. She began working at Moir's in 1959 and was paid a piece-rate for packing. She explained that she had no strong feelings toward piece-work. She was unable to recall bodily pain or difficulty. For her, the earnings she made at a piece-rate were the dominant memory. Margaret recalled that in the early 1960s she was able to bring home

³⁴ Interview with Muriel, 18 November, 2011.

³⁵ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

³⁶ Interview with Muriel, 18 November, 2011. The average weekly wage for a woman working in the manufacturing industry in Canada in 1951 (the year Muriel began working at Moir's) was \$31.27 and the average annual wage was \$1,492. See: Statistics Canada, Series E60-68, "Average annual, weekly and hourly earnings, male and female wage-earners, manufacturing industries, Canada, 1934 to 1969." The poverty lines for 1951 (based on the 1997 basic needs line) were: \$1,303 for a family of one, \$2,045 for a family of two, \$2,486 for a family of three, \$2,888 for a family of four, \$3,261 for a family of five, and \$3,613 for a family of six. See: Christopher A. Sarlo, *Measuring Poverty in Canada* (Vancouver, Canada: Fraser Institute, 2001), 34. On average a woman working in the manufacturing industry in Canada in 1951 was earning \$189 above the poverty line for a family of one. However, Muriel's recollections of her wages indicate that her wages put her below the poverty line. Despite this, Muriel was content with her wages and did not indicate that she was displeased with her standard of living. Although income statistics provide a greater understand of people's historic standards of living, Christopher A. Sarlo warns that the statistics can be flawed and he points out that other sources of income are not always reported.

approximately forty dollars a week and considered that to be very good money. She explained that the factory eventually did away with piece-rates but after this occurred her salary was only slightly higher than what she had earned previously.³⁷ However, wages earned through piece-work were highly dependent on personal performance. Not all women working in piece-work were able to make a decent wage.

Working for a piece rate left many women vulnerable to injuries and the whims of supervisors with strict quality standards. Herzog describes her experience welding tubes for a piece-rate at AEG Telefunken in Berlin, in the early 1970s.³⁸ She explained that after ten years of piece-work a woman was considered old and susceptible to chronic injuries.³⁹ Herzog's description of poor working conditions and extreme fatigue contrast sharply to Muriel and Margaret's recollections of piece-work. Although piece-rate conditions at Moir's were viewed by some as exploitive, Muriel explained that her department was very pleasant and the other women frequently went for smoke breaks. Muriel, however, only took breaks to use the bathroom and never left her work to smoke or socialize.⁴⁰ Muriel took a job at Moir's in order to contribute to her family's income. She maintained that she did not pay much attention to the dating and socializing at the factory because she was only interested in "making money to help [her] family out."⁴¹ Muriel's commitment to her work and ability to go without breaks allowed her to make what she considered to be a decent wage working under conditions she found to be quite pleasant. Piece-work at Moir's, at least for some employees, was a reasonable way to make a wage.

³⁷ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

³⁸ Herzog, *From Hand to Mouth*, 43.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴⁰ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁴¹ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

Breaks

Breaks provide workers with a reprieve from the physical and mental exertions of their jobs. While on break, an employee can perform a number of tasks. They can rest, eat, smoke, use the washroom and, in a factory setting, avoid the watchful eye of supervisors. Moir's employees were given three official breaks for an eight hour shift. The first was in the morning and lasted approximately fifteen minutes. The lunch time break lasted one hour until the late 1950s when management decided that thirty minutes would suffice. The third official break was in the afternoon and was also fifteen minutes. When discussing their break times the women interviewed were generally content with the quantity of breaks they received. When asked if she liked or disliked the way breaks were set up, Marion, who worked at Moir's from 1963 to 2003, responded that the break system "was alright. It had to be alright, you know."⁴² This attitude was shared by the majority of the women interviewed although some did feel that breaks did not allow enough time to perform necessary tasks such as using the washroom, getting a drink of water and having a cigarette.⁴³

Although breaks at Moir's were short and often rushed, there was a system in place to allow for bathroom breaks and emergencies. In this unofficial policy, women working on the belt would ask their chargehand or supervisor to take their place so they could leave the belt for a short period of time to use the bathroom or go to the nurse if they were feeling ill. There were also packing tables from which women could easily be moved to take over for someone packing on the belt. These tables were also used to get

⁴² Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011.

⁴³ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011; Interview with Millie, 19 October, 2011; Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

women accustomed to the routine of packing before they packed on the moving conveyor belt. When asked if the women had to wait until their break to use the washroom, Marion explained, “No, no. You’d ask your chargehand if, you know, you’d like to use the washroom. You couldn’t, you know, when you have to go you have to go. So they would, she would take your place, usually the chargehand.”⁴⁴ After Marion explained this system, Dorothy added, “If she [the chargehand] felt like it. If she felt like it. [laughs]”⁴⁵ Margaret explained that her chargehand would often replace the women on the belt if they needed to go to the washroom. However, when a packer was sick, a more long-term replacement needed to be found and this was sometimes difficult:

I remember this scenario this girl was beside me and [laughs] I don’t know if she was going to pass out or something and I remember the chargehand and putting her arm around her and, “don’t pass out.” She says, “til I get somebody to go in your place.” [laughs] I remember her sayin’ that, right. And the person didn’t pass out but she felt like she was going to. This is the chargehand “Don’t pass out til I get somebody in your place.”⁴⁶

When a chargehand was unwilling, or unable, to find a replacement for a packer, the packer would have to wait or disobey her chargehand or supervisor and leave the belt without permission. The women knew that their additional bathroom breaks were dependent on their chargehand’s good will. If a chargehand wanted to keep a packer at the belt she could refuse to take her place or to find another replacement. Alternatively, a packer who wanted extra breaks could abuse this system and request to be replaced more often than she may have needed. Although the women generally had few complaints about this system, during menstruation the women often needed to visit the washroom more frequently.

⁴⁴ Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011.

⁴⁵ Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011. Dorothy was present at each of Marion’s two interviews. The interviews were held in Dorothy’s home for the convenience of all parties involved.

⁴⁶ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

Pace

When working on the conveyor belt, it is imperative to keep up with the pace. Failure to keep the pace could greatly inconvenience other workers down the line and would typically result in anger and frustration from a supervisor. In the packing departments at Moir's, it was easy to determine who was keeping up with the pace of the work and who was not. At the end of the line, an inspector examined the boxes for quality control. Each packer was responsible for one or two specific candies and if their candies were not in the box or were placed improperly, the inspector would fill in the missing candies. Initially, foreladies, inspectors and chargehands would be lenient about packers missing their candies. But if the errors persisted, the problems were easily traced back to individual packers. A packer who could not keep up with the pace of the belt after her initial shifts at Moir's was first given a warning and if her performance did not improve she was moved to another job. Beynon expresses his personal belief that it took a certain type of person to work on an assembly line. After recounting the story of his friend who lasted only two days at the Vauxhall automotive plant in Ellesmere Port, England he concludes that "tall dozey men don't belong on an assembly line."⁴⁷ Beynon believes that to work on an assembly line a worker must be agile. Without this agility a worker cannot keep up with the speed of the belt.⁴⁸ He explains that the other men on the line worked up the belt so that they gained a few minutes break by the end of every hour. Beynon's friend, however, was constantly falling behind and was unable to work up the line and gain a rest.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Huw Beynon, *Working for Ford* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 116.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

An employee's ability to keep up with the line was extremely important for many of the jobs at Moir's. If a worker was too slow, she could be moved to a less pleasant job. Millie recalled being moved several times during the eight weeks she worked at Moir's. She struggled to keep up with the pace of the belt while packing and was moved to another floor where she worked by herself sorting candy. She recalled:

I got taken off the belt. I got moved a couple times there. I never did find out if that's what they did, you know, they'd try you here see where you were best or whatever. I just messed up I guess [*laughs*] I felt under pressure there. I had to get this out and I had to be good and I had be really good in order to blah blah. I think that's what a lot of it was at Moir's and I didn't like that, you know. Yes. Maybe that's what it was. Yes.⁵⁰

Millie quit her job at Moir's after only eight weeks. She did not enjoy the stress and anxiety caused by the pace of work and the constant supervision. She moved on to a new factory job at Maritime Paper where many of her friends worked. When she failed to keep up with the pace of the belt, Millie was moved to another job which she found to be very unpleasant. However, there were also many other jobs that either took employees away from the belt or gave them fewer tasks to accomplish in a given time frame. These positions were often more desirable and involved less strenuous work. Marion's job was to place padding on top of the packed boxes after they were inspected. Although this required quick and constant movements, Marion found it to be less difficult than packing. For a time, Marion was given a job as a packer but was moved because she was unable to keep up. She recalled that she was "glad" to be moved.⁵¹ On another occasion, Marion was given the opportunity to be a full-time packer:

Oh yeah, I never cared because -----, she was the supervisor, one time she came and asked me if I wanted to, cause I think it was more money in packing, and she

⁵⁰ Interview with Millie, 9 November, 2011.

⁵¹ Interview with Marion, 5 October, 2011.

asked me there was an opening, did I want it? I said, “No thank you. I’m quite satisfied, what I’m doing.” Cause you know, steady steady goin’. Shoulders would bother me. I didn’t like it.⁵²

For Marion, even the prospect of a slight income increase could not entice her become a packer. She could not keep up with the pace and so, once she found a suitable position, she stuck with it. Marion explained that the ache she felt in her shoulders would go away after she rested but did not believe a pay increase was a good reason to suffer even the temporary discomfort she experienced.⁵³ Although the women had limited control over their working conditions, they could sometimes choose to stay in a job they were comfortable with. Millie was moved around in the plant and had no say in what job she performed and this significantly contributed to her decision to leave Moir’s. However, Marion was given the opportunity to take on a job with greater pay but refused it to stay in a job she was happy with.

Like Marion, Joyce did not enjoy packing and preferred her job at the end of the belt. Joyce’s job was to shine the chocolates with a brush after they were packed and recalled that she tried her hand at packing only once. Packers had to put each chocolate or candy into a small cup before placing them in a box. Joyce replaced a packer who had to use the bathroom. She explained that “I thought “Well this is disaster. Forget that.” I can’t, I couldn’t get the cup, you know, flickin ‘em and cause it was something that you had to, you’d get good at after a while. So but the only time they tried me one time at packing I said “No, that’s not for me. Sorry.” [laughs]⁵⁴

⁵² Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011.

⁵³ Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011.

⁵⁴ Interview with Joyce, 30 November, 2011.

Millie alluded to the possibility that supervisors placed employees in the positions they were best at. Other women expressed similar sentiments. Verna explained that she was moved from her job separating chocolates after they were enrobed but believed she was quickly moved back because she was so good at her original job:

So I didn't get to work in the cold room for too long. I liked it [*laughs*] But you know when they like you in a particular position that's where you stay. You understand? You don't argue with the boss. You get it done or you're out the door [*laughs*] you know?⁵⁵

Like Verna, June also worked separating the chocolates after they were enrobed. June found this job difficult and consistently missed the chocolates she was meant to separate. She preferred her job sorting seconds to her job on the line.⁵⁶ The women's job satisfaction was dependent on the degree to which they could obtain and stay in positions they preferred or were best at. Some of the women, like Verna, accepted that their position in the factory was largely dependent on their performance. This could end positively with a woman being moved back into a position she excelled at or negatively if poor performance meant being moved to a less attractive position.

Although some of the women disliked packing or had difficulty keeping up with the pace, some women found that they were quite good at it. Mary worked at Moir's from 1969 to 1974. She worked primarily as a packer and never had trouble keeping up with the pace:

But if you missed it, they would just let it go. And like, they called her the inspector, down at the end of the belt she would fill in what you missed. But once

⁵⁵ Interview with Verna, 3 November, 2011.

⁵⁶ Interview with June, 3 October, 2011. "Seconds" was the name given to chocolates or candies that were not up to Moir's quality standards. This could mean a chocolate that was not completely coated or a candy that was misshapen. These candies and chocolates had to be sorted so that they could be re-melted or packed and sold at the factory store for a discount rate.

you got the hang of it, you know, it wasn't hard at all to do it. In fact, like the boxes come down right close together right. They're touchin' so you just get one in there's another one, there's another one, there's another one and I mean your hands are forever goin' like this [*shows the motion of putting chocolates in the boxes*] So I can understand why I got sore arms, you know. It's hard. But once you get used to it. It's just like nothing. So.⁵⁷

Clearly, a worker's ability to pack depended largely on physical ability as well as attitude. Margaret explained that when women were paid piece-rates for packing it was especially important not to miss any chocolates:

I remember one time there that was quite a few years there, people were having trouble like sometimes the belt would be speeded up. So you had people who were a little bit slower you had people who were a little bit faster. Some people couldn't get all their candy in and this inspector she couldn't catch them all. So they were held up on a dolly and be taken back up to the top of the line. Well may as well say for that ten minutes or so, there was no money being made.⁵⁸

Keeping up with the pace was important to the workers themselves as well as Moir's management. Margaret explained that when packing at a piece-rate, another packer was more likely to scold you for missing candies than a chargehand was:

I remember them hollerin', "Hey put your candy in." Wouldn't be the chargehand or the supervisor it would be your next door neighbour. "Hey come on, get your candy in, that's my money going down the line." You know what I'm saying? So we were, we all looked out for ourselves like sort of.⁵⁹

When working for piece-rate, production becomes important for the employees as well as the managers and there is added pressure to keep up. Piece-work encouraged employees to work as quickly as possible to make a decent wage. Their speed and commitment to producing a decent wage also meant they would meet high production goals. This gave employers an added level of control over their employees and their production.⁶⁰ When an employee's wage depends upon other workers' performance there is an added level of

⁵⁷ Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

⁵⁸ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

⁵⁹ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

⁶⁰ Milkman, *Gender at Work*, 20-21.

pressure to meet production goals. In this model, a worker will suffer if they are slower than the other workers but there is also no incentive to excel.

When working on an assembly line, employees are forced to work together to achieve a common production goal and there is no reward for displaying individual skill and ability. Sociologist Richard Sennett explains the contradictory relationship between individualism and collectivism on the factory floor. In order to form a greater understanding of the connections between class and certain values, Sennett interviewed William O'Malley, an assembly-line worker in a plant in the U.S. in the late 1960s. O'Malley believed that "hard work" was "important to a man's self-respect."⁶¹ Despite the fact that O'Malley wanted to work hard and do the best he could, he also wanted to avoid standing out and overshadowing his fellow workers. O'Malley explained this to Sennett: "I try to work as hard as I can without standing out, without seeming special; there's this, too – I don't want to get the other guys against me."⁶² When O'Malley was working on the line, he avoided working too fast because he did not want one of the slower workers to suffer. He wanted to reach production goals to keep the foreman happy but did not want to "press" the other employees.⁶³ Interestingly, in a piece-work setting where individuals are earning a wage based on their own production, Fenwick explains that the women felt a sense of obligation to work as quickly and with as few errors as possible to ensure the maximum income for all other the workers.⁶⁴ In an interview that was later used in the play, one woman explained this phenomenon: "Working, you have to learn right. You have to give into people. It's not that you do good and the other people

⁶¹ Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 99.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 101.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶⁴ Fenwick, "Learning on the Line," 223.

doesn't[sic] do good. You can't, just because you know something, be proud. You have to go slowly so that everyone can follow you together."⁶⁵ This conflicting relationship between collectivism and individualism was also present at Moir's. The women did not want to hold up the line because they would be confronted by not only a frustrated chargehand but also annoyed co-workers.⁶⁶ The women worked hard to make a good wage but, as previously discussed, most of them were not attempting to be noticed by management or promoted to a chargehand or forelady position.

Although there were few rewards for displaying individual skill at Moir's, in some departments there were monetary incentives to ensure the women met production deadlines. Linda worked in the bar wrap department packing candy bars in boxes after they were wrapped. She explained that the women in her department would receive a bonus on their cheques if they reached production goals for a given time period. Linda remembered that she struggled with the pace at first but quickly learned the necessary motions to pack the bars:

Oh when you first start you kind of got backed up and you know they'd all be mad at you. "Stop the belt!" they'd be yelling, you know, until you kinda got the flow. Because at first you just, after a while I still have the rhythm. [*Reaches out arms and pretends to grab the bars and sweep them off the table into a box*] I know that's the way it used to go, was grab the bars put them in the box, grab the bars put them in the box, grab the bars put them in the box. But at first they'd be kind of backed up or you had to make sure that the wrapping was proper on it as it was coming through, you know, if it was twisted or anything like that you couldn't that wouldn't go in the box you'd have to sort of put that to the side and take the next one.⁶⁷

Linda became so accustomed to her job that over forty years later she still remembered the motions involved in her work. The bonus gave the women extra incentive to work as

⁶⁵ Ibid., 234.

⁶⁶ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

⁶⁷ Interview with Linda, 8 November, 2011.

quickly as possible. Similar to piece-work, bonus incentives acted as a means of control for employers. When one worker held up the line, they could be made to feel guilty if the women did not meet production goals and receive their bonus. However, there was still no incentive for being the fastest employee. Instead, packers learned to reach a speed that prevented them from falling behind the others.

It may have been difficult for the first few days on the job, but in a relatively short period of time most workers grew accustomed to the pace. Adapting to the speed of the factory floor was in part a matter of training. Practice and repetition meant that women's bodies learned the necessary movements for their particular tasks. What was strenuous and tiring in the initial days of work became second nature. But this is not to say that every person was capable of excelling at every task. Some women were not cut out for the packing belt and were never able to master the speed or handle the stress. This of course, depended upon a person's individual skills as well as preferences. Adapting, however, did not always mean mastering the belt. While a person's deftness was important on the conveyor belt, the ability to cut corners and appear to be working when you were not was equally important. Make-work was a regular part of factory workers' everyday lives.

Injury and Sickness

The women at Moir's used a variety of coping strategies to make their days more enjoyable. They also employed self-care strategies to avoid sickness and injury and to ensure that they were not over-exerting themselves. Only one of the women interviewed for the study was seriously injured while working at Moir's. However, several women

recounted stories of close calls they had while working around the conveyor belts and other machines.

Many of the women attributed their ability to do their jobs without pain or injury to their youth. When asked if sitting on a stool all day ever bothered her, Joyce explained: “No not at that time [*laughs*] Now I’d need two backs on to ‘em [*laughs*] Yeah no like I say well I was only, what, 19 then anyway. I had no sign of arthritis ‘til these last years.”⁶⁸ Linda, June, Lois and Mary believed that their youth allowed them to accomplish their job without any injuries.⁶⁹ Verna believed that her job was hard work but felt that she was able to it because she was “young and vigorous and able.”⁷⁰ When asked if she ever experienced aches and pains from her job, Margaret explained “you’re only a little snotty kid so why would you have aches and pains?” and added “Aches and pains came years later. When you started getting older [*laughs*]”⁷¹ For many of these women, injuries, aches and pains were associated with old age. The women may not be remembering aches and pains because they were not significant events or chronic problems. The women’s memories are also demonstrating that their youth allowed them to manage the physical demands of their work without difficulty. To many of the interviewees, it was logical to experience aches and pains only as they grew older. They associated their aches and pains with their advanced life stage. However, they could be using the life stage discourse to naturalize what may also be the postponed impact of their factory work.

⁶⁸ Interview with Joyce, 30 November, 2011.

⁶⁹ Interview with Linda, 8 November, 2011; Interview with June, 3 October, 2011; Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

⁷⁰ Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

⁷¹ Interview with Margaret, 15 December, 2011.

The interviewees believed that their youth saved them from aches and pains but workplace accidents could happen to any employee regardless of age. Some of the women recalled close calls they experienced when working around the machinery at Moir's. Lois once got her hand caught in a machine when she was trying to remove a box that had gotten stuck. She explained that she was not seriously hurt but she learned to be more careful around the machinery:

It pained but it taught me a lesson. That you turn the bloody thing off. You don't just go putting your hand down try to clear it. I did it before, lots of times. But it just caught me that time. But it wasn't their fault. It was mine. Cause they always told us, shut your machine off before you clear the machine, you know. And I thought I was pretty smart, yeah. Well it didn't work. It caught me. But it was nothing, serious. I mean, I went, I never quit work or didn't have to stay home.⁷²

Lois went to the nurse and had her finger bandaged and returned to work. Verna also had a close-call when her ring got caught in the wire belt:

And it was just two seconds away. I don't, my hair was standing on end. I'd never caught it there before. And I said "oh dear," I said, "I can't do this. I cannot let..." There goes your finger, right? I was just about that far. Clear panic. I said, "I don't care if I get fired, I'm tearing that belt out." I ripped the belt. And it was like, you know, pliable, you know, pliable wire. So I ripped and I save my finger. Seconds seriously from going under I wasn't going to break my finger, no way. You know what happened? The whole thing, this particular section, shut down.⁷³

Verna explained that when she ripped the belt to save her finger her entire section shut down. Her supervisor came over to find out what had happened. She did not get into any trouble for breaking the belt. Her supervisor was not pleased that the belt had to be shut down but seemed to understand Verna's actions. Because she ripped the belt she was able

⁷² Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

⁷³ Interview with Verna, 3 November, 2011.

to avoid seriously injuring her finger but she remembered that her ring was ripped “all to pieces.”⁷⁴

Only one of the interviewees suffered a serious injury while working at Moir’s.

Muriel explained that she seriously injured her back and had to leave her job:

Well one of the men [*laughs*] he’s in this picture somewhere. But anyway he like the scotch mints came in it looked like a great big thing of when you were makin’ homemade bread only it was you know like a creamy thing. And he put it on the table and then he wanted to go for a cigarette so he put two of them on at once and of course it was hot and it blended with the other one. Well I was pouring them course you had to pull them through the machine. The machine was here that went with all the like you know things on it to make the Scotch mints. And I was pulling them and I felt my back when it cracked and then I tried to keep going but then I couldn’t and then they took me out on the stretcher and took me down stairs and I was off for two months and then when I went back I couldn’t stay because I couldn’t stand and work anymore, no. And at that time you didn’t get unemployment or anything if you couldn’t work. Yeah. I worked all those years there and I never got nothing when I left. So.⁷⁵

Muriel attempted to return to work at Moir’s after she had taken some time off but found that she was no longer able to work in the factory without experiencing back pain. She expressed sadness about having to leave Moir’s because she enjoyed working there.

Many of the women recalled other accidents at Moir’s. They told stories of people losing fingers in the machines or getting their clothes caught in the line. But the women also emphasized that these accidents were rare. Few of the women witnessed any of the accidents they remembered. Instead they recalled hearing the stories from other workers.

Although many of the women believed that their youth helped them to avoid injuries, they maintained that they did occasionally experience aches and pains.

⁷⁴ Interview with Verna, 3 November, 2011.

⁷⁵ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011. Muriel explained that she visited the Moir’s company doctor after her back was injured. She was told by the doctor that she could not receive workmen’s compensation for her back injury because the doctor maintained that it was a pre-existing injury Muriel had suffered long before she worked at Moir’s.

Depending on their job, the women would either stand or sit to complete their work. Some had the opportunity to switch back and forth between sitting and standing and several of the women used this as a way to avoid soreness and injury.⁷⁶ Lois explained that her legs would ache after working on her feet all day. When she went home, she would have warm baths with salt to ease the pain in her aching legs.⁷⁷ In a three-year field study of female flight attendants, Roberta Lessor observed various self-care strategies adopted by the women to avoid illness, injury and discomfort in the workplace.⁷⁸ Flight attendants learned to pack water, to ask patrons to allow them to skip the line for the washroom, and to wear non-regulation but more comfortable shoes to prevent pain and injury.⁷⁹ At Moir's, the women similarly used a variety of self-care strategies to manage the tedious and repetitive nature of their work.

Taking time off work because of illness was rarely done. Many of the women could not afford to take time off if they were sick. Most of the women avoided taking sick days unless they felt they had no other choice and would go to work even if they were not feeling well. Rather than losing wages many women medicated or otherwise treat their illness and went into work. Margaret explained that if she was not feeling well she would simply rest and get back to work so she would not lose her pay: "In those days, who could afford to go home? It was easier to lay down for a few minutes and you know get your bearings, you know, unless you were deathly ill or something like that. And get

⁷⁶ Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011; Interview with Marion, 5 October, 2011.

⁷⁷ Interview with Lois, 29 November, 2011.

⁷⁸ Roberta Lessor, "Consciousness of Time and Time for the Development of Consciousness: Health Awareness among Women Flight Attendants," *Sociology of Health and Illness* 7, 2 (1985): 199.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 199-200.

your bearings and then go back to work.”⁸⁰ Lois expressed similar sentiments and maintained that she would treat her own ailments to avoid missing work:

God everybody gets sick. But I tried not to stay home. I think it's because, you know you only made so much money and you had to pay your rent and buy your food and stuff like that so you tried not to miss work. So I think I used to drag myself there, you know. Doctor myself up with cough drops, and you know, and Aspirin or Tylenol or whatever was there that time. And I had to be really sick to stay home. And if I did it'd be just a day. Cause you had to get back to that, you know, get to work. You know, you couldn't miss that much time, you know.⁸¹

Dorothy explained that she got sick several times and was forced to leave Moir's for several weeks at a time.⁸² Despite missing long stretches of work, Dorothy was always able to return to her job. However, Dorothy was the only women interviewed who remember missing work due to illness for more than a day or two.

Conclusion

Factory work, then and now, provides employees with various challenges and difficulties. The workers are often performing repetitive tasks that can cause underload and result in feelings of boredom. When workers are performing piece-work, they may experience overload and feel stress and anxiety to produce enough to make a decent wage. And yet, the majority of the women interviewed for this study enjoyed their work at Moir's. Several women expressed sadness over leaving their jobs at Moir's. Although some of the women had close calls with machinery only one of the interviewees was seriously injured while working at Moir's. Many of the women believed that their youth allowed them to avoid aches and pains as well as injury. The Moir's plant was unionized

⁸⁰ Interview with Margaret, 15 December, 2011.

⁸¹ Interview with Lois, 29 November, 2011.

⁸² Interview with Dorothy, 5 October, 2011.

in 1956. Dorothy believed that when that the union came in, it improved the working conditions and did away with negative aspects of the plant such as piece-work.

The gendered division of labour at Moir's was representative of factory work in the post-war era. The women performed the so-called unskilled labour mainly along the conveyor belts while the men were responsible for the so-called skilled labour such as chocolate and candy making, repairing machinery. The interviewees expressed acceptance of the gendered division of labour at Moir's and did not express a desire to challenge it. Additionally, the women did not express a desire to pursue promotions within the plant and generally expressed satisfaction with the jobs they had. The women's acceptance and satisfaction with the working conditions is linked to the lack of job opportunities for women in Halifax. The following chapters will show that many of the women believed that their limited educations prevented them from leaving factory work. When limited educations are coupled with limited job opportunities for women in Halifax, factory work, particularly at a factory where the women maintained everyone got along well, was an attractive occupation. Some of the women may have believed that factory work was their only employment option, but this did not mean they felt trapped in their Moir's jobs. The women were able to bend and break some regulations in order to make their work days as enjoyable as possible. The women used various forms of job-related body work to maintain their embodied selves while at work. They developed coping and self-care strategies in response to the working conditions at Moir's. These strategies allowed the women to make the best of their working conditions and preserve their physical well-being at least in the short term. The following chapter will

demonstrate that these strategies were used as a means to create breaks and leisure in the women's work days.

Chapter 3: Leisure at Work

When a person goes to work, they are responsible for all of the duties their job entails. However, beyond the obvious responsibilities of their work, employees are also constantly maintaining their embodied selves through unofficial tasks while on the job. Shilling's term for this form of embodied maintenance is job-related body work.¹ Job-related body work includes practices such as make-work and "forms of emotional and mental 'escape'" used to cope while at work.² Different types of work call for different coping strategies. The majority of the jobs held by women at Moir's put them at risk of underload. Most of the Moir's women worked in the packing departments, which meant that most worked in some capacity on the packing line. On the line, their jobs were almost always repetitive and their motions were determined by the belt. In order to manage underload, the women working at Moir's adopted a variety of coping strategies. These coping strategies varied from socializing with the other employees in their department to sabotaging the line to gain a longer break from their work. In addition to

¹ Chris Shilling, *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society* (London: SAGE, 2005), 73.

² Ibid.

coping strategies, the women also practiced self-care strategies to avoid injury and give themselves more breaks throughout the work day. Temporary job-trading and taking unofficial breaks allowed the women to vary their movements and have additional rest periods. With only one exception, all of the women interviewed for this study enjoyed their time at Moir's. Several women expressed regret about leaving their jobs at Moir's. Although the women recalled enjoying their work, they also occasionally avoided the responsibilities of their work through make-work, sabotage, and soldiering. Through these actions, the women were exercising control in the limited ways they could to ensure that their jobs were more pleasant and their physical well-being was maintained. Typically, the women recalled these actions as amusing and did not describe a desire to challenge management. Although many scholars interpret acts of sabotage and make-work solely as politicized acts of rebellion and challenges to management, I argue that in the context of the Moir's plant in the post-era, the women's coping strategies were also intended as a means to create pleasure and leisure time while at work. The interviewees' comments suggest that they enjoyed their work precisely because of these entertaining interludes of socializing and mischief. This argument is not meant to imply that no conflict existed between workers and managers at the Moir's plant. Instead, it is intended to explore additional motivators behind the women's workplace behaviors.

Within the workplace there is the structural basis for a struggle between employers and employees. Craig Heron and Robert Storey describe a "frontier of control" that results from the "ongoing process of initiative and resistance between workers and

their bosses.”³ Bosses want to maximize production while employees do not want to be overworked. These conflicting desires can cause workers to give their employers the impression they are doing their work when in fact they are not. Goffman calls these performances make-work. Make-work gives employees a break from their work and acts as a coping strategy against employers’ supervision.⁴ Goffman maintains that employees’ behaviours are dictated by established job standards. Different jobs have different standards. In an occupation in which an employee interacts with the public, such as waitressing or store work, they are expected to comport themselves with a certain level of politeness.⁵ However, employees are also expected to maintain a sense of “decorum” even when they are not directly interacting with the public.⁶ For employees in a factory setting, the need for politeness and decorum are somewhat different than for employees in a service position. Although factory workers do not interact with customers they do interact with their bosses and other employees. Goffman explains that make-work is a form of decorum commonly used in occupations that emphasize production.⁷ When a worker is expected to work consistently, taking only prescribed breaks, some employees give themselves a rest by performing make-work. Employing make-work as a coping strategy allows workers to avoid conflict with supervisors by appearing to be working while satisfying their need for a physical and emotional reprieve. In the Moir’s candy plant, female factory workers typically worked along a conveyor belt. This type of work calls for constant attention and continuous motion. Employees are not able to simply stop

³ Craig Heron and Robert H. Storey, *On the Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 3.

⁴ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 109.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

working. However, in a factory setting such as Moir's, make-work acts as a type of decorum in which employees can pretend to do their work when they are not. Packers were not typically able to perform make-work in their part of the packing process, but women in other positions on the line and throughout the factory were.

Several of the women interviewed for this study recalled employing make-work throughout their time at Moir's. Heron and Storey's interpretation of initiative and resistance is not so easily applied to some of the Moir's women's make-work. The interviewees generally recalled their make-work as a means to create leisure at work and their emotional tone did not suggest a consciousness of an inherent struggle in the workplace. Joyce worked on the assembly line on the sixth floor for ten years. She sat on a stool at the end of the line with two other women and they each polished the chocolates with a brush after they were packed. Joyce explained that she enjoyed working at Moir's very much despite the "tedious" and "tiresome" nature of her work.⁸ She recalled that she and the other women shining the chocolates often "left them go when [they] shouldn't have [*laughs*]."⁹ Unlike the packers, Joyce was able to overlook polishing some of the chocolates because she assumed that one of the other women would brush them.¹⁰ In this way, the women shining the chocolates had more leeway in their work ethic. Joyce explained that at times "you had to try and make out you were busy."¹¹ Joyce recalled that giving supervisors the impression that workers were busy was especially important when the belt broke down. She laughed when she remembered running behind the belt to avoid work. Despite instances of make-work, Joyce emphasized that she enjoyed working

⁸ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

⁹ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

¹⁰ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

¹¹ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

at Moir's and that the supervisors were never "nasty."¹² She explained that some foreladies and chargehands were stricter than others. Joyce maintained that she got along well with her superiors because she always appeared to be getting the work done even if she was not:

But I don't know how much, I never had any trouble with her [the forelady] as long as you were doin' your work, as long as they looked and they thought you were I guess. [laughs] But bein' young, you don't care.¹³

Joyce believed that her youth allowed her to be less concerned about the possible consequences of being caught not doing her work. In her department, make-work was fun and mischievous. It was not an attack on the foreladies.

Like Joyce, Lois employed make-work to gain a break while at the same time making her forelady think she was working. Lois worked in several different jobs over the seven years she was at Moir's. For a time, she packed boxes of chocolates at a packing table. Lois recalled that she always got along well with her forelady and attributed the success of their relationship to her use of make-work:

It was long, hard day and I was on my feet constantly. 'Til I wanted to goof off, which I did that too. I used to go over and talk to the girls on the belts and then I went back to my work when I saw the boss comin'. And so I'd look very busy when she saw me. That's how, you know, I think that's how I got along with her so well [laughs] She never saw me goofin' off. She was a good person. Yeah.¹⁴

Like Joyce, Lois got along well with her forelady. Her goofing off was used to provide relief from the work, but were not meant to intentionally negatively affect production.

Lois tried her best to avoid upsetting her boss by getting back to work before the boss

¹² Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

¹³ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

¹⁴ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

noticed Lois was away from her table. In this way, she was preserving the appearance of hierarchy that the plant required.

Make-work occurs in what Goffman calls a “front region,” which he defines as “the place where the performance is given.” At Moir’s, the front regions were the places where an employee’s actions were being watched by employers. A front region is complemented by a “back region” which Goffman described as “a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course.”¹⁵ Put more simply, a back region is an area where employees can stop acting polite, performing their make-work or maintaining other forms of decorum, and can let down their guard. It is an area where employees no longer have to do work of any kind and can forget about the requirements of their jobs.

The Moir’s plant contained several back regions where employees could escape the scrutiny of their employers. On their breaks, women could go to the washrooms to smoke a cigarette and rest on benches for a few minutes before getting back to work. Some employees took the concept of a back region one step further. Lois worked in a very small department, nicknamed Grand Central Station, on the third floor. There were only eight workers in her department, six women and two men. All of the packed boxes from the other floors were sent to this department to be sorted and sent out for shipping. Grand Central Station had multiple roller conveyor belts and Lois was responsible for sorting boxes and sending them down the appropriate belt for shipment. She enjoyed her job and got along well with all the people in her small department. Lois happily described her experience working in Grand Central Station:

¹⁵Goffman, *Presentation of Self*, 112.

That's all [everyone who] worked on the floor, happy family. We had a lovely parties there that nobody knew about. [*we both laugh*] We had our bar set up [*laughs*] You wouldn't believe how you get in there. It was like a maze, is that what you call it? You go in like that. ----- had it all set up. He was a great guy. He used to set it up and we used to have to go in this way and then we'd turn and all that and get way back and we'd have it all set up. We had a party on like special occasions at Christmas or New Year's or something like that. Yeah, we had our time. And nobody knew about it. Nobody from the office, they used to come in and out but they didn't know. We were busy workin' and when they disappeared we disappeared.¹⁶

In this example, the back region built by the workers gave them an opportunity to socialize and even to have small parties and drinks. Although Moir's contained back regions, such as the washrooms and locker rooms, Lois and her co-workers took it upon themselves to construct their own secret back region where their employers could not find them. Similar to make-work, the use of a secret back region provided these workers with an opportunity to have breaks and create leisure. However, this example demonstrates that the employees knew that management would disapprove of their actions. Unlike make-work, the employees were not maintaining a guise of productivity to keep managers satisfied. Instead, they avoid conflict by going to great lengths to hide their parties from management. In this way, the workers were able to satisfy their desire for leisure time during working hours without confrontations with management.

Many of the women interviewed used make-work to gain an occasional unofficial rest from their work. The women performing the make-work generally viewed their behaviour as a bit of fun or an opportunity to "goof off."¹⁷ These women were able to get away with their make-work with few or no consequences. However, Muriel recounted an

¹⁶ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

¹⁷ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

instance in which workers suffered when the managers realized they could handle more work than they had let on:

So what we started doing that really screwed us up, was like one would want to go for a cigarette and she'd say, "Come watch my machine while I go for a cigarette." So, she'd only go for a couple of puffs like and we'd, you know, go and look after the two machines. So then the boss seen this and he figured, "Well if you can do that then you can look after two machines." And then they took another girl off the machine and you were lookin' after two machines. That was our own fault cause we shouldn't have done it. [*laughs*]¹⁸

When their supervisors realized that the women were able to watch two machines rather than one, they put fewer workers in their department. Before the supervisor assigned each worker a second machine, the women were able to sit down on a stool and take breaks in between loading their machines. Muriel explained that she was able to manage watching two machines but it meant that she no longer had additional breaks. There is clearly a conflict here in which the managers are attempting to increase production using fewer employees. Even though Muriel and her co-worker were caught and given more work, she did not express any anger with her boss and her recounting of this story was not intended to expose unfair working conditions. Muriel laughed when she finished telling the story and concluded that one way the situation could have been avoided was by not smoking. Supervisors wanted to meet production goals and the Moir's women understood this fact. However, most of the interviewees did not feel as though they were struggling against foremen's and foreladies' expectations. Instead, some of the women believed that the foremen and foreladies were the ones under pressure from their bosses to meet production goals.¹⁹ Although being caught and reprimanded was always a possibility,

¹⁸ Interview with Muriel, 18 November, 2011.

¹⁹ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.; Interview with Joyce, 30 November, 2011.

make-work acted as a simple and effective coping strategy when the women needed an additional break from their work.

Sabotage, Soldiering, and Acts of Defiance

Make-work was not possible in every position in the factory and therefore other coping skills had to be used in order to gain a break from their work. These include sabotage, soldiering and other acts of defiance. Labour historians and sociologists point out that sabotage has long been used by factory workers as a means of resistance against unfair working conditions. Freund maintains that factory workers experience feelings of alienation as a direct result of the loss of control over their motions and rhythms.²⁰

Beynon interviewed stewards and workers at the Ford Motor Company assembly plant in Halewood, England in the late 1960s and attributed their reports of sabotage to a lack of job control. In an attempt to gain control, Kenny, an exhausted assembly line worker, would improperly assemble units in the small parts section to force the steward to run up and down the line trying to fix the mistakes. When other workers realized how easily they could antagonize their steward they also left pieces out. Another worker would then complain to a supervisor that their steward was working on the line, which was not allowed.²¹ This resistance gave the men in the small parts section a sense of control over their work and their steward. It also prevented the stewards from further mistreatment of the men on the line. Another worker told Beynon that they “*had to destroy the foreman.*”²² The workers discovered that once they showed the stewards that they were a

²⁰ Peter E. S. Freund and Miriam Fisher, *The Civilized Body: Social Domination, Control, and Health* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 97.

²¹ Huw Beynon, *Working for Ford* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 131.

²² *Ibid.*, 132. Emphasis in original.

force to be reckoned with, they were able to have more control over the pace of their work.

In her interviews with female workers at the ALPLY plywood plant in Port Alberni, British Columbia, Klausen found that the women fondly recalled instances of defiance and rebellion.²³ The women recounted memories of “defacing veneer” and avoiding work “by taking bets on daring feats of bravery (by pulling stunts such as riding a bicycle down the dry chain or running on the log boom).”²⁴ Klausen believes that these minor acts of rebellion were “indirect challenges to male and mill authority” and represented the growing confidence that Plywood Girls gained from their collective identity.²⁵ Sociologist Pamela Sugiman believes that some women used acts of sabotage as a means to resist employer control of the labour process. In one instance, women working at a General Motors plant in Oshawa in the 1950s resisted a speed-up by putting a block of wood under the machine so that the pace was slowed.²⁶ The women from Moir’s described similar stories of small acts of defiance. These acts varied from deliberate attempts to slow or stop production to faking sickness and pretending to meet production objectives by hiding candy. Although Klausen and Sugiman believe that acts of defiance were meant to challenge management and resist the labour process, the women interviewed for this study generally emphasized a desire to gain additional breaks and more leisure time while at work. Conflict between female workers and managers may have been present at Moir’s, but when the Moir’s women recalled their acts of defiance

²³ Susanne Klausen, “The Plywood Girls: Women and Gender Ideology at the Port Alberni Plywood Plant, 1942-1991,” *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998), 218.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Pamela H. Sugiman, *Labour's Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937-1979* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 110.

they typically emphasized the entertainment and fun they experienced when misbehaving.

Some of the interviewees recalled acts of sabotage that they were either complicit in or simply witnessed. These women stressed that when these acts occurred, none of the women would report each other to supervisors. Marion explained that on several occasions when packing jellies, some of the women would periodically place jellies under the belt until it slowed and eventually stopped. Marion maintained that she was never involved in the sabotage because she feared getting caught and losing her job. She added that despite her own fears, she never “squealed” on any of the women involved because she knew they would turn on her and she would be labelled a “rat.”²⁷ Margaret also recalled an instance in which jellies were used to stop the belt. On another occasion, in an act of soldiering, Margaret explained that a group of girls in her department each pressed their knees against the belt so that it would slow down.²⁸ When asked if she was ever worried another employee would tell on her, Margaret explained: “Well not as such. You know, who’s going to catch ya? Who’s going to tell on ya? Nobody was going to tell on ya sort of. You were all, you were all there, you, how can I say? You were all involved into it so one wasn’t going to say about another person or anything like that.”²⁹ For some of the women, their mischievous pranks and acts of sabotage created a shared bond and identity among the women. Margaret did not recall any animosity between the workers and supervisors. For her, the acts of defiance were “mischievous” and the

²⁷ Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011.

²⁸ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

²⁹ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

intention was to have “one over on them [supervisors].”³⁰ Margaret saw her defiance as youthful fun rather than a direct attack upon the supervisors: “It was mischievous but it was a funny mischievous. You were getting away with it like sort of. Like the kid that steals the candy and doesn’t get caught, you know?”³¹ The women’s acts of sabotage and soldiering created a shared sense of identity similar to the one observed by Klausen in the ALPLY plant. The Moir’s women’s mischievous acts stimulated their minds, lifted their spirits and helped to ward off the underload that is so commonly associated with working on assembly lines.

Like Margaret, Lois told several stories of her own mischievous behaviour. And like Margaret, Lois always got along well with her superiors. But she remembered that the girls had a system to avoid being caught. Lois explained, “when we wanted to do something naughty we used to have somebody on the lookout see where she’s [the forelady] at. What end of the plant she was at.”³² Lois explained that on one occasion she decided she could not wait to have a cigarette on her break:

We didn’t take any advantage on the smoking bit. Well I shouldn’t say. I’m a daredevil. When I was workin’ we was almost break time. This other girl she smoked and me and she said, “Gee I just can’t wait for a cigarette.” Well I said, “Why wait? Sit down on the floor and take a couple of drags.” “Oh no, they’ll see it.” And I said, “I’ll show you how it’s done.” [*laughs*] So I had a couple of puffs of a cigarette and then we went like this [*waves arms*] for the smoke. We looked and see where the boss was first [*laughs*] But that’s, that was the only time I ever did that [*laughs*] It was just like, it was into me, “Gee I’d love to do that” And I did it. But I never did it again. That was the only time. But we got a lot of laughs out of it you know. So, that’s it.³³

³⁰ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

³¹ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

³² Interview with Lois, 29 November, 2011.

³³ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

Like Margaret, Lois got a thrill from her acts of defiance. Smoking on the factory floor was not permitted, but Lois was careful to make sure no supervisors were around to catch her in the act. This action provided the women with entertainment and a story to tell among themselves. The women's defiance was meant to create fun and give them a short reprieve from their labour. The fun and entertainment produced by the women's acts of defiance gave them small experience of leisure while at work.

Typically, leisure scholars discuss leisure as complementary to work. The two activities are defined as separate. But occupational therapist Loree A. Primeau warns against a strict dichotomy between work and leisure. Primeau explains that occupational therapists consistently recommend a healthy balance between work and leisure. However, she points out, they never define in concrete terms what a healthy balance is.

Furthermore, Primeau maintains that what one individual defines as work, another can define as leisure. Similarly, some people define certain activities as both work and leisure. Primeau cites her study which interviewed parents after playing with their pre-school aged child. All of the parents defined this play as work despite the fact that they also explained that they were enjoying themselves as they interacting with their child.³⁴

Historian Thomas W. Dunk believes that it is impossible to discuss the "leisure sphere" without taking people's working lives into consideration.³⁵ Dunk explains that although "free time" is governed by its own social norms and expectations it is "the time when the working class is not under the direct control of the labour process and is better able to

³⁴ Loree A. Primeau, "Work and Leisure: Transcending the Dichotomy," *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 50, 7 (1996): 575.

³⁵ Thomas W. Dunk, *It's a Working Man's Town Male Working-Class Culture in Northwestern Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 66.

express itself and pursue its own desires.”³⁶ Dunk means to distinguish work from leisure entirely. However, short periods of leisure time are created on the job when workers are able to avoid the demands of their work.

Some leisure scholars are attempting to redefine leisure as a phenomenon that can and does occur in the workplace. In a review of literature on leisure at work from Britain, West Germany, France and Japan, sociologist Jennifer Fell explains that the majority of the research “refer[s] only incidentally to leisure at work and none attempts to define the phenomenon.”³⁷ Instead there is a focus on leisure as an activity outside of work. In the literature that does discuss leisure at work, Fell finds that employees prefer “spontaneous” and “unorganized” leisure activities rather than organized leisure such as participation in company organized sports teams.³⁸ The list of recreation at work included “calisthenics, drinking tea and coffee, smoking, doodling, listening to music, chatting, socializing and reading.”³⁹ Fell also explains that employees in all four countries “want more freedom and autonomy at work and thus more leisure-like work.”⁴⁰

Professor of Leisure Studies Wayne Stormann has also called for a re-evaluation of modern work and leisure. He believes that modern society’s reliance on leisure as a pursuit of pleasure outside of work is the product of devalued labour. Stormann borrows from historian Lewis Mumford who defines “true leisure” as “freedom *within* work” rather than “freedom *from* work.”⁴¹ According to this definition, true leisure is different

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Jennifer Fell, “The Impact of Leisure on Work in Britain, West Germany, France and Japan. A Cross-Cultural Comparative Study,” *World Leisure & Recreation* 33, 2 (1991): 39.

³⁸ Ibid., 39.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Wayne Stormann, “Work: True Leisure’s Home?” *Leisure Studies* 8, 1 (1989): 29. Italics in original.

from “having a chance to converse and ruminate on the job.”⁴² Stormann describes a craftsman who is free from supervision and production deadlines as an example of a worker experiencing true leisure.⁴³ However, without the luxury of this freedom, many workers still attempt to create leisure at work. This leisure may not be considered true leisure, but it provides workers with the desired temporary reprieve from the demands of their labour.

Sociologist Kenneth Roberts explains that the leisure activities vary across social classes because of one obvious factor – money.⁴⁴ However, without the means to afford a variety of leisure activities outside of working hours, workers must instead create their own leisure on the job. Moir’s had several sports clubs and teams but none of the women interviewed ever participated in these activities. Many of the women had children or familial responsibilities that prevented them from spending time away from home after work. Unorganized leisure during work allowed the women to have fun without an additional time-commitment. In Fell’s review she found that workers were more likely to participate in spontaneous rather than organized leisure activities. Similarly, Enstad explains that women working for piece-rates would sometimes read books on their lunch breaks to stimulate their minds. Reading on their breaks gave the women an escape from the boring and exhausting nature of their work.⁴⁵ Many of the women who worked at Moir’s had little time for leisure activities outside of work. But clearly, many of the women found small opportunities for leisure and play while they were on their job. They made the most of their situation and created pleasure and leisure-like activities at work.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Kenneth Roberts, *Leisure in Contemporary Society* (Wallingford, UK: CABI Publishing, 2006), 63.

⁴⁵ Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 57.

The interviewees remembered many situations in which they attempted to avoid their work and gain breaks and leisure time on the job. Margaret recalled an instance where she and another woman attempted to trick their manager. They were working beside a new steaming machine that softened the paper cups that would later hold chocolates. The machine gave off a lot of heat and made the women uncomfortable while they worked:

I remember her sayin', "We gotta do something about the heat." And I said, "Well," I said, "Well when we go on break," I said, "When we go by so and so's office door," I said, "you pass out." I said, "pretend you're fainting," I said, "And he'll come running out." Anyway break time came, we went over going to the washroom and that... And anyway we got over by this supervisor, well he was a manager, we got over by his office and she dropped right on the floor as natural as anything. Well he wasn't in his office. I walked by and I was pissin' myself laughin'. And I went back to her. I said, "You better get up." I said, "He ain't in there." So this was, you know, the devil of what you used to do.⁴⁶

The women hoped their manager would believe the heat was making them sick and send them home. On another occasion, Margaret remembered a woman putting a lighter to the thermostat to run the heat up in their department in the hopes of being sent home for the day. In these situations, the women were not looking for long term changes or improvements to be made in their workplace. Instead, the women were trying to get an afternoon off work. In each case, the women were unsuccessful in their attempts. However, these stories provided the women with entertainment and the attempts at tricking managers gave their jobs an additional challenging dimension.

Time off was very important to the women who worked at Moir's. Whether it was being sent home for an afternoon or summer vacation the women would go to great

⁴⁶ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

lengths to gain time off. Muriel explained that on one occasion she and the other packers hid candies so that they could start their summer vacation on time:

...I remember one time we were going on vacation because the last week in July and the first week in August Moir's closed down and you had to have all the candy and everything all done up and before you could go. So we were doing jellies like you pick the jellies up and then you roll them with the plastic and that and we were eating them to get rid of them and we hid some. So you would get out of there. [laughs]⁴⁷

With the help of the men in their department, the packers hid candies behind stacks of skids and were able to tell their supervisors that they had finished packing all of the candy. The supervisors eventually found the candy when everyone returned from vacation but none of the packers were punished for their behaviour. Muriel happily recounted this memory and maintained that the workers “never seemed to get caught at anything.”⁴⁸ She believed that the chargehands allowed the packers to hide the candies because they also wanted to leave for vacation on time. However, workers were sometimes punished when management believed their behaviour went too far. Marion recalled an instance in which one employee was caught and fired for bad behaviour: “We played hooky once. We all let on we had an appointment or somethin’ and we went to the, there was a fair or something going on in Halifax. That was when we were at the old plant in Halifax. And we went there. One girl got found out and they fired her.”⁴⁹ After her friend was fired, Marion never played hooky again for fear of losing her own job. In an instance such as this, the workers were reminded that there were limits to the fun they could have while at work.

⁴⁷ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁴⁸ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁴⁹ Interview with Marion, 5 October, 2011.

The women's mischievous actions were not always directed at their superiors; sometimes women would play tricks on each other. Margaret explained that in her early days at Moir's, the other women played a trick on her. She was placed at the corner of an L-shaped belt and her job was to guide the moving boxes along the corner to make sure they did not fall off the belt. At her feet, there was a wheel that controlled the speed of the belt. The women on either side of her told her to place her foot on the wheel. The moment she did that, the belt quickly accelerated boxes of chocolates went everywhere.⁵⁰ Margaret explained that the women did these things for fun. Playing tricks on each other and the supervisors provided the women with entertainment and a break from their otherwise repetitive jobs. In a two-month participant observation study in which he worked as a punch card operator in a machine-shop in the late 1950s in the U.S., sociologist Donald F. Roy found that without the common enemy of a disagreeable superior, workers often sought out other means to create commonalities and increase job satisfaction. He described his small department and explained that he and the other men were isolated from the rest of the plant and rarely interacted with supervisors or management. Roy believed "intergroup conflict" was a "perennial source of creative experience to fill the otherwise empty hours of meaningless work routine."⁵¹ He concluded that his department was "left without that basic reservoir of ill-will toward management which can sometimes be counted on to stimulate the development of interesting activities to occupy hand and brain."⁵² Without animosity and conflict between workers and supervisors the men in Roy's department had to create working

⁵⁰ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

⁵¹ Donald F. Roy, *"Banana Time" Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), 159.

⁵² *Ibid.*

relationships with each other without the convenience of a common enemy. In order to provide themselves with entertainment, the men in his department would play tricks on each other and divide their day according to hourly unofficial short breaks or “interruptions.”⁵³ The men took a coffee and lunch break but they also engaged in daily breaks that were never discussed or named. Roy explained that every day, at approximately the same time, one employee, Ike, would leave his station and open a window next to Sammy. This was done to annoy Sammy and eventually he would also leave his station and close the window. The men engaged in other daily interruptions of this manner. Roy believed that these interruptions allowed the men to break up the monotony of their days.⁵⁴

Some of the women used pranks and sabotage to gain more rest and leisure time throughout their work day. However, this does not mean that everyone at Moir’s was satisfied with the working conditions. After falling behind on the belt, Millie was moved to a new department where she worked on her own filling buckets with Christmas candies that came down through a chute. Millie explained the isolation she felt when working alone and explained that she eventually gave up on her job:

Well again you had to do so much in that area, I wasn’t doing it. I didn’t care. Because I didn’t like to be there so I just let it all happen anyway it would happen. I did what I could. I wasn’t having that “you gotta keep up” type of thing. So I just sort of knew I wasn’t going to last if they left me there. So I just sort of gave up on Moir’s.⁵⁵

Millie ultimately expressed her dissatisfaction with the working conditions at Moir’s by quitting her job. Sangster explains that leaving unpleasant working environments was a

⁵³ Ibid., 161.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 162.

⁵⁵ Interview with Millie, 9 November, 2011.

consistent means of resistance. Sangster maintains that women often resorted to unofficial means of resistance and protest in the inter-war years before they gained the protection of unions.⁵⁶ She describes instances in which factory workers met in the bathroom to play cards and take a break because they were not granted an official break by management.⁵⁷ One worker from Canadian General Electric described an instance in which a group of women all came into work wearing hats decorated with fruit to protest the mandatory regulation of wearing hats while they worked.⁵⁸ But unionization did not put an end to workers' personal methods of dealing with working conditions they believed to be bad: Moir's was unionized at the time Millie quit. Although she did voice her dissatisfaction with her job to her boss she believed that quitting her job and moving on to another factory was preferable to continuing to work at Moir's. Millie believed that many forces were working against her at Moir's but she attributes her final decision to leave to the boredom, isolation and loneliness she experienced in her final days at the plant. In this way, Millie's story confirms the importance of workplace camaraderie, fun and leisure.

It is difficult to find a workplace with absolutely no conflict between workers and managers. As Millie's example confirms, not everyone at Moir's was content with the working conditions. The remaining interviewees did not express dissatisfaction towards the working conditions but they did describe coping strategies that were developed to manage feelings of boredom at work. While on the job, the women would occasionally use make-work as a means to avoid their work and give themselves an additional break.

⁵⁶ Sangster, *Earning Respect*, 168-69.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

Some of the women viewed this make-work as a chance to rest while avoiding conflict with their chargehands and supervisors. Many of the acts of defiance, sabotage, and soldiering recalled by the interviewees were motivated in part by a desire for additional breaks or entertainment and a degree of leisure at work. The interviewees, though a tiny sample, described similar coping strategies from the period before the Moir's plant was unionized and after.

Other Coping Strategies

Not all coping strategies involved avoiding work. Many of the women liked working at Moir's because the job gave them an opportunity to socialize with other women while they worked. The camaraderie they enjoyed made their work more pleasant and helped the work day pass more quickly. In this way, they are similar to the men that sociologist Donald F. Roy worked with during his time as a punch-card operator.⁵⁹ Initially, Roy found the job extremely monotonous and tiring, but after establishing a rapport with the other men in the department he found his work days less gruelling. However, after a disagreement between the head of the department and another employee, a no-talking rule was enforced. When the men stopped having informal conversations, Roy found that his boredom and fatigue returned. He concluded that, "one key source of job satisfaction lies in the informal interaction shared by members of a work group."⁶⁰ The women interviewed for this study expressed similar sentiments.

The women's experiences varied depending on which department they were in and the managerial style of their supervisors, foreladies and chargehands. Some

⁵⁹ Roy, "Banana Time," 158.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 166.

departments had noisy machinery that made holding conversations difficult. Joyce explained that on the sixth floor the conveyor belts made a lot of noise and she would mostly talk to the women on either side of her.⁶¹ Mary remembered that the women in her department were not supposed to talk to each other while they worked. Regardless of this rule, Mary explained that the women still socialized while they worked. She maintained, “How do you sit by somebody and not speak, right? You know. Just so you were getting your work done there’s nothing they could do. No.” For Mary, it was not possible to sit directly beside another person and not speak to them. When asked if she was ever told to stop talking Mary explained: “They’d be telling the wrong one to stop talking if they ever told me. I’m getting my work done I can say all I want to say. I don’t work with my tongue. I work with my hands.”⁶² Mary was aware of herself in relation to those around her. She did her work well but also knew that there was more to her job than the work she accomplished on the belt. Dorothy also remembered a no-talking rule in the Pot of Gold department on the sixth floor but as in Mary’s department, this rule was never officially enforced.⁶³

Verna described her work at Moir’s as “hard” but found consolation in the camaraderie.⁶⁴ She enjoyed talking with the other women but explained that at times she was repelled by “rancid” jokes.⁶⁵ Lois recalled that in the packing department where she worked all of the women talked to each other. She explained that the forelady would even stop by and comment on conversations.⁶⁶ Linda worked at Moir’s for the summer in

⁶¹ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

⁶² Interview with Mary, 5 October, 2011.

⁶³ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

⁶⁴ Interview with Verna, 3 November, 2011.

⁶⁵ Interview with Verna, 3 November, 2011.

⁶⁶ Interview with Lois, 29 November 2011.

1969. Like June, Linda had not finished high school, still lived at home with her parents and worked at Moir's to gain extra spending money. Linda explained that she was a quiet person and her experience at Moir's helped her come out of her shell. She remembered listening to the older women's conversations and found that in her department there was "good camaraderie" and "everybody seemed to get along well."⁶⁷ As previously mentioned, Lois's department was quite small with only eight employees. They did not have a supervisor checking in on them frequently and the man who was in charge of their department was considered more of a friend than a chargehand. Lois recalled:

Sometimes I used to be down talking to the men, you know, and the girls and stuff like that and [*laughs*] All at once they said, "Oh Lois, it's piled up!" I said, "Oh my god!" The boxes were flying every place [*laughs*] I used to go up step on the thing, boy they'd come up and the boys would go down and push them back on to the belt and here I was, boy just letting the boxes down the belt. [*laughs*] I said, "Here they come girls." [*laughs*] Oh my, I don't know how many times boy that caught me.⁶⁸

She explained that the chargehand never got upset when this happened because he was often involved in distracting her.⁶⁹

Talking to other co-workers, usually women, was not the only coping strategy used by Moir's employees. Margaret remembered women on the belt singing to pass the time and described working at Moir's as "a happy game."⁷⁰ Muriel brought a small portable radio to work so that she and the other girls in her department could listen to music while they worked. She explained that her supervisors in the dipping department never had a problem with the workers listening to music:

⁶⁷ Interview with Linda, 8 November, 2011.

⁶⁸ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

⁶⁹ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

⁷⁰ Interview with Margaret, 15 December 2011.

Oh yeah, but just a little portable radio that I used to bring with me. On the Country and Western channel and everybody was saying, “Turn it up, turn it up!” They never said anything about us, you know, having the radio or anything. It was really a good place to work. Like you could talk to your bosses and you know they’d come over and chat with ya.⁷¹

Muriel was forced to leave Moir’s in 1968 after she suffered a back injury at work. She explained: “I hated it when I had to leave. Yeah. [*laughs*]”⁷² Muriel wanted to keep her job but the lingering pain from her injury prevented her from going back to her former position.

Although most of the women interviewed emphasized the happy and friendly nature of their departments, some women did mention cliques.⁷³ Millie’s department strictly enforced a no-talking rule and she believed her supervisors moved her away from her friends to ensure greater production:

If they saw you talking with another person and buddying up and stuff like that. We tended not to let on that we were, like I had a couple friends there, right? They moved me because we were talking, you know. And they don’t like that. They’ll move one so that doesn’t happen. Because they want this work out, these guys want to see their bosses say, “Great work today.” “Your quota is great.” Or, “A lot of work got done.”⁷⁴

By contrast, Dorothy believed that some women in her department took advantage of friendships with chargehands to avoid working hard.⁷⁵ Ultimately, Millie believed that many variables contributed to her leaving her job at Moir’s after only two months. Her lack of friends at the factory was listed among these.⁷⁶ The friendships the women developed with co-workers made their shifts more enjoyable and provided them with a distraction from their work. Leisure scholar Lewis Mumford disregards conversing on the

⁷¹ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁷² Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁷³ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.; Interview with 04, 19 October, 2011.

⁷⁴ Interview with Millie, 9 November, 2011.

⁷⁵ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

⁷⁶ Interview with Millie, 19 October, 2011.

job because he does not consider anything short of “true” freedom to be true leisure. However, the women clearly benefitted from establishing friendships and having conversations on the factory floor. Without these interactions, the women’s work days would no doubt have resembled the dark days of the no-talking rule described by Roy. Like their pranks and mischievous acts, talking to each other, singing and listening to music allowed the women to stimulate their minds and avoid underload.

Even though such tensions existed, talking and camaraderie allowed the women to enjoy days at their work despite the repetitive and at times boring nature of their tasks. The women also had other ways of coping with their work. Joyce remembered sneaking to other floors to take handfuls of candies when the belts would break down:

Well I guess what it was I found that it was getting like you were doing the same old thing eight hours a day. And there was three of us doing it. And you know sometimes it would get slack, sometimes the belt would break down and we weren’t allowed to go around to the other floors, we weren’t allowed to leave our floor. Although sometimes we used to sneak up. I forget how many floors was in the place, it was a lot. And we used to sneak up cause they used to have these little, baked beans they called them, they were peanuts and they were covered with, it wasn’t chocolate, but whatever it was, were they good. And we’d go up and each grab a handful and back we’d go. So the boss wouldn’t see us. And I guess that’s what we had to do when it got boring.⁷⁷

Joyce and her friends knew that they were not supposed to go to the other floors in the factory, but they did so anyway. Similar to the acts of mischief discussed earlier, sneaking to another floor to steal candy gave the women a sense of fun and leisure while they were at work. The coping strategies discussed thus far allowed the women to recreate forms of leisure while at work. Although these activities would not be considered true leisure because they were not performed in conditions of complete freedom from

⁷⁷ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

work, they provided the women with a means to break up the monotony of their work days. The women used singing, listening to the radio, and talking to make the work day pass more quickly. The women's coping strategies made their working environment more fun and entertaining. The interviewees sometimes bent the rules in the factory, but they generally did so in a manner that avoided conflict management.

Self-care Strategies: Additional Breaks

The various coping strategies used by the women at Moir's allowed them to occasionally avoid their work and make their work days pass more quickly. In addition to these coping strategies, the women also employed self-care strategies to preserve their bodily and emotional well-being. As previously mentioned, Moir's employees were given three official breaks for every eight hour shift. Many of the interviewees were content with their break times and did not think they needed extra time. Despite this, most of the women explained that they would often leave their work station to go to the washroom when it was not an official break. Breaks are important for workers' physical well-being and employee morale. They provide workers with a brief opportunity to rest and socialize typically out of earshot of employers. Sociologist Donald F. Roy believed the men in his department of the punch card business developed seemingly arbitrary routines motivated by the knowledge, whether conscious or not, that a day divided by many short breaks or rituals passed more quickly than the days subject to the no-talking rule.⁷⁸ Marianne Herzog explained that the women working at AEG Telefunken would divide their days into short manageable intervals so that their work was both "bearable" and "possible."⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Roy, "Banana Time," 166.

⁷⁹ Marianne Herzog, *From Hand to Mouth: Women and Piece-Work* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1980), 56.

The women would divide the time between breaks into half-hours and some workers would divide the time again by minutes. The working days at Moir's were also divided by breaks but the women did not feel the need to sub-divide their working hours. Instead, the women could generally give themselves short breaks to use the washroom.

The chargehands and supervisors typically allowed the women at Moir's to leave their work if they needed to use the washroom. However, Millie explained that some of the supervisors disapproved of this practise:

I would go to the bathroom whether it was break or not. I would just go, catch the guy and say, "I have to go." They didn't like that. Because you get another break. More or less you're getting a couple breaks. Oh no, that was part of it too. I would go when I had to go.

(Did anyone ever say something to you to imply that they wanted you to stop?)

I have had that said to me, "Your break is going to be in about another half hour, hold on." That I can remember. That would have been said to me, yes.

(And did you have to wait?)

No, I went. [*laughs*]⁸⁰

In Millie's department, the chargehands and supervisors were less likely to replace a woman on the belt so she could use the washroom. Most of the interviewees remembered being allowed to leave the belt as soon as a chargehand or supervisor took their place or found another employee to replace them. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, whether or not a woman was replaced was dependent on a chargehand or supervisors' willingness to do so.

When Lois was a packer she worked at a packing table rather than on the belt. This meant that if she had to leave to use the washroom she did not need to be replaced by another packer. Lois remembered that she would leave her station not only when she had to use the washroom, but also when she felt that her arms and legs needed the rest:

⁸⁰ Interview with Millie, 9 November, 2011.

No, because if I, if my hands and arms started to get tired, I used to stop and go over on the belt and talk to the girls for five, two or three minutes. You know, just let my arms. And then I'd go back. And then I can, you know, work. It wasn't like they were pushin' ya. They liked to have so much done per day, first thing in the morning is when you're, I well I, I could work better. But when it starts getting to the end of the day then I start slowing down and wanting to talk and yack, you know. And that was the way it went. But as long as I got my work done that was the main thing I guess. They didn't holler at me too much, you know. In fact I can't even remember them hollering at me. I think if they only holler at me was get back to your table and get those chocolates [*laughs*] I'd be over on the belt yackin'. That's about it.⁸¹

There was obviously substantial variation in the managerial styles of different departments. If Lois was caught away from her work she was told to go back. But she did not find these instructions to be pushy, and they certainly did not stop her from taking a break when she felt her body needed one. Although this unofficial system was reliant on the good-will of chargehands and supervisors, the women generally felt that they could use the washroom when they needed to even if they were not on break. This self-care strategy helped the women maintain their physical well-being and also allowed them to break up the monotony of their days.

Job-trading

Taking additional breaks allowed the women to have a brief rest from their work. The women also allowed their bodies to rest through job-trading. Some women would occasionally trade jobs in between their official breaks so that they could perform a different task for a short period and have a break from their own. Some of the women found this change in their routine to be almost as good as a break and used job-trading as a self-care strategy to avoid repetitive motion injuries or stave off boredom. Roy emphasized the importance of job variation in his observational study of the machine-

⁸¹ Interview with Lois, 29 November, 2011.

shop. He believes that the other men in his department were constantly confronted by the “beast of monotony” because of the simple and repetitive nature of their work.⁸² Roy’s study outlines the numerous ways the men staved off boredom. He maintains that his findings could help employers increase job satisfaction.⁸³ In order to cope with his boredom, Roy made a game out of his work. His “game of work” involved punching different coloured pieces in varied orders to provide his work with added complexity.⁸⁴ The women at Moir’s did not create a game of work, but some of them recognized the importance of job variation.

Some of the interviewees employed job-trading to make their work day more interesting. Lois explained that when you were packing on the belt you were not supposed to trade jobs with other women. She did, however, trade with women when she worked in Grand Central Station:

Where I was on the machine, sometime I went down and went the other girls job and she did mine. Just to give it a little break, you know, different, you know something like that. But that, that’s about it I don’t think because on the belt we weren’t allowed to, you know.⁸⁵

Marion explained that part of the reason she traded jobs, despite her dislike for packing, was to avoid repetitive strain injuries:

I kinda liked it there. There was some hard jobs sometimes you’d take if they needed you somewhere. On another. If they were short a girl it’s just something you had to. But I ended up I was putting on the padding. Putting on the padding and it was fast. You had to be fast you know. Some girls got the carpal tunnel or whatever but I didn’t. I was lucky. You, from doing that all the time [*Marion does motion of putting padding on box (looks like dealing cards)*] Sometimes you’d trade with another girl. They’d say, “Do you wanna trade?” And they’d trade ya

⁸² Roy, “Banana Time,” 161.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 160.

⁸⁵ Interview with Lois, 29 November, 2011.

and you packed the candy. Or whatever. Or you had to supply, whatever I can't remember what they call that but you had to supply the candy to the packers. There was a belt and there was all stands of candy and different girl had different candies to pack in the boxes. So sometimes you'd trade with her, you'd, you know, different job that wasn't too bad instead of doing the same thing all the time all day. But when the robots came in the robots did the packing.⁸⁶

Dorothy explained that in her department, job-trading was mostly up to the chargehand.

She did explain that the women did trade occasionally:

We but it was to trade like if we traded it would be for that every hour and a half we had a break. So we would trade for an hour and a half and they would come and do my work and I'd go and do their work and the same way with anybody else. It gave you a break and made it different. Yeah, helped out the day. [laughs]⁸⁷

And then some of them that you traded with they got used to you traded with them so they just looked forward to "oh I'll be packin the next, or I'll be doin something different for the next hour an a half." And it was nice, you know, we weren't allowed to talk to the girls, the next one, we did but we weren't supposed to [laughs]⁸⁸

Temporary job-trading was not the only way to create job variation. Margaret explained that whenever she had an opportunity to try a new job, she took it: "You know, if they asked, I was always quick to say "I'll do it.""⁸⁹ Similarly, Dorothy was a packer for approximately two years before she applied for a chargehand position. She disliked sitting in the same place all day and wanted a job that would allow her to move around.⁹⁰

Job-trading and job-transfers allowed Moir's women to avoid boredom and repetitive motion injuries. Although some of the women did not enjoy packing, all of the women interviewed were able to replace a packer for a short period of time so that they could leave the belt to use the bathroom or just to provide some job variation. This ability

⁸⁶ Interview with Marion, 5 October, 2011.

⁸⁷ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

⁸⁸ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

⁸⁹ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

⁹⁰ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

speaks to the sense of collectivism that existed on the shop floor. Individuals had job preferences but were able to put those aside temporarily to replace other workers.

Conclusion

The women had to accomplish all of the tasks assigned by supervisors, but beyond the basic responsibilities of their work they also acted in ways that were meant to maintain their embodied selves. The women's job-related body work meant that they were consistently performing additional actions that were important to their sense of physical and mental well-being while they were at work. The women used various coping and self-care strategies to deal with the repetitive and tedious nature of their work. At times, the women would sabotage the line or perform make-work to avoid doing their work. These strategies were typically used to gain additional breaks throughout the day. The women adopted coping strategies to make their work bearable or even enjoyable. Beyond these coping strategies, the women also used self-care strategies to avoid injury and maintain their physical well-being. Similar to instances of make-work and sabotage, the women would take additional breaks when they felt their bodies needed a rest or if they needed to use the washroom. According to the official policy, packers were not supposed to leave the belt when it was not a designated break. However, there was an unofficial policy in place that allowed the women to leave the belt for a short period of time to use the washroom or visit the nurse. This arrangement relied on the willingness of the chargehand to replace a worker but generally workers explained that they were permitted to leave their station. This system effectively allowed women to take additional breaks throughout their work days. Job-trading was also used by some of the women to avoid repetitive strain injuries and create job variation. The women at Moir's used a

variety of coping and self-care strategies to offset the tiring and repetitive nature of their work and produce moments of leisure-like repose.

Some of the women expressed their belief that their limited educations prevented them from leaving factory work. Additionally, the women at Moir's were working at a time when the male breadwinner/female homemaker ideology was still strongly engrained within Canadian society despite the fact that more and more women were continuing to work after they married. Many of these women had little opportunity for leisure outside of work and so they created leisure while on the job. The women were not experiencing "true leisure" in the sense that they were still at work and therefore were still under managerial controls. However, the tricks they played and breaks they gained gave their work a sense of fun and mischievousness. They also provided the women with stories to tell each other and laughs to enjoy together. In addition to sabotage and make-work, the women had other coping strategies. They talked, sang, and listened to music to pass the time and make their work more enjoyable. They also developed friendships with the other women in their departments and through this sense of camaraderie they made for themselves a workplace that was, for them, a positive environment. The women's camaraderie and sense of shared identity as factory workers had a strong influence on how they responded to company regulations regarding dress and grooming in the plant. The following chapter will discuss this influence and the numerous ways the women adjusted their cultural body work and emotional labour to preserve their embodied selves in the Moir's plant.

Chapter 4: Emotions and Dress

Post-war Canadian society was laden with contradictory ideals. In the previous chapters I discussed societal adherence to the male breadwinner/female homemaker ideology despite the reality that married women were entering the workforce at an increased rate. The definitions of femininity change over time and are shaped by class and race. Throughout the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, middle- and upper-class women were considered inherently feminine while working-class women were considered unfeminine, lacking proper maternal feelings, sexual purity, or piety. In the 1920s, however, this distinction blurred: in Halifax women from the working- and middle-class began to sport the same fashions. In this way, a woman's social class could no longer be distinguished by looking at her clothes and hairstyle.¹ Women's classed appearances were blurred inside and outside of the workplace as many working-class women sought clerical jobs.² Although women from different classes intermingled in

¹ Suzanne Morton, *Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 150.

² *Ibid.*, 146. It is important to note that these trends were specific to white women in Halifax.

white-collar jobs and positions in the service sector, factory work continued to employ primarily working-class women.

Cultural body work is a form of work done to the body to maintain levels of presentability to comply with established social norms. However, these norms vary widely and are affected by class, gender and race. According to Shilling, “cultural body work mirrors some of the forms of self-presentation [that] occur within jobs, but it is not determined by economic considerations.”³ Although cultural body work occurs constantly in daily life, its importance in the workplace and the ways in which workers affected change in cultural displays should not be overlooked. Shilling explains that cultural body work throughout the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries transformed as workers responded to the demands they experienced as part of a newly industrialized work force. Working-class culture emerged and class-specific “interactional norms” developed within the community through leisure activities. These norms and the sense of community and identity they created then influenced working-class organizing against working conditions.⁴ The norms were highly gendered with “[t]he most acceptable and prestigious forms of cultural body work reflect[ing] masculine culture.”⁵ Women’s cultural body work was considered inferior to men’s. These idealized portrayals of cultural body work were classed, gendered and “predicated upon a *white* corporeality which excluded people of colour.”⁶ Although the cultural body work of white working-class men was considered the most valued within their class, these same traits can be looked down upon by middle- and upper-class society.

³ Chris Shilling, *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society* (London: SAGE, 2005), 74.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.* Italics in original.

Appropriate portrayals of cultural body work vary significantly across class, race and gendered lines. Similarly, appropriate presentations of self are influenced by many factors that are also specific to place and time. At Moir's in the post-war era, the women's cultural body work was shaped by a company dress code that regulated dress and grooming. In some instances, female workers accepted these regulations and took pride in following the rules. However, other times, the women deviated from the rules. Like the women's creation of leisure during working hours, the deviation from the dress code was intended to make their working days more enjoyable. The women established their own norms regarding what was and was not appropriate dress, make-up and hairstyles to wear while at work. These standards were developed and reinforced through peer group pressure that played on the women's feelings of pride and shame. Managing these feelings was an important part of the women's cultural body work in the workplace. Through the use of oral history, working-class women's perception of their working lives and female beauty norms can be better understood.

Cultural body work is represented by work done on the body to ensure its presentability. These physical representations are also accompanied by emotional labour. How an employee behaves and presents themselves on the job depends on the nature of their work. When a person accepts a position, they are told what tasks they must accomplish to properly complete their work. However, workplace regulations and standards can also dictate what a worker is permitted to wear, how they are meant to act and even what they are to say to customers. Properly adhering to regulations such as these can be difficult for some employees and demand a certain amount of physical and emotional labour. However, these types of duties are taken-for-granted aspects of jobs

and are not always considered work in and of themselves. According to Arlie Hochschild, factory work does not require true emotional labour. Although factory workers often suppress emotions, Hochschild believes that this suppression represents a burden rather than a “*performance* of emotional labour.”⁷ Hochschild maintains that most jobs involving emotional labour are held by the middle-class.⁸ She goes on to explain that emotional management is first taught to children by their parents and that the lessons vary across class lines. Hochschild believes that middle-class parents teach their children that their “feelings count because [they] are (or will be) considered important by others.” In contrast, lower-class parents teach their children that their “feelings don’t count because [they] aren’t (or won’t be) considered important by others.”⁹ Hochschild explains that for children who will likely enter into nonemotional-labour occupations, parents teach their children to “learn to manage [their] behaviour because that is all the company will ask of [them].”¹⁰ Although Hochschild believes that class has an effect on how children are taught to handle their emotions, she later explains that how families express emotions vary in accordance to the emotional labour they perform at work which is not always clearly divided along class lines. Furthermore, a child’s school will play a large role in teaching students how much they should control and value their feelings.¹¹

Although Hochschild does not categorize factory work as emotional labour, the burden of emotional suppression no doubt has a constant effect on employees’ behaviour and attitudes towards their job. Additionally, while workers performing emotional labour

⁷ Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 153. Italics in original.

⁸ Ibid., 156.

⁹ Ibid., 159.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 160.

are trained to display certain emotions at appropriate times, employees are never shown how they must suppress negative emotions while on the job. Although the Moir's women were not performing emotional labour in the truest sense of the term, they were constantly managing feelings of pride and shame in response to their place within the hierarchy of feminized jobs and their own place within the Moir's factory. The emotions experienced in reaction to these expectations are worthy of discussion in their own right.

Working-class Femininity

The definitions of appropriate representations of femininity have changed over time and vary across class and racial lines. In the class structure that emerged in the late nineteenth-century urban North America working-class femininity was defined differently from middle- and upper-class femininity. Sociologist Beverly Skeggs explains that by the late nineteenth-century, femininity was considered an inherent characteristic of middle- and upper-class women while their working-class counterparts were devoid of femininity. Skeggs maintains:

Working-class women were coded as inherently healthy, hardy and robust (whilst, also paradoxically as a source of infection and disease) against the physical frailty of middle-class women. They were also involved in forms of labour that prevented femininity from ever being a possibility... Working-class women- both Black and White- were coded as the sexual and deviant other against which femininity was defined.¹²

Skeggs goes on to explain that working-class women have long been associated with vulgarity and sexuality. In this way, working-class women embodied the exact opposite of what was meant to be feminine. Skeggs asserts that working-class women were

¹² Beverly Skeggs, "Ambivalent Femininities" in *The Body: A Reader*, ed. Mariam Farser and Monica Greco (London: Routledge, 2005), 130.

“positioned at a distance from femininity but claim[ed] proximity to it.”¹³ Skeggs maintains that when achieving femininity “[t]o look was to be.”¹⁴ However, herein lay another contradiction: a woman’s appearance was important, but if she spent too much time caring for her appearance she was considered deviant.¹⁵ Sociologist Mariana Valverde examines the historical development of beliefs surrounding working-class woman’s subservient social position. She explains that in the nineteenth-century, middle-class men and women pitied working-class women but also believed they were responsible for their social position “by not being thrifty, by having too many children, by not knowing how to keep their homes and children clean, and, last but not least, by wasting money on showy clothes and being immoral.”¹⁶ Valverde explains the term “finery” was used to negatively describe working-class women’s purchase of showy dress and accessories.¹⁷ Although these items were appropriate for wealthy women they were viewed as cheap and immoral on a working-class woman. In the later Victorian era, there were increased ideological tension between “Victorian thrift” and consumer capitalism.¹⁸ Working women were considered sexually dangerous, susceptible to immorality and guilty of “committing sins of consumption.”¹⁹ This belief that working-class women were frivolous with their wages persisted throughout the early twentieth-century.²⁰

¹³ Ibid., 133.

¹⁴ Ibid., 131

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Mariana Valverde, “The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse” *Victorian Studies* 32, 2 (1989): 169.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 188.

¹⁹ Ibid., 185.

²⁰ Ibid.

A working-class woman had to work more diligently than did her middle- and upper-class counterparts to maintain a reputation of respectability. Through her examination of Richmond Heights, a working-class neighbourhood in Halifax in the 1920s, Suzanne Morton maintains that “gender ideals must be specific in their circumstances.”²¹ She explains that gender ideals are influenced by “class, age, region, sexual orientation, and race.”²² These factors combine to produce different definitions of femininities and masculinities. Morton asserts that an appropriate portrayal of femininity was a skill that was mastered with time and constant effort. Although building a respectable reputation could take years, it could easily be “destroyed by a single unfeminine or unrespectable action.”²³ Maintaining an image of feminine respectability was especially important for these women because the distribution of social services were dependant on a woman’s reputation.²⁴ Jeanne Fay reaffirms these findings and explains that, in Nova Scotia, social assistance continued to be distributed based women’s individual character well into the 1970s and unmarried mothers were not entitled to receive Mother’s Allowance until 1966.²⁵ Working-class women’s femininity continued to be challenged throughout the twentieth-century and the negative connotations associated with their class and gender persisted. Social services attempted to control these women’s respectability by withholding funds from women they deemed undeserving of aid.

²¹ Morton, *Ideal Surroundings*, 5.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 38.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Jeanne Fay, “The ‘Right Kind’ of Single Mothers: Nova Scotia’s Regulation of Women on Social Assistance, 1956-1977,” in *Mother’s of the Municipality: Women, Work, and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax*, ed. Judith Fingard and Janet Guildford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 143.

Education and Job Opportunities

Factory work was not considered the most desirable of the feminized occupations, but for many women it was the most viable option. Women in the post-war era had limited educational and job opportunities. Suzanne Morton explains that as early as the 1920s, working-class women in Halifax began to pursue white-collar occupations. As working-class women entered these white-collar occupations there was a blurring of class identities. Wini Breines discusses the conflict felt by middle-class white teenagers in 1950s United States. Many teens rejected their parent's ideals and refused to perform in school. Breines asserts that "[b]eats, bohemians, and sectors of middle-class youth shared disdain for making money at an unfulfilling job, working as a full-time housewife, conforming in the suburbs, and searching for security."²⁶ These problems do not seem to have affected working-class girls in the same ways. Many working-class women left school because they had to begin working to help support their families. Abandoning studies was not an ideological choice but an economic necessity. Although Breines points out white middle-class teenagers' rejection of feminine norms, Sociologist Norma Sherratt believes that many other middle-class girls accepted the sexual division of labour and had little desire to challenge it. Sherratt interviewed sixteen girls between the ages of sixteen and seventeen who were entering college in the North of England in 1977. She believes that through socialization, many women "grow up *prepared* to accept their place in the sexual division of labour."²⁷ Although some of the interviewees went on to other

²⁶ Wini Breines, "The "Other" Fifties Beat and Bad Girls," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne J. Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 390.

²⁷ Norma Sherratt, "Girls, Jobs and Glamour," *Feminist Review* 15 (Winter 1983), 47. Italics in original.

occupations after their time at Moir's, they remained in positions typically defined as feminine such as nursing and secretarial work.

Several women interviewed for this study expressed their belief that they had limited job opportunities in Halifax in the post-war years. Despite their belief that they did not have many job options, they believed that they would always be able to find work if they needed to. Many believed that if they quit one factory they could find a job working at another one in or around Halifax. Marion believed that there were more available jobs in the post-war years than there are today.²⁸ However, she explained that she stayed at Moir's because she believed her lack of education limited her job opportunities:

Well I guess I wasn't, I didn't have the education for one thing. And when I started there if I remember correctly, I was only getting, it's either \$35 or \$38 dollars a week. Wasn't it?

(Do you think you could have found another job if you needed to?)

Heaven knows. Well I didn't, although I had a course in, what they call it, commercial course back then. I went to St. Peter's there's typing and shorthand and book keepin'. But I found, I found my diploma or whatever you call it I had come across it one time and I read it, it said I only partially passed. I mean, I didn't bother looking for another job because I figured I wouldn't. I wasn't smart enough in other words.²⁹

Despite her belief that jobs were readily available at the time, Marion thought that her employment possibilities were limited. She was happy with her work at Moir's and saw no reason to search for another job. Like Marion, Mary believed her lack of education seriously limited her job opportunities:

No, no. See I don't have an education that can, like most places you need a half decent education. I got grade 7 education that's what I left school with, grade 7, you know. But to work at Moirs you didn't need education you just knew how to

²⁸ Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011.

²⁹ Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011.

pack chocolates. Work in the laundry all you knew how to do was fold clothes so that's why I had crummy jobs, you know.³⁰

Marion and Mary believed that their lack of education prevented them from finding jobs outside of factories and laundries. These women were not unhappy with their careers in factory work, but they were aware that staying in factory work was a decision they made based on their educational background. Millie eventually left factory work and returned to school to become a nurse. She explained that when she was in her teens everyone she knew quit school early to start working.³¹ Factory work provided an alternative for some young women in post-war Halifax who were not able to or not interested in continuing their education.

Margaret explained that her mother made her take a secretarial course in the evenings at Miss Murphy's Business College but that she "had no intention of being a secretary to anybody."³² Margaret took the course to placate her mother who wanted something better for her than factory work. Despite successfully completing her course, Margaret recalled that being a secretary did not appeal to her:

[Laughs] No it didn't because, being a secretary it would depend upon who you would be a secretary to. My thought was, "hey, there ain't no man I'm going to carry coffee for. There ain't no man that I'm going to do this work for." Like you know, get a present for this one. I mean that's what secretaries do, right? You know, they're their own personal whatever, gopher I called them. [laughs] I mean this is going back then. Whether they still do that today, I don't know.³³

Margaret took pride in her job at Moir's and believed that she was not cut out for the life of a secretary. She was not interested in the emotional labour of subservience that she believed defined secretarial work at the time. Margaret did not want to "carry coffee" for

³⁰ Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

³¹ Interview with Millie, 9 November, 2011.

³² Interview with Margaret, 15 December, 2011.

³³ Interview with Margaret, 15 December, 2011.

a man and preferred the relative independence she was allowed at Moir's. Margaret's example demonstrates that although some parents encouraged their children to pursue white-collar occupations, these jobs and the emotional labour associated with them were not considered appealing to some women.

Although secretarial work appeared unattractive to Margaret, June and Linda each decided before they had finished high school that they wanted to work as a secretary.

When asked what her ideal future job was Linda remembered:

The ideal job when I left school was I wanted to work in an office. That's all I thought about was I just wanted to work in an office. I remember going to see my mom she used to take us to work every now and again if she couldn't get a babysitter or something on her big key punch machine and I'd think, "Wow wouldn't it be great to work in an office?" That's all we thought about was being a secretary or at one point I think I wanted to be a dental assistant, I remember that. Then I hate the dentist so that didn't work out so good. I used to faint. Like what was I thinking? *[laughs]*³⁴

June expressed similar sentiments and explained that her parents' expectations played a role in her decision to become a secretary:

I think it was because from my own home life, my parents wanted me to get either. Then you were either you wanted secretarial or teaching or something like that. I really wasn't going to university, knew I wasn't. Was just either, you know, in teaching or I suppose that would be university, going to get a teacher's job. But no it was mostly secretarial and I knew that. Really from grade 10 what I was going to do. So yeah.³⁵

June and Linda believed that their family's expectations played a role in their decisions for future careers. However, these expectations were shaped by a gendered division of labour at the time. Many of the women interviewed for this study left school at an early age to begin working to support their families. Marion and Margaret took secretarial

³⁴ Interview with Linda, 8 November, 2011.

³⁵ Interview with June, 3 October, 2011.

courses but did not pursue this work. In Margaret's case, her mother's belief that she should be working somewhere better than a factory did not affect her perception of and pride in her work. But these pressures from family to pursue what was believed to be better and more reputable work surely influenced the way the women thought about their own jobs. Within the Moir's plant, as in Halifax society at large, women's jobs fell along a hierarchy scale of prestige.

Hierarchy of Jobs at Moir's

Some women believed secretarial work was more desirable than factory work but some jobs within the factory were also perceived to be more or less prestigious than others. The production and reinforcement of these hierarchies were directly connected to the women's feelings of pride in their work. Margaret McCallum notes that in the Ganong candy plant, workers identified with their departments rather than the entire factory. She asserts that each department developed their own "routine, conventions and camaraderie."³⁶ McCallum explains that women from the fancy packing department were teased by other workers "about being stuck-up, or giving themselves airs, since they tended to dress a little more stylishly than other factory workers."³⁷ Some of the women were aware of what they believed was a hierarchical division within women's jobs at Moir's. Verna worked in the cold room for a short period but typically worked in the hot room. She believed that there was a division between the two groups and that the cold room was considered a more prestigious position. She went on to explain further divisions within her department:

³⁶ Margaret E. McCallum, "Separate Spheres: the Organization of Work in a Confectionery Factory: Ganong Bros., St. Stephen, New Brunswick." *Labour/Le Travail* 24 (Fall 1989), 75.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

But the stringers got a little bit more money than we did. And we used to call them the big shots. And we were just labourers. You know what I mean? That was our vernacular, of course. That wasn't what anybody said but that was what was in our minds.³⁸

Oh yes, if anybody was too gringy, oh yes if anybody was too gringy [*laughs*] They'd be sent down to the nurse and have to get a new uniform. They would not be allowed to work with their uniforms [dirty] at least not in my department. I'm sure, I'm sure, the cold room they thought they were far better than us I'm sure they wouldn't allow it. I don't know why they thought they were better than us, cause they had a cleaner job that's why I guess. We were into the chocolate, the dirty work [*laughs*]³⁹

If working in the hot room was considered the least prestigious job at Moir's, then working in the office was the most. Dorothy recalled that some women would claim they worked in the offices at Moir's rather than on the factory floor:

Yes, yes. Well there were one like I had mentioned there. Oh she thought she was too good to work in the factory and she didn't want people to know she worked there. And we had a couple of other ones the same. And you would think when they were out of there they worked in the office and, you know, this is what they would tell people. "I work at Moir's yeah, but I'm in the office." [*laughs*] Oh my. They weren't in the office anymore than I was. [*laughs*]⁴⁰

Dorothy believed that these women lied about where they worked in the factory because it was considered more prestigious to work in the office. Dorothy left her job working in a store to work at Moir's because it allowed her to have the evenings and weekends free to spend with her son. She preferred her job at Moir's and was not ashamed to tell people she worked there. The women who claimed to work in the office may have wished to portray a more white-collar appearance. The women in Dorothy's story believed that factory work was not something to be proud of and did not want to identify as a factory worker. These women wished to separate themselves from the other factory workers and

³⁸ Interview with Verna, 3 November, 2011.

³⁹ Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

⁴⁰ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

some of the women, like Verna and Dorothy, viewed these actions as laughable. Clearly, if a woman put on airs she would be rejected by her co-workers who believed that there was no shame in factory work. Through reactions such as these, the women regulated each other's attitudes and physical appearance.

Beauty Norms at Work and the Moir's Dress Code

While working-class women were encouraged to appear respectable and chaste they were also bombarded with media portrayals of women in an increasingly sexualized light. During the Second World War, images of female pin-ups became extremely popular among soldiers overseas. These images portrayed women as "healthy, optimistic, and erotically desirable" and reminded the soldiers "what they were fighting for".⁴¹ In the post-war era, these images made their way into the mainstream media through advertising and women were encouraged to look and act glamorous like their Hollywood counterparts.⁴² The beauty industry began to portray glamour as an essential part of femininity and womanhood. Historian Kathy Peiss explains that women were under increased pressure to appear feminine through "grooming and makeup" when they entered traditionally male occupations during the Second World War.⁴³ A feminine appearance demonstrated working women's commitment to appropriate gender roles despite their entry into masculine work. Although this feminine appearance was important, it became evident that for the sake of safety women would have to adhere to a more practical dress code. Peiss describes posters that assured women "it's smart to dress

⁴¹ Stephen Gundle, *Glamour a History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 260.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Kathy Lee Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), 240.

the part” and she maintains these warnings were also meant to emphasize the temporary nature of women’s war time employment.⁴⁴

There was little criticism of the cosmetics industry until the late 1960s. Peiss references an article published in a 1954 issue of *Militant*, a socialist journal, in which the cosmetics industry was brought under scrutiny for selling “useless products.”⁴⁵ The editor was surprised to receive many letters from women defending their use of cosmetics. Many working-class women appreciated products that made them look and feel more feminine. Peiss concludes that “[h]ard work, monotony, poor health and the struggles to survive robbed working-class women of the beauty and self-fulfillment to which they were entitled.”⁴⁶ Through the use of beauty products, some women believed they were able to regain their beauty. Sociologist Miriam Glucksmann, also known as Ruth Cavendish, kept a diary while she worked in a factory in England in the 1970s. She reported that all of the women in her department wore make-up and would frequently spray each other with eau de cologne at work. Glucksmann explained “[i]f you have a job that lets you sleep enough it’s easy to view other women who wear make-up as being conned by the media, and treating themselves as sex objects, but I came to realise it wasn’t nearly as simple as that.”⁴⁷ Glucksmann believed the women’s working conditions, characterized by long hours and difficult labour, forced them to rely on beauty products to improve their physical appearances. Working-class women were not

⁴⁴ Ibid., 242.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 256.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 256.

⁴⁷ Miriam Glucksmann, also known as Ruth Cavendish, *Women on the Line*. (London: Routledge, 2009), 122. For legal reasons Glucksmann had to change the name and location of the factory and was not permitted to name any of the actual parts the women assembled or packed.

using beauty products as a means to achieve idealized middle-class beauty norms, but were instead using them to mask signs of fatigue.

The popular beauty norms that prevailed in the post-war era North America were largely based on middle-class ideals of femininity. Although these images were viewed and likely internalized by women from all classes, working-class women in a factory setting did not always dress or act in accordance with these ideals. Women's workplace dress codes were highly regulated through the twentieth-century. They were dictated by social norms associated with respectable femininity and in some instances by company and government workplace safety regulations. The women at Moir's all wore the same uniform. It was a smock with straps that wrapped around the waist and could be tied to keep the garment closed. The women also had to wear a hairnet. Most of the women wore a dress or skirt and blouse under their smock. Women were not permitted to wear pants at the Moir's plant until the late 1960s. Muriel remembered that she had to hem her smocks because even the smallest size was too long for her.⁴⁸ The uniform changed over time in both colour and style. These changes were in part influenced by fashion trends, such as women beginning to wear pants, but also by the introduction of increasingly standardized safety regulations.⁴⁹

Although Moir's factory workers were not expected to impress any customers with their beauty, they were expected to maintain a clean appearance because they were working with food. Moir's workers were expected to keep their uniforms clean, keep their hair swept back into a hair net, and not wear any jewellery. Most of the women

⁴⁸ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁴⁹ Interview with Dorothy, 28 September, 2011; Interview with Dorothy, 5 October, 2011; Interview with Marion, 5 October, 2011.

interviewed did not have a problem with the dress code. Several women expressed a dislike for wearing hairnets but accepted the practice as a non-negotiable characteristic of their work. Despite the acceptance of the dress code by the majority of the women interviewed, the Dress Code Notice found below is a clear indicator that some women choose to disobey the rules. Additionally, many of the women remembered co-workers who wore jewellery, improperly wore their hairnets, and failed to keep their uniforms clean.

NOTICE

The following practices are too prevalent and they must cease at once:

1. Girls coming with their hair in pin curls.
2. Girls wearing slacks while at work, except in 3rd floor packing.
3. The wearing of broaches[sic], earrings and other forms of jewelry[sic], except persons with pierced ears may wear a band only without drops.
4. The wearing of hair nets on the back of the head only, leaving the front hair uncovered.
5. The wearing of smocks and uniforms which are not kept clean and tidy.

You appreciate that in the food processing business we cannot be too careful. We must be careful of foreign objects such as bobby pins, parts of earrings and hair getting into the products. We must also be careful in our appearance for people coming into the plant. One person with an unclean uniform can cause more bad public relations than we can overcome in a long time.

The jobs of all of us depend on the good quality of the product we produce and also on our own appearance when visitors come through the plant.

We all want to make a good impression on our visitors and customers and we can all do our part. We must do our part.

Your supervisor has been asked to ensure that the above practices are discontinued and you are asked to give your wholehearted co-operation.

Thank you.

PERSONNEL MANAGER

Halifax, N.S.

November 30, 1961⁵⁰

Many of the problems listed above were directed at the “girls” working in the plant. The importance of a clean uniform was not gender specific but the wearing of pin curls, slacks and jewellery were all problems the girls had to fix.

In her discussion of Canadian auto-plant workers during World War II, sociologist Pamela Sugiman finds that the women resisted the government- and company-enforced safety regulations concerning hair protection and safety shoes.⁵¹ Female employees at the McKinnon auto parts plant wanted to look “good” and “feminine.”⁵² However, what was considered fashionable and feminine was typically not practical or acceptable for work. Sugiman believes the women’s rejection of official safety and dress code regulations were “attempts to assert some control, maintain dignity, and impart personal style in the workplace.”⁵³ In her interviews with several plant workers, Sugiman was told that many women came to work with their hair in pin curlers and other women would set their hair for them on their lunch breaks.⁵⁴

Joan Sangster discusses the differing images of women who made fur coats and those who wore them. Through her examination of fur industry journals from the 1940s and 1950s, Sangster finds that fur coat consumers were divided in two types of women. The first was the suburban housewife who wanted her fur to embody comfort, practicality

⁵⁰ “Notice,” written by a personnel manager at Moir’s in 1961, Moirs Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1870, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

⁵¹ Pamela H. Sugiman, *Labour’s Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937-1979* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 74.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 75.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

and respectability. The second woman was “the sensual, sexy, sultry movie star model, wearing makeup, high heels, and jewellery, adorned in fox or mink.”⁵⁵ Although women wore the fur, men were the typically the ones buying it. Female customers were at times considered “simply vain and susceptible to flattery.”⁵⁶ Sangster points out the sharp contrast between the images of female workers who make fur coats and consumers who are meant to buy them. The same contrast was noticeable between the imaged Moir’s consumer and the Moir’s workers. Moir’s Pot of Gold chocolates always featured a beautiful made up woman in a fancy gown. The image below shows this image is very different from the woman found on the factory floor. The images found within the media as well as industry publications characterize the conflicting ideals and lived reality of working-class women in the post-war era. Middle-class images of the beautiful homemaking mother were idealized while the image of the working-class women was disparaged or ignored completely.

⁵⁵Joan Sangster, “Making a Fur Coat: Women, the Labouring Body, and Working-Class,” *International Review of Social History* 52, 2 (2007): 264.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 265.

Fig. 4.1: “Boxes of Chocolates Coming off the Assembly Line,” c. 1957.



Photographer unidentified. Image from Moirs Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1976-332, Image # 134, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Female workers' dress codes were dictated by more than just safety concerns or societal pressure to appear feminine. Historian Kathryn M. McPherson examines dress code regulations for Canadian nurses before, during and after the Second World War. In

the first half of the twentieth-century, nurse's uniforms resembled nun's habits, with long skirts, large collars and aprons. Following the Second World War, nurse's uniforms took on the appearance of the "exaggerated feminine" with raised hemlines and shortened shelves.⁵⁷ In the post-war era, a nurse's job was riddled with contradictions regarding respectability and appropriate feminine behaviour. Nurses were expected and encouraged to pursue heterosexual fulfillment. However, these pursuits were highly regulated by nursing leaders.⁵⁸ In her Master's thesis, Nancy Power Shiner briefly discusses uniform regulations placed on Royal Canadian Air Force flight nurses. Many of these nurses were exposed to the elements while working outdoors and soon realized that the prescribed nurse's uniform was impractical for the reality of their working conditions. Despite this reality, approval for nurses to wear "battle dress top only, blue cotton shirts, woollen socks, leather field boots, [and] rubber boots" was granted for "extreme weather only" and required the signatures of nine RCAF officers and the Minister of Defence.⁵⁹ The thought of nurses wearing masculinised uniforms, even in extreme conditions, in place of their traditional dress was controversial. In a British nursing journal from 1952, an image of several flight nurses was featured with the caption: "GLAMOUR CREW! After gruelling training the nurses emerge as attractive as the wonderful scenery in which they strove."⁶⁰ Shiner believes that by undermining the women's participation in a

⁵⁷ Kathryn M. McPherson, "The Case of the kissing Nurse': Femininity, Sexuality, and Canadian Nursing," in *Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada*, ed. Kathryn M. McPherson, et al. (Don Mills, Ont: Oxford University Press, 1999), 191.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁵⁹ Nancy Power Shiner, "'In the Best Interest of the Service': RCAF Flight Nurses as the 'New Woman', 1945-1959," (MA Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1998), 98.

⁶⁰ As quoted by Shiner, 86.

masculinised environment by portraying them in a more feminized light, they remained within the proper image of the “50s woman.”⁶¹

At Moir’s in the post-war era, women’s dress was also regulated by the company, specifically with respect to the wearing of pants and maintaining femininity. The dress code emphasized cleanliness and prohibited the wearing of jewellery and other feminine accessories. However, the dress code also ensured at least a basic feminine appearance by forcing women to wear dresses or skirts under their smocks. Only women working in the third floor packing department, or Grand Central Station, were permitted to wear pants.

Lois worked in this department and explained why this exception was made:

Yeah. Why? Well there was a lot who wore, but I wore pants a lot because I was up high. And the men, well we got that little guy that used to sweep the floor. And when I’m up there pushing the things down if I had a skirt on, he would have fun [*we both laugh*].⁶²

Lois worked, literally, above the other employees in her department which meant that if she did not wear pants, the people below her would be able to look up her dress or skirt.

Lois revisited this issue a little later in our conversation. After discussing some of the challenges and positive aspects of her jobs she stated:

Yeah. You had to keep your wits, you know. Sometimes, you know. But no accidents there. Nobody got hurt. As far as I know. Cause I was up and I had the belt it was here the belt was. Cause I had to come up to here. And nope there was nothing, nothing to hurt me. Except this little man sweeping the floor trying to look up my skirt. [*we both laugh*] But the men used to holler “-----, -----!” “What?” They’d say, and they pointed down below and then I’d go “Oh god.” What I did. I’d come down off the steps and I’d go over and talk to him. Talk to the man until he finished sweeping [*laughs*]
(So he couldn’t look up?)
I think he was a little weird too, I’m not sure. But we got a great kick out of them

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

though. I never got mad at him. You know, he was very quiet man, you know. But [laughs] But I had to laugh. And if I wore slacks, I wore dress skirts sometimes, but yeah sometime if I wear slacks then it didn't bother me. But I did wear skirts sometimes up there but oh yeah, that little man [laughs] I'll always remember him. I don't know why, I don't know if he got a thrill or not. [we both laugh]⁶³

Although Lois joked about the man looking up her skirt it was clearly a subject of concern for her and the other employees who warned her when he came around. A woman's body at work is not just a labouring body. Female bodies have an added sexual connotation. This situation illustrates how women's bodies were, and still can be, sexualized while on the job. It meant that Lois had to "keep [her] wits" not only in the face of the challenging nature of her work but also to avoid unwanted attention from the man sweeping the floor. If she wore a dress or skirt to work, which was the culturally endorsed fashion at the time, she had to be on constant guard. The very fact that she had a woman's body meant this was necessary. Moir's management was aware that if a woman did not wear pants while working above other employees inappropriate voyeurism could occur and the woman's respectability could also be called into question. The exception to the no-pants-rule avoided these problems.

Eventually women in all of the departments at Moir's were allowed to wear pants. When asked why this change occurred, Dorothy explained that she did not know. She recalled: "It's just that they told us we could wear pants. That's all. So we grabbed that. [laughs]"⁶⁴ Dorothy was happy to be able to wear pants because they were much warmer than dresses and skirts.⁶⁵ Dorothy never disobeyed the rule and wore pants to work; she waited until she was formally told that the dress code had changed. But she considered being allowed to wear pants an important workplace improvement. Although Dorothy

⁶³ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

⁶⁴ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

⁶⁵ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

complied with the rule, the Dress Code Notice demonstrates that by 1961, the women at Moir's were actively challenging the rule. When discussing this issue with Mary, who began working at Moir's in 1969, she maintained that she and the other women in her department always wore pants to work. Mary stated: "If I had to go to work and wear a dress I wouldn't go to work. No, no dresses are not my thing, sorry."⁶⁶ Clearly, the change in the dress code was made at some point between the Dress Code Notice was issued in 1961 and when Mary began working at Moir's in 1969. When the Moir's plant moved to Dartmouth, the uniform underwent several more changes. Eventually, everyone working at Moir's was given pants and shirts as a uniform and differences in the dress code for men and women were thus finally eliminated.

In many occupations available to women, their bodies are not only performing their work but are also sexualized by male customers, co-workers and bosses. Women working in the service industry were often encouraged to appear sexually available for their male clientele. Roberta Lessor explains the strict dress code and weight restrictions applied to flight attendants in the post-war era.⁶⁷ These measures were intended to ensure flight attendants' attractiveness in the eyes of passengers. Hochschild also discusses flight attendants and explains that many airlines used images of attractive flight attendants and sexual innuendo in their ads to attract male customers. Hochschild maintains that these ad campaigns reinforced the notion that flight attendants were sexually available to male passengers. This meant that flight attendants were expected to flirt and flaunt regardless of any personal reservations with such behaviour.⁶⁸ Shilling notes that the maximum

⁶⁶ Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

⁶⁷ Roberta Lessor, "Consciousness of Time and Time for the Development of Consciousness: Health Awareness among Women Flight Attendants," *Sociology of Health and Illness* 7, 2 (1985): 200.

⁶⁸ Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 93-94.

bodily size restrictions are found in some traditionally female occupations while minimum size restrictions are found in some traditionally male occupations. He concludes that these types of “[e]mployment rules can, quite literally, embody gender inequalities.”⁶⁹

Historian Dorothy Sue Cobble discusses the sexual harassment experienced by waitresses in the United States throughout the twentieth-century. Through interviews with former waitresses she heard reports of sexual harassment on the part of bosses as well as customers. Cobble maintains that waitresses were considered sexually available by many men because of the nature of their work. Customers often expected a waitress to be pleasant, charming and looked to them to fulfill emotions needs.⁷⁰ Many waitresses survived on tips and some patrons believed a large tip gave them free license over a waitress’s body.⁷¹ McPherson emphasized the way nurses’ bodies were sexualized throughout the twentieth-century and the attempts made by nursing leaders to control nurses’ behaviour, sexual or otherwise.

Sexual harassment and the assumption of sexual availability were not exclusively found in the service industry. This same sexualization also affected female factory workers. Mary explained why she quit her job working at a fish plant:

Well I worked a month at the fish plant in ----- and I got mad at buddy and told him to go you know where [*we both laugh*] Not usin’ me for no sucker. No he had a thing for young girls, right? Well I’m not that kind of young girl there bud and I’m not a young girl. So you might do it to some of them here but don’t cross me. He got pissy at me. Him and I got in a fight and I told him where to go in not so nice words. Haven’t worked since.⁷²

⁶⁹ Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1993), 120.

⁷⁰ Dorothy Sue Cobble, *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1991), 45.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁷² Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

Mary would not tolerate sexual advances at work and quit her job. However, not all women were able to leave their jobs despite the presence of sexual harassment in their places of work. None of the women interviewed for this study discussed instances such as this occurring at Moir's. But the experience of Mary and Lois, remind us that female factory workers' bodies also have a sexualized connotation.

All of the women maintained that they avoided getting romantically involved with the men at Moir's. Lois explained that she dated one man who worked at Moir's before she was married. However, she maintained that she only went out with the man to win a bet:

I just said, "I went out with you on a bet, now get lost" You know. I was a little bugger, I know. But you had to be with the men in those days. I find they, some of them weren't nice, you know. I think all they thought about of the girls in Moir's was easy pickins, you know? This is what, I mean in my mind, that we were easy pickins. Well we weren't. And if anybody went out with them, which some of them did, their reputation was tarnished because they came back and oh my gosh the stuff they would tell you. And I went to a couple of 'em I said, "Did this happen?" And they said, "No, why?" And I said, "That's what they're sayin." You know. Well that hurt the girls, you know? All these guys and they were married men anyway. So I didn't think much of them, you know? But I was friends with them I got along with them at work. But I wouldn't got along with them outside. Because they were married men, they had children. And they would, they only went out with you for one thing and you knew that. So you just didn't do it, you know?⁷³

Lois avoided getting romantically involved with the men at Moir's because she believed that it would have a negative effect on her reputation. She thought that many of the men, who were married with families, took advantage of the girls working at Moir's. Despite her lack of interest in dating men at Moir's, Lois recalled that men from work would sometimes call her at home and ask her on dates, offers that she always refused.⁷⁴ Lois

⁷³ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

⁷⁴ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

took pride in distancing herself from these men. She believed that the girls who agreed to go out with the men ran the risk of having shame cast on their good names.

Although the women I interviewed did not date men at Moir's, they were aware that their co-workers were dating among themselves. Dorothy recalled that her friends at work would often go to dances. She explained that she would attend occasionally but typically would not:

So it was very hard to go out and you didn't have the money to spend in taxis and then I had a child to look after besides. So, but I know everybody in the plant went to dances. You know, I know that. [*laughs*]⁷⁵

Verna alluded to the gossip surrounding dating in the workplace but maintained that she did not get involved:

But I never was a dancing girl or anything like that, you know. Didn't run with the boys, never did. [*laughs*]
(Did you find that a lot of the men and women at Moirs were dating each other?)
Oh yes, oh yes. There was a lot of them that dated, not with each other. But they had their own, they had their own mates and that you know. And the boss well he used to have his wife of course. And I don't know if he had any others ladies there but, you know, talk gets around. And sometimes they do, sometimes they don't, you know. That's their business, I didn't bother with that. [*laughs*]⁷⁶

Seven of the women interviewed for this study were single, at least for a time, while they worked at Moir's. Lois was the only women who ever dated a co-worker. June and Linda were young students who dated outside of the plant. Dorothy and Millie each had a child to support and reported little time for socializing. Margaret and Verna specifically rejected the idea of dating men at work. Although some advertising campaigns aimed at young single women appearing during the war years emphasized the important connection between looking good and smelling your best to attract a male partner both at

⁷⁵ Interview with Dorothy, 28 September, 2011.

⁷⁶ Interview with Verna, 3 November, 2011.

work and in general, none of the women interviewed seemed overly concerned about their physical appearance while at work.

The women at Moir's all wore an identical smock. In a discussion about uniforms, one female autoworker told Sugiman that she enjoyed wearing coveralls at work because she "didn't have to go in worrying whether you looked alright or not, you know. Everybody looked the same."⁷⁷ When they were asked about their uniforms the women generally had few complaints. June did not mind the uniforms because they protected her clothing from chocolate.⁷⁸ Although none of the women expressed distaste with wearing their uniforms in the candy plant, several mentioned discomfort with the idea of wearing them outside the factory. When asked if she ever left her uniform on when she left the factory Joyce explained:

I don't think I ever did. I was just glad to get it off I guess, only for an hour but no. Some people used to go out just run across the street they didn't take them off. But I suppose now you wouldn't be allowed wearing them outside especially when you're working with candy and stuff like that on account of germs. But same way that old hairnet I was glad to get rid of that off my head. I used to say "Oh I hope nobody goes through here right now. [*laughs*]"⁷⁹

Lois also never wore her smock outside of the plant:

Oh no, inside that's all. Yeah, we took them off. Even when we went for dinner. You know, we took them off and left 'em, you know, where we worked. We just threw them down and went, you know. I don't think we were allowed to take 'em, you know, wear 'em out. I didn't want my smock on anyway. Most of the time it was dirty. Especially right here where I was leaning against the belts and stuff, you know. That was it, never wore it out.⁸⁰

The women did not mind wearing the uniform at work where everyone looked the same.

But some of the women felt self-conscious about wearing the uniform outside of the

⁷⁷ Sugiman, *Labour's Dilemma*, 76.

⁷⁸ Interview with June, 3 October, 2011.

⁷⁹ Interview with Joyce, 30 November, 2011.

⁸⁰ Interview with Lois, 29 November, 2011.

factory setting. Lois did not want people to see her wearing a dirty smock and Joyce was embarrassed by her uniform in general. The Moir's women developed their own norms regarding dress in the plant but these norms did not apply outside of work where they wanted to blend in with other Haligonian women.

Although most of the interviewees did not have an issue with their uniforms, some were concerned about what was worn under the smock. Women layered to keep warm when they worked in the cold room. Other women had to shed layers to avoid overheating in the hot rooms. Muriel remembered that she preferred to remove her top before putting on her smock:

Well you could wear your clothes if you want. But I mean I used to, like if I wore a top I used to just take the top off. You had a little place that you could put your stuff and yeah I would just take that off and just put the smock on.⁸¹

Muriel preferred working in fewer layers but removing your clothes and working in a slip or underclothes was considered a risk by some of the other employees. Verna recalled working with a woman who used to wear only a slip under her smock:

She was close to my age now. She retired earlier. But yes, she used to take her dress off and that made a lot of sense because if she had a sweater on for the cold weather outside, she would naturally find it very hot, you know very stifling. She would every morning she'd strip off just have her slip on. But she wouldn't do it in the, but she'd do it in the cloak room.

(And then put smock over top?)

Put the smock. But I always left mine on, always. Wasn't taken no chance cause there's fellas around there you know. I was a young girl at that time. Well you know my age I was, let me see. I worked there from 1949 I was possibly 19 years old, right. I go right on the cusp like I told you, 1930 I was born. Yeah.

(With the lady who would have her slip under her smock, would people tease her about it or did she just try to hide it?)

Oh did we ever [*laughs*] We'd make jokes, off colour jokes and such with her. She was one of those real stately older ladies.⁸²

⁸¹ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁸² Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

Despite the fact that removing layers “made a lot of sense” to Verna she believed this action could bring her own respectability into question. She was only 19 years old at the time and believed that the actions of an older female co-worker were not suitable for herself. She did not want to be the butt of “off colour jokes” or risk attracting unwanted attention from male co-workers.

Keeping uniforms clean was very important to Moir’s management and a clean uniform gave some women a sense of pride. The women were given two smocks and would alternate between them throughout the week. Most of the women did not have any difficulty washing their uniforms but others found it challenging at times. Some women were able to get several days wear out of a single uniform while others found that they had to wash their smock daily. Linda was still living at home and her mother would wash her uniforms for her.⁸³ Millie explained that if you worked on the belt, your uniform could get a black streak around the stomach from rubbing against the belt.⁸⁴ Joyce considered herself lucky because she worked at the end of the belt and her uniform remained relatively clean. In reference to the women working on the belt, Joyce stated: “But you’d take a lot of them, you’d see like where their belly was it was they were filthy. I don’t know how they ever got ‘em clean.”⁸⁵ Mary remembered that she had to wash her uniform everyday: “But it was every day you were washing your uniform cause you couldn’t ever get two days out of one. Cause you’d be full of chocolate in the front, used to get in some messes I tell ya, oh my god.”⁸⁶ Verna explained that she would wash her uniform in her bath tub and hang it on a line to dry in her living room. She described

⁸³ Interview with Linda, 8 November, 2011.

⁸⁴ Interview with Millie, 19 October, 2011.

⁸⁵ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

⁸⁶ Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

this arrangement as very “touch and go.”⁸⁷ Whether or not the women saw keeping their uniforms washed as a problem depended largely on the dirtiness of their job and their living situations. Remembering to bring the uniform to and from work presented another challenge in keeping them clean. Joyce remembered that at times she would forget to bring her uniform back to work:

So that was sometimes I used to forget mine, bring it home. Have it washed and that was a pain and anyway. Cause it was just the old stuff you had to wash and they had to be ironed. But anyway I guess when you’re young you don’t mind anything. I wouldn’t want to have to do it now. [*laughs*]⁸⁸

Additionally, washing uniforms could be complicated by sickness. Verna recalled an occasion in which illness prevented her from washing her uniform:

But you had to wash them every week because if you didn’t, if you didn’t, it’s pretty bad. Like say you had the flu or something you were sick and you stayed off work the next week, you never got a chance to wash it and you had to go back on Monday with a dirty uniform, just the feel of it, you know? Yeah. No, you had to be, with me it had to be clean, and they wanted you clean to because you’re working around the food.⁸⁹

Verna preferred her smock to be clean because she believed that a clean uniform was more comfortable to wear.

A clean smock was an enforced rule within the candy plant and Millie believed that many women, herself included, considered a clean uniform a point of pride:

Well, I noticed like everybody was proud to have their uniforms clean when they went to work. At least I was. I was always clean and I liked that. I worked with people like that. And I never really seen anybody with dirty, dirty uniforms. Because it wouldn’t happen there. They would tell you to take it off. Your appearance was, you had to have the hairnet on, the uniform and you had to work

⁸⁷ Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

⁸⁸ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

⁸⁹ Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

hard. And they had bosses there that watched ya and if you didn't they would come up and tell you.⁹⁰

This sense of pride associated with a clean uniform reinforced management's rules and ensured pressure from fellow workers to keep a clean appearance.

Fig. 4.2 "Hand-dipping Chocolates," c. 1960.



Some jobs were dirtier than others but still more prestigious. Photographed by Harry Cochrane, Chronicle Herald. Image from the Moir's Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1976-332, Image # 111, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

⁹⁰ Interview with Millie, 19 October, 2011.

Fig. 4.3: “Assembly Line for Packaging Candy,” c. 1960.



Photographed by C.V. Maxwell. Image from the Moir’s Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1976-332, Image # 189, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Having a clean and presentable appearance was an important part of the women’s job at Moir’s. Although they did not have customers to impress in person, the above Dress Code Notice warned the women that important visitors could enter the plant at any time. The notice stated that: “One person with an unclean uniform can cause more bad public relations than we can overcome in a long time.”⁹¹ If the workers did not make a good impression on their visitors, customers would no doubt hear about it. The notice

⁹¹ “Notice,” written by a personnel manager at Moir’s in 1961, Moirs Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1870, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

emphasizes this point by asserting: “The jobs of all of us depend on the good quality of the product we produce and also on our own appearance when visitors come through the plant.”⁹² It was the responsibility of an individual worker to keep her uniform clean but management established these rules of cleanliness in such a way that workers would look down on other women who were not washing their smocks. Dorothy remembered that some of the women did not wash their uniforms regularly and that “some start work Monday morning the same as they left it Friday night, you know. It would be more chocolate brown than white.”⁹³ Like Millie, Dorothy was proud of her bright white uniform and believed the other women should have kept their own looking as clean.

Moir’s wanted to present an idealized image of the inner workings of the factory. The following image features a woman working at a box-wrapping machine. This photo was meant to be published in *Candy Industry and Confectioners Journal* in 1960. Moir’s asked to have the waste paper box to be airbrushed away to present a more tidy image of the work room. Moir’s was concerned with presenting their factory in the best light possible. This included touching up photos in professional publications and ensuring the individual workers did their part by keeping their uniforms clean to produce a positive reputation for the company in the community.

⁹² “Notice,” written by a personnel manager at Moir’s in 1961, Moirs Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1870, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Emphasis in original.

⁹³ Interview with Dorothy, 5 October, 2011.

Fig. 4.4: “Box-wrapping Machine in Moirs Box Factory.”



Photographed by Tom Martin. Image from the Moir's Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1976-332, Image # 188, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.⁹⁴

In addition to their smock, the women were also expected to wear a mesh hairnet that featured a small white band with “Moir's” written across the front. The women did not have a problem with their uniforms but many of them disliked wearing a hairnet.

When asked how she felt about wearing a hairnet, June stated that she “hated the hairnet.”⁹⁵ Linda also disliked the hairnet but complied with the rule because she knew she had no choice in the matter:

⁹⁴ Caption reads: “Box wrapping machine in Moirs own box factory Model 405 by Stokes and Smith, Philadelphia. Capacity 12, 000 per day. Moirs own factory makes about 10 million pieces and 5 million folding boxes per year for its own use.”

⁹⁵ Interview with June, 3 October, 2011.

I didn't like the hairnet because I had hair that was right down to here [*shows long hair*] of course right and I had to coil it all up and put it in the hairnet and whatnot. And you know you're a little bit vain when you're that age. So I didn't like it but you know, you had to do what you had to do, you know.⁹⁶

Millie explained the importance of hairstyles to some women at the time:

In those days, yes. People did look after their hair, it was important, yes. A lot of pony tails or the new style coming out. Girls who worked there longer probably saved money and they were able to look after themselves and look nice. Me, I had natural curly long hair it was basically in a pony tail. So the hairnet would go very easily on me and go up. I remember I had to put bobby pins in, because of the weight of my hair it would move back.⁹⁷

The Dress Code Notice stressed the importance of the wearing the hairnets properly and reminded the women they also had to cover their bangs. Several of the women found it difficult to cover all of their hair with the hairnets. When asked about the Dress Code Notice, Muriel explained the strategy she adopted to cover all of her hair:

No, I just knew that you had to cover your hair. So if you're going to cover your hair then I had to cover this. [*touches bangs*] So I just took one of the hairnets and put it around like that and then I just took the other one and put it. And then my hair, cause my hair was long, yeah.⁹⁸

However, Dorothy maintained that other women she worked with were not willing to comply with the hairnet rule. When asked why they wore their hairnets improperly Dorothy explained: "Oh well they didn't want to mess their hair up was one thing. And then they'd put their hairnet on but all their bangs and that were all out so you may as well have nothing on."⁹⁹ Margaret explained that the official rule was not as easy to follow as it seemed and that the women's disobedience of the hairnet rule was at least in small part due to the design of the hairnet:

⁹⁶ Interview with Linda, 8 November, 2011.

⁹⁷ Interview with Millie, 19 October, 2011.

⁹⁸ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁹⁹ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

Yeah because you had that great big band and so anyway the plastic, you know what I mean? It sat better on back of your head than what it did on the, you know, front. The thing floppin' down or whatever. But then you fixed it, you know what I mean. There was ways to fix it that it did stay up. Just the same as anything, you know, rules are made to be broken.¹⁰⁰

Despite the fact that she did not like the hairnet, Linda explained that it was not in her nature to rebel against management. She was happy to have her first job and did not want to do anything to upset anyone.¹⁰¹ Millie remembered that she removed her hairnet quickly when she left the plant. She explained that some of the girls may have been concerned about their appearance in the hairnets: "Well I suppose your appearance. There were a lot of young girls feeling, "oh this is ucky." But no I didn't mind it. I put it on. But I saw, we would take them off very quickly when we left. You know, that type of thing."¹⁰² When asked if everyone followed the rule and wore them, Joyce explained:

Yeah, yeah. No one seemed to care. Well you never seen anyone up there that you cared for so. You didn't worry about. Could have been like ----. See somebody comin', man, we could take it off. But we didn't [*laughs*] No you had to leave 'em on. Only time we took 'em off is when we went out for dinner. Even for our break we'd leave 'em on because it was no good taking them off and then on again. Wasn't worth your while for 15 minutes so, anyway. Pretty funny.¹⁰³

Many of the women did not like wearing the hairnets but they would leave them on when they went on break. Although Joyce's chargehand made sure to remove her hairnet when a man entered their department, the other workers could not be bothered.

Cleanliness and the wearing of hairnets were important to prevent contamination of the chocolates and candies. In addition, the official policy stated that workers were not permitted to wear any jewellery "except person with pierced ears may wear a band only

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Linda, 8 November, 2011.

¹⁰² Interview with Millie, 19 October, 2011.

¹⁰³ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

without drops.”¹⁰⁴ This rule was meant to prevent foreign objects from getting packed along with the products as well as for the safety of the women who were working near machinery. Despite this rule, many of the women reported that they wore jewellery to work and were never told to remove it. Some photos of women working at Moir’s in the early 1960s feature women wearing large earrings, watches and rings.¹⁰⁵ Like many of the rules discussed in the previous chapters, whether or not the dress code was enforced depended on the chargehands and supervisors in each department. Dorothy followed the no jewellery rule but maintained that some of the other women did not:

Oh yes, you would see the odd one. Nothing was said to that person. And it’s like different things that you would see letting go by. And there was always a certain amount that could do anything. Yeah¹⁰⁶

Although the women were not supposed to wear jewellery, Dorothy believed that some of the chargehands and supervisors would let some workers get away with breaking the rule. Other women had supervisors who told them to remove their jewellery. Muriel remembered that she always wore rings to work. But others maintained that their supervisors would ask them to remove jewellery. Lois recalled that she would put her rings in her pocket while she was at work:

Yeah. Well some of us would try it I think. But I remember putting them in my pocket, you know. But I think if the bosses saw it, [*laughs*] I think they would mention it to ya. They were pretty good at watchin’, you know. Maybe for safety. But I never wore all my good ones, no. I wouldn’t wear them there because I could lose them.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ “Notice,” written by a personnel manager at Moir’s in 1961, Moirs Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1870, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁵ In Image #134, shown earlier, two of the women are wearing watches. In Image #111, each of the dippers is wearing earrings. Similarly, Image #110 found below shows one young woman wearing large earrings and a watch.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Dorothy, 5 October, 2011.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Lois, 29 November, 2011.

Lois did not want to wear her good jewellery to work because she worried she would lose them. For Lois, good jewellery was reserved for wear outside of working hours.

Fig. 4.5: “Finished Chocolate Centres being Inspected on the Assembly Line,” c. 1960.



Photographed by Harry Cochrane, Chronicle Herald. Image from the Moir's Limited fonds, MG 3, vol. 1976-332, Image # 110, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Although some of the women wore jewellery while they were at work. Others stopped because they had close calls while working with machinery. Verna stopped wearing rings after one she was wearing got caught in the belt:

I never wore a ring [*laughs*] you're not supposed to wear rings or earrings. Some of them did. Took the chance. But if you're leaning over machine, what does a machine do? Grab it right? Oh no, I don't know how foolish they were but I know I

wasn't going to take a chance like that again. No, but that's the closest. And I was there for five years, it wasn't until then.¹⁰⁸

Margaret also had a ring caught in a machine but maintained that she was never warned against wearing jewellery:

When I was putting a roll of something on I don't remember exactly but I got jammed it some way or another and had broke the top of my ring. That we weren't told to take off. We were only told probably the end of the 70s about jewellery. When, when again, the things started bein', how can I say, bein' implemented, rules were being implemented then. When safety became awareness. Back in the 60s you didn't hear of anybody getting hurt or anything happening sort of. But then when the 70s came you went to the other factory that's when things started changing. Like you weren't allowed to wear this or that or anything else.¹⁰⁹

Margaret worked at Moir's for over forty years and explained that safety conditions changed greatly after the plant moved to its new location in Dartmouth.

When asked about footwear, most of the women emphasized the importance of comfort. June never wore heels to work and remember that she wore "just a sneaker. Flat shoe something comfortable. Something comfortable."¹¹⁰ Linda explained that during the same period she worked at Moir's she frequently wore platforms and high heels but never remembered wearing them while she was at the factory.¹¹¹ Lois explained that she only wore sneakers to work and only wore heels if she was going to a dance. She also recalled that some women would wear high heels to the plant but would change into sneakers before they started their shift.¹¹²

Although most of the women interviewed preferred to be comfortable rather than look fashionable at work, Muriel explained that she often wore high heels when she went

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Verna, 3 November, 2011.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Margaret, 8 December, 2011.

¹¹⁰ Interview with June, 3 October, 2011.

¹¹¹ Interview with Linda, 8 November, 2011.

¹¹² Interview with Lois, 29 November, 2011.

to work. When asked if she ever experienced pain from standing all day at work, Muriel answered:

Not really. I used to sometimes, I'd wear these high heels like this [*shows a few inches with fingers*] [*laughs*] And I'd stand in them all day. I mean sometimes when I was on the Kiss machine I'd go from seven 'til three and then sometimes about five to three they'd come and they'd say, "Well the other girl didn't show up. So can you work 'til eleven?" So I'd say, "Yeah sure." So they'd bring me a sandwich and a drink and I would work until eleven o'clock. And then walk home.

(In high heels?)

I was young it didn't bother me.¹¹³

(And you said you wore high heels, did a lot of the women wear?)

Oh some of them did, the younger ones yeah.

(And they didn't bother you?)

No. I walked everywhere in high heels.

(Wow. Did you wear them because of how they looked?)

I just liked them. The little baby doll toe on them and everything, ya know.

[*laughs*]¹¹⁴

Muriel did not have a problem working all day in high heels. She enjoyed they way they looked and did not find them uncomfortable.

Moir's did not have any official rules regarding makeup but the women developed their own unofficial standards regarding what kinds of makeup should be worn to work and who should be wearing it. In the 1950s *Chatelaine* had makeover contests. These contests were extremely popular and showed women across the country "the importance of eye makeup, foundation cream, and a good haircut."¹¹⁵ Beauty products were important to many working-class women in the post-war years. But to some of the women working at Moir's, there was a large difference between a good appearance and an over-done one and beauty norms depended on a woman's age and marital status.

¹¹³ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

¹¹⁵ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 199.

Verna recalled that she used to work with an older woman who wore a lot of make-up (the same woman who wore only a slip under her smock.) According to Verna the woman was made fun by her co-workers for her behaviour:

But she used to be one that wear earrings and she used to wear makeup way beyond her years, you know? She used big red lip stick you don't even use red lip stick after a certain age. She had to be in her 60s maybe 70s. She used to curl her hair up all she looked kinda nice you know for her age. But you know.

(Did the girls often wear makeup to work?)

No they used to make fun of her for wearing so much makeup because you don't wear garbage makeup. She used to paint the colour, you know like some people shave their eyebrows, that was her business. But she'd put, you know, black real, black can you imagine? When you're that age? And you know why you don't, people never mind you they really don't. When you get older not only your hair changes but the pigment of your skin changes. You lose that resilience that you had, you know, in your skin. And it goes with it and if you wear garbage makeup, you only make yourself look clownish. She looked clownish. But she wasn't easy to get along with she was kind of snappy you know. That was her way. But she always claimed to be from pretty rich people. But she wouldn't be working at the factory [*laughs*] I don't think, not usually, anyway.

(Did she work there a long time?)

Oh she wear big fancy rings and I don't know if they were dollar store quality but they did flash a bit. So we, they used to. They used to say "Are you going to see the Queen?" All that stuff, you know. And, you know, like you do. Picking, making fun of an older one that's all. Did she what?

(Did she work there for a long time?)

Oh yes. She was one of the older. We always had a problem with the older girls, you had that everywhere you go. Seniority. Girls that were older. "Oh well we got the say so..." Whatever the amount the candy was they always had that kind of thing over us. The older ones always had more respect than we had...

(And so the other girls didn't really wear makeup and do their hair?)

Oh yes they did.¹¹⁶

Verna believed that her co-worker was too old to be wearing the type of make-up that she did. Additionally, Verna and the other women who made fun of their co-worker, believed that she was attempting to look more wealthy than she was through her make-up and jewellery. Verna and her co-workers saw this woman's makeup and jewellery as an affront to their own social status. Her desire to appear wealthy offended the girls who

¹¹⁶ Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

believed that if this woman were truly wealthy she would not be working with them in a factory. Verna also recalled one of her co-workers coming into the plant every day with her hair in pin curlers.¹¹⁷ Although the make-up worn by the older woman was seen as a problem to Verna and her co-workers, the young woman wearing pin curlers was considered acceptable behaviour. Moir's management dictated what was appropriate dress and grooming for the workplace through its dress code policy. However, the women developed their own standards of appropriate workplace presentation and attempted to reinforce these presentations in one another. When a woman put on airs, like the one in this story, the other women were offended because their own identities as factory workers were perceived to be under attack.

The cosmetics industry stressed the importance of make-up and proper personal hygiene when trying to attract a male partner. Joyce described how her chargehand would reapply make-up whenever a man stopped by their department:

So I don't think, poor -----, she was one of our bosses she used to come runnin' down, we used to have fun with her. ----- was never married and she last I heard she was in ----- livin'. But she knew there was a man comin' up on the floor you'd see her over there with a comb and a mirror and it would brushin' her hair and it would putting lipstick on and we'd all get laughin' at her and she'd laugh with us, she didn't care. [*laughs*]

(So was it kind of considered an occasion when a man would come into the department?)

Apparently, it was for her. She was lookin' for a man I think [*laughs*] I don't know. We used to have more fun. Poor old ----- . But we used to get more kick out of her and she'd come over talkin' to us and sayin' things. And we'd say "sooner or later - ---- you'll get a man, we're sure." And you didn't have to care what you said to her and she didn't care. [*laughs*]¹¹⁸

To Joyce, who was married, applying make-up and looking attractive to her male co-workers was not a priority. She believed that her chargehand saw the use of make-up as a

¹¹⁷ Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

way to attract male attention and a possible future husband. Although the women in Joyce's department teased their chargehand, their jokes seemed to be more good natured than those made in Verna's department.

Conclusion

In the post-war era, workplace dress codes were dictated by safety regulations and societal values surrounding appropriate dress for women. At times, these two forces were at odds and compromises over dress codes were made by employers and female employees. The women working at Moir's were responsible for accomplishing their assigned tasks as well as maintaining an appearance that was deemed appropriate by the formal rules set out by management and the informal norms established by the women themselves. This cultural body work occurred both at work where women obeyed or disobeyed the dress code and at home where the women washed their smocks. The dress code at Moir's disallowed the wearing of many accessories and the use of products that societal norms attached to the proper image of a feminine woman. Appearing feminine was important to some of the workers but many of the women interviewed expressed the importance of comfort while working. Many women added layers to stay warm, wore comfortable footwear and did not bother with their hair and make-up. Still others choose to wear high heels, pins in the hair and make-up on their faces. Cleanliness was of the utmost importance in a confectionary factory and many of the women took pride in a clean appearance. Feelings of pride and shame had a strong influence over the women's workplace dress and behaviour. Managing these feelings were an important part of the women's occupation.

Many of the women broke some of the dress code rules at one time or another while working at Moir's. However, the cultural beauty norms established within the plant pressured the women to comply with certain aspects of the dress code while ignoring others. Cultural body work was an important part of the women's jobs. When the women disobeyed the dress code, it was motivated in part by the women's own standards for beauty norms within the plant. Some of the interviewees expressed awareness of their social position as factory workers and reinforced the behaviour and appearance they deemed appropriate for a working-class woman in the post-war era. The women were proud of their status and were quick to disparage co-workers who put on airs or acted as though they were better than factory work. People perform cultural body work not only while on the job but in virtually all of their interactions. Similarly, when a woman goes to work she cannot separate her paid labour from her reproductive body work. The following chapter will demonstrate the added challenges faced by women in the post-war era when separating reproductive body work from paid labour was made even more difficult by limited resources for working wives and mothers.

Chapter 5: Reproductive Body Work

Married women participated in the paid labour force for a variety of reasons. In the case of many married working-class women, working to supplement a husband's income was essential to the survival of the family. Still other women were divorced, separated or widowed and needed to provide for themselves and at times dependent children. Historian Joan Sangster maintains that in the post-war era "definitions of need were changing."¹ In order to acquire funds for new household items, many married women entered the labour force. In some families, "[w]orking wives were another strategy to increase purchasing power."² Veronica Strong-Boag also asserts that "[w]omen's work in the labour market regularly represented an investment in a more domestic future."³ In some cases, married women's labour force participation meant an increased standard of living that had come to be expected by many in the prosperous

¹ Joan Sangster, "Doing Two Jobs: The Wage-Earning Mother, 1945-1970," in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 101.

² Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 6.

³ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-60," *Canadian Historical Review* 72, 4 (1991): 480.

post-war era. However, the age of a woman's children was another determinate of whether or not it was considered socially acceptable for a married woman to remain in the paid labour force. Although it was at times considered acceptable for childless wives, or mothers of older children to remain in or re-enter the work force, it was often considered inappropriate for mothers of young children to continue to work for pay unless it was motivated by absolute financial necessity.

As working mothers entered the labour force at increased rates, the need for public childcare resources was left unsupported. By the mid-twentieth century, women began returning to the paid labour force after their children had reached a certain age. Gail Brandt examines women's labour force participation in a cotton mill in Valleyfield, Quebec between 1910 and 1950. She finds that the women's labour force participation shifts from a two-stage life cycle, in which the women work only until they are married, to a three-stage life cycle, in which the women work after their children had reached a certain age.⁴ Susan Householder Van Horn reports that in the United States in the 1950s most working mothers were returning to work only once all of their children were at least twelve years old. However, by 1960, an increased proportion of working mothers returned to work when their children were between six and twelve years old.⁵ Although increasing numbers of wives and mothers were entering the paid labour force, government policies to ensure proper public day care services for children were not implemented until 1966. The need for day care services peaked in the post-war era when working mothers' employment rose dramatically. However, day care services only

⁴ Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "'Weaving it together': Life Cycle and the Industrial Experience of Female Cotton Workers in Quebec, 1910-1950," *Labour /Le Travail* 7 (Spring 1981): 120.

⁵ S.H. Van Horn, *Women, Work, and Fertility, 1900-1986* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 147.

became accessible in the 1970s when Canadian employment rates fell.⁶ The reality of these women's labour force participation was in direct opposition to middle-class ideals of women's important domestic role. Joan Sangster summarizes this conflict when she states: "The discrepancy between women's important role in the labour force and the persisting antipathy to married women's wage work foreshadowed a crucial contradiction: changing economic structures were still intertwined with a resilient patriarchal ideology."⁷ Working mothers' need for childcare began to gain recognition at the end of the 1960s but the 1950s represent a period of continuity rather than change in the lives of working-class mothers. Although the Second World War is sometimes described as establishing women's place in the paid labour force, the lack of childcare and other reproductive labour resources available to wives and working mothers in the post-war era was consistent with the pre-war era.

Reproductive Body Work

Historian Cynthia Comacchio explains that in early twentieth-century Canada, men and women's bodies were defined in terms of their ability both to produce and to reproduce.⁸ These gendered ideals were further emphasized in the post-war era with "a renewed glorification of the home and woman's place in it"⁹ Although women were considered primarily responsible for the home and caring for children, as we have seen, wives and mothers were entering the labour force at increased rates. This development

⁶ Alvin Finkel, "Even the Little Children Cooperated: Family Strategies, Childcare Discourse, and Social Welfare Debates 1945-1975," *Labour/Le Travail* 36 (Fall 1995): 93.

⁷ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 223.

⁸ Cynthia Comacchio, "Mechanomorphy: Science, Management, and "Human Machinery" in Industrial Canada, 1900-45," *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 49.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

blurred the separation of women's productive and reproductive roles within the family and workplace.

Reproductive body work is defined by Shilling as any act done to ensure “a minimally functioning physical self.”¹⁰ Shilling explains that reproductive body work has long been associated with domestic labour. However, he asserts that reproductive body work is comprised of tasks performed by both genders. These include actions such as personal grooming or visiting a doctor. Shilling recognizes that women have traditionally been associated with domestic labour but believes that the other characteristics of reproductive body work cannot be easily divided according to gender.¹¹ Although reproductive body work can and does encompass many actions and habits performed by both genders, in the post-war era care of young children and a specific range of daily domestic chores were believed to be a woman's responsibility.¹² These gendered responsibilities therefore had a continuing effect on how a woman managed her work and home life and prevented a real separation of the two. Historian Kathleen Canning explains that women's labour reflects the “hybrid character” of women's bodies.¹³ When women work for wages, their bodies experience the combined effects of both paid and unpaid labour. It is therefore impossible to completely separate a woman from her

¹⁰ Chris Shilling, *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society* (London: SAGE, 2005), 74.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Meg Luxton explains that women's domestic responsibilities did not decrease when they enter the paid labour force. Instead, women were burdened with a double day. Luxton cites a study from 1973 based on interviews with 340 couples from the Vancouver area. The study found that women working for pay spent approximately twelve hours less on domestic chores per week compared to full-time housewives. However, women working for pay spent more of their weekend hours performing domestic chores and sacrificed their leisure time to meet the demands of their two jobs. Luxton also points out that whether or not a woman was employed had little effect on the amount of domestic labour performed by her husband. See Meg Luxton, *More than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home* (Toronto, Ont: Women's Press 1980), 180-187.

¹³ Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class & Citizenship* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006), 138.

reproductive body work. Canning uses the example of birthing a child on the factory floor to demonstrate this point.¹⁴ Although birthing a child while at work is not an everyday event, it is common for women go to work while pregnant or menstruating. Additionally, because working mothers are often charged with childcare duties, if a child is sick or a babysitter quits the mother is expected to leave her work to take care of her primary responsibilities. The 1950s represented a period of continuity in which working women remained primarily in charge of the domestic aspects of reproductive body work despite their increased entry into the paid labour force.

Attitudes surrounding working mothers in the post-war era were mixed. Some people continued to believe that if women were not home to care for their children, the children's wellbeing would suffer. Sangster explains that some opponents to working mothers "drew on a broader current of mother-blaming."¹⁵ They believed that children left without their mother's care would be unruly and possibly delinquent. Additionally, some magazine articles warned against undermining the established notions of femininity and masculinity. To many, a married woman working would upset the delicate balance of married life.¹⁶ Strong-Boag conducted interviews, circulated questionnaires, and received correspondence from twenty-six women and one man who formerly lived in the suburbs of Ontario in 1945 to 1960. She reports that some women believed married women's labour force participation was at times due to financial need. One of Strong-Boag's interview participants explained that the wives of blue-collar workers typically had no

¹⁴ Ibid., 138.

¹⁵ Sangster, "Doing Two Jobs," 104.

¹⁶ Ibid.

choice but to continue working after they had children.¹⁷ The interview participant went on to say that her doctor was a woman who had four children. She believed that no one “felt negative about her [the doctor’s] role.”¹⁸ Although this interview participant did not disapprove of her doctor’s decision to work, another argument against working mothers in the post-war era was the belief that many women worked in order to afford unnecessary extras. Religious leaders criticized the consumerist climate of the time and many expressed the belief that only the small portion of working mothers in true financial need should participate in wage labour.¹⁹ Expecting families to go without televisions and new appliances may have seemed logical to the opponents of married women’s labour force participation but such views were increasingly out of step with expectations of a normal standard of living.²⁰

Even one of the more progressive voices in the debate over mothers working outside the home, Dr. Marion Hilliard, expressed her views in such a way as to put reproductive labour first. In 1957, Dr. Hilliard argued, in her path-breaking book *A Woman Doctor Looks at Love and Life* that women, regardless of marital status, should work. She asserts that it is only through work that a woman reaches her full potential.²¹ However, Dr. Hilliard warns against mothers’ working for a pay cheque alone. She

¹⁷ Veronica Strong-Boag, “‘Their Side of the Story’: Women’s Voices from Ontario Suburbs, 1945-60,” in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 65.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Sangster, “Doing Two Jobs,” 105.

²⁰ Paul Rutherford effectively demonstrates Canadians’ rising standard of living in the post-war era through the use of the 1951 Census. He explains that “half of Canadian households had an electric or gas stove (up from 40 per cent), about the same number of refrigerator (up from 21 per cent), two-fifths a vacuum cleaner (up from 24 per cent), three-fifths a telephone (up from 40 per cent), and a whopping three-quarters a ‘powered washing machine.’” Across Canada, household television ownership rose from 10 per cent in 1953 to 82.5 per cent in 1961. Television ownership was most common in Central Canada but by 1967 nine out of ten households in Atlantic Canada had a television. See Paul Rutherford, *When Television was Young: Primetime Canada 1952-1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

²¹ Marion Hilliard, *A Woman Doctor Looks at Love and Life* (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1957), 104-105.

believes that women should find an occupation, cause, or hobby that they find emotionally fulfilling and intellectually stimulating. Dr. Hilliard warns against mothers of young children heading out to work, rushing their children off to a babysitter and returning home in the evenings exhausted. She also warns against mothers' staying home with young children, believing a mother's presence at home is necessary, only to pay more attention to a television or radio.²² Dr. Hilliard advocated women's labour force participation, but like its opponents she warned against a desire for too many consumer goods.²³

The Moir's women's decision to leave or remain in the paid labour force after having children was largely based on financial considerations. Some of the interviewees were single mothers who worked at Moir's even when their children were very young. Others continued working after they had children to supplement their husbands' income. Still others stopped working at the factory after they had their first child. Joyce did not intend to keep working after she had children and saw her job at Moir's as a way to contribute to her husband's income so that they could purchase items they would not be able to afford otherwise:

Then there was no such thing as a minimum wage I don't think. And I can't even remember but I just remember bringing home \$31 a week. That was after your income tax and unemployment and stuff was taken out. Boy that's a lot of money I said, "I think I'll buy myself a TV" [*laughs*] I don't know how long I had to save up for it, and it was only black and white TV at that time. So I bought that and so I said to -----, "I'll put my money in that to help you out a bit." Because he worked with the Provincial government. He was there 35 years as a painter.²⁴

²² Ibid., 110.

²³ Ibid., 108.

²⁴ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011. In December 1952, the average cost of a television set was \$425.20. See Rutherford, *When Televisions was Young*, 50.

For Joyce, working at Moir's was considered more of a choice than an absolute necessity. Even though she planned to quit her job when she became pregnant with her first child, her job gave her the financial freedom to establish her home the way she wanted it to be. Margaret McCallum asserts that a woman's decision to stay at home or enter the work force was largely dependent on her husband's income.²⁵ Joyce and her husband planned to live on his salary once they started their family, but before that happened they welcomed the extra income she earned at Moir's.

Although women had few opportunities in the primary industries that dominated the Atlantic Provinces' economies, they were still entering the workforce at an increased rate in feminized occupations. In order to meet the changing needs of working women, the Canadian Government established the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labour in September 1954. A trend that was of particular import to the Women's Bureau was the increased rate of married women's labour force participation. In 1956, the Women's Bureau conducted a survey of married women working for pay in eight major Canadian cities, among which Halifax was included.²⁶ The Women's Bureau believed that women's labour force participation was a not a passing trend and understood that their involvement would only increase over time. The survey had five goals: to estimate married women's occupational status, patterns of work, relate patterns of work to family

²⁵ Margaret E. McCallum, "Separate Spheres: The Organization of Work in a Confectionery Factory: Ganong Bros., St. Stephen, New Brunswick," *Labour/Le Travail* 24 (Fall 1989), 78.

²⁶ These eight cities were: Halifax, Quebec City, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver. See *Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Canadian Cities* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1958).

and household responsibilities, reasons for working, estimate the extent of occupational mobility among married women.²⁷

Henry Bourgeois was one of the researchers who conducted the survey in Halifax. He compiled a final report of the survey's findings for his Master of Social Work thesis at the Maritime School of Social Work. Fifty-one Haligonian women agreed to participate in Bourgeois survey. Of those fifty-one women, 39 were married, 4 widowed, 7 separated and 1 divorced. Twenty-five of the women had dependent children, one had a college-aged child and the remaining women had no children.²⁸ Working mothers were challenged by societal beliefs that mothers should remain home with their young children. In addition, these women encountered criticism in their own homes. The report found that eleven of the forty children disapproved of their mother's working.²⁹ After reporting the statistics from the study, Bourgeois goes on to discuss the dangers of working mothers not giving their families and children enough attention and the negative consequences that may occur in adulthood.³⁰

Childcare Options for Working Mothers

In the 1950s and 1960s, married women's labour force participation was still controversial. This was especially true of working mothers. During the Second World War, day nurseries arose as an experiment and temporary necessity. However, in the post-war period day care was not considered an option to free up female labour. Instead,

²⁷ Henry Bourgeois, "A Report on the Survey of Married Women who are Working for Pay in Halifax," (MA Thesis, Maritime School of Social Work, 1956), 5.

²⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

²⁹ Ibid., 25.

³⁰ Ibid.

other family members were expected to care for children while a mother was at work.³¹ In the post-war era, the concept of day care was laden with many negative connotations. Day care was understood as a welfare service and many people believed it should only be used out of financial necessity. Making day care available to working mothers was believed to undermine the male-breadwinner ideology.³² Sangster asserts that many people were uncomfortable with the idea of day care not only because it upset the gendered division of labour but because it “question[ed] the dominant story that women’s wage labour [was] a ‘choice,’ or luxury, not a necessity or a basic social right.”³³

In Halifax, the development of a childcare system was stalled by the prevailing belief that mothers of young children should not be working. Day care was seen as necessary for single mothers but only because it cut down on “social assistance costs and welfare dependency.”³⁴ Despite women’s increased labour force participation in post-war Nova Scotia, the first official legislation pertaining to day care occurred with the 1967 Day Nurseries Act. The Act created new requirements for day care facilities and caused some centres to close because they could not afford to make the necessary changes put forth by the Act. Before this time, day care facilities existed in unofficial terms and mothers typically relied on personal arrangements made with family members or babysitters.³⁵ By 1968, there were three non-profit day care centres in Nova Scotia. These services were partially funded by a cost-sharing agreement between municipal and

³¹ Sangster, “Doing Two Jobs,” 115.

³² *Ibid.*, 118.

³³ *Ibid.*, 120.

³⁴ Suzanne Morton, “From Infant Homes to Daycare: Child Care in Halifax,” in *Mothers of the Municipality: Women, Work and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax*, ed. Judith Fingard and Janet Vey Guildford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 184.

³⁵ Sue Wolstenholme, *Development of Day Care in Nova Scotia: A Socio-Political Analysis* (MEd Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1986), 23.

provincial governments for families receiving welfare. This resulted in an association with day care and welfare and this stigma persisted for many years.³⁶ The “Survey of Married women who are working for pay in Halifax” revealed that, of the fifty-one women interviewed, only one brought her child to a day nursery. Bourgeois reports that although the women surveyed discussed day nurseries as reasonable options for childcare, “[a] large number saw them as a facility for other women but not for themselves.”³⁷ Even before childcare services became officially associated with the welfare system in Nova Scotia, day care had negative connotations in the eyes of many, including many working mothers.

Due to the lack of public childcare options in Halifax in the post-war era, working mothers were forced to find their own childcare arrangements. Five of the women interviewed for this study had children while they worked at Moir’s and two of these were single mothers. Only one woman brought her child to a day nursery. The other women had childcare arrangements with family members or hired a babysitter. These situations presented the working mothers with many challenges. For these women, sharing childcare responsibilities with other family members was typically a reliable arrangement. But it also meant returning the favour and helping those family members with their own dependent children. Leaving a child with a babysitter was a reasonable option if the women could afford it but it also presented its own unique challenges. A babysitter could quit without notice leaving a mother with little choice but to miss work to care for her children. Mary was married with three children, she explained that she was forced to leave her job at Moir’s after her babysitter quit:

³⁶ Ibid., 24.

³⁷ Bourgeois, “A Report on the Survey of Married Women,” 15.

I started at Moirs in 69 and I worked from 69 'til 74. And my babysitter sort of up and quit on me so I had to quit too. So. Yeah and I had three children so I was home for a few years babysitting, looking after my kids.³⁸

Mary decided to stay home with her children after her babysitter quit because she was unable to find new childcare. Many working mothers faced similar challenges in their attempts to find appropriate care for their children. In this way, a women's employment could rest precariously on childcare options that could change at a moment's notice.

Marion had one child and would take her to a babysitter's home while she was at work.

When asked if she was ever called away from work because her daughter was sick

Marion explained: "I was called once. I was called home. The woman looking after her I think she had a nervous breakdown. And I was called home to come and get her [her daughter]. In the afternoon."³⁹ Like Mary, Marion had little notice when her babysitter

was no longer able to care for her daughter. Unlike Mary, Marion was able to make new arrangements and keep her job at Moir's. Without an established, regulated daycare system, working mothers had to rely on babysitters or family members. At times, if a babysitter quit, new arrangements could be made quickly without losing too much pay or even their jobs. But other times a working mother would have no choice but to leave her job and stay home to care for her children.

Like many of the women interviewed by Sangster, several of the women working at Moir's shared childcare duties with other family members. Although these situations allowed the women to avoid paying for a babysitter, they often involved caring for other family member's children. Millie was a single mother and she shared childcare duties with her mother. Millie's mother would look after her daughter while she was at work in

³⁸ Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

³⁹ Interview with Marion, 5 October, 2011.

the evenings and Millie would look after her younger brother for her mother during the day while her mother was at work. Millie explained that although this arrangement was reliable, she was often very tired from constant childcare and work responsibilities:

Oh yes, yes. Pretty good, as soon as my mother got home I'd lay down too for a while. I managed, I'll put it that way. Because I had a sister-in-law that just lived across the street and she knew the circumstances and sometimes I would just take -- ---- over there and I'd lie on the sofa and she would play with her cousin. I would have a sleep that way sometimes. And I had my brother with me. ----- is a nurse so she was pretty good, she was pretty good to help me out. Yes. But it was, I was tired a lot. I can say that. I was tired. Because I had more responsibility. I had it on my own and I worried about my mother and my brother so it all, I was really tired, yes.⁴⁰

Millie was grateful to have help from her mother and other family members. Sharing childcare responsibilities allowed both Millie and her mother to work and provide for their children. It also meant that Millie was constantly performing paid or unpaid labour to support her family. Without accessible daycare facilities Millie was forced to make her own childcare arrangements. Her description of her own feelings of being tired demonstrates the physical difficulties she faced in her double day.

When asked about the childcare arrangements of the other women at Moir's, Millie explained:

Yes their mom and dads were always there. Or a sister. Always family. It seemed to me like everybody had family, they weren't completely alone. I had family. I wasn't completely alone. Everybody was helping everybody. It wasn't like we had nobody around but ourselves, me and the baby. No, no it was a lot of interaction.⁴¹

Many working mothers received help with childcare from family members. Like Millie, Dorothy was a single mother and shared childcare responsibilities with her mother. When she first had her son, Dorothy would take him with her when she worked in people's

⁴⁰ Interview with Millie, 19 November, 2011.

⁴¹ Interview with Millie, 19 October, 2011.

homes. Eventually, Dorothy's mother offered to take care of her son during the week and Dorothy began working at Moir's:

So now in between the time that in I was working at Kinley's drug store, around that time I got married and my marriage didn't work out, only for about three years. And so eventually I had a son, a boy. And so I went out working from house to house with the child. You could do that in those days. And things weren't as easy as what they are today but I got through it. But then my mother, father, my father was still living and they said well you leave [your son] here and you go out to work. And which made this much easier for me because I could go. This is when I started at Moir's. Again it was in between there but I could go at Moir's. And so I was working there I got my holidays and I got the weekends and still no transportation and no car. And there wasn't many cars down around yet then. And things were getting better. And so you always had to pay to go home.⁴²

Dorothy's family lived outside of Halifax and she would travel to go see her son on the weekends. Dorothy's father died when her son was still young, and she and her mother were each single mothers with young sons. After her father passed away, Dorothy's mother moved into the city, and they lived together with their children.

Only one woman, Muriel, brought her son to a day nursery. Unlike the Mary and Marion who had some negative experience with babysitters, Muriel explained that the day nursery where she brought her son provided her with reliable and affordable childcare. When asked if it was difficult to work at Moir's when she had a child, Muriel explained:

No, because just up the street from [Moir's] on Brunswick Street was a place called Jost Mission. And I used to just drop him off there in the morning and when I got off at three o'clock I went and picked him up. Very convenient. It was only \$4 a week. For them to babysit him.⁴³

Muriel recalled the Jost as having been run by two older women, a mother and daughter.

⁴² Interview with Dorothy, 28 September, 2011.

⁴³ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

Despite the negative connotations many Haligonians associated with daycare services, Muriel recalled the Jost Mission very positively.⁴⁴ By using this daycare, Muriel was able to work at Moir's without having to worry about making arrangements with family members.

It was difficult for working mothers to find childcare in the post-war era. Even if they had regular childcare arrangements, though, working mothers were sometimes left with little choice but to miss work to care for a sick child. Marion's daughter was born with a condition in her eyes and had to go to doctor's appointments frequently. Marion explained that her boss at Moir's understood her situation and she was allowed to leave work to take her daughter to the doctor: "But yeah, they didn't seem to mind. They understood. You know I said, "she has to be looked after" and so they didn't mind."⁴⁵

Although the bosses at Moir's displayed a paternalistic patience for at least some working mothers, many employers would not tolerate repeat absenteeism. Some employers refused to hire married women and working mothers because they believed they would leave their jobs to have children or miss work frequently to care for sick ones.⁴⁶

Although married women's labour force participation increased in the postwar period, many women planned to leave their jobs when they had children. As previously discussed, some women were forced to quit the paid labour force due to a lack of available childcare options. Still other married women, whose families could live on the husband's income, chose to leave work and stay home with their children. Joyce was

⁴⁴ For a detailed history of the Jost Mission see: Christina Simmons, "Helping the Poorer Sisters": The Women of the Jost Mission, Halifax, 1905-1945," *Acadiensis* 14, 1 (Autumn 1984): 3-27.; Renée Nicole Lafferty, "A Very Special Service" Day Care, Welfare and Child Development Jost Mission Day Nursery, Halifax 1920-1955" (MA Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1998).

⁴⁵ Interview with Marion, 5 October, 2011.

⁴⁶ Sangster, "Doing two Jobs," 109.

newly married when she started working at Moir's in 1953. She planned to continue working there until she got pregnant with her first child. However, it took Joyce much longer to get pregnant than she had anticipated and she ended up working at Moir's for ten years. She explained that she initially believed her job at Moir's to be temporary:

So we just went in there. Cause I said, "Well I didn't know how long I'd be workin'" Cause I had just got married and I said, "Well if I have children I won't be stayin'" So I was a stay home mum after that. I never went out to work. That's the only ten years I ever worked. [laughs] Sometimes I wish I had have gone takin' a hairdresser course I would have liked to but I don't know if I have any patience with it or not. Cause I can't do my own. [laughs] But anyway. That's too late now.⁴⁷

Joyce's job at Moir's provided she and her husband with an added income and allowed them to improve their standard of living. She knew that one day she wanted to be a stay at home mom, but she also enjoyed her work at Moir's and the interactions she had with her co-workers. Joyce left Moir's before she got pregnant and explained the difficulty of her decision:

Yes I don't know I was a long time making a decision I thought, "Should I leave?" Cause I wasn't pregnant or anything at that time and I thought, "Should I or should I keep goin'?" Then I just made up my mind. No, I'd had enough. [laughs] So probably if I had have went to a different job it would have been different maybe. But anyway it was a job when I first come to Halifax so I thought I'll fill in with anything for the time bein' but I never expected to stay ten years.⁴⁸

Joyce left Moir's because she decided she had "had enough" of factory work. Although this quote implies that she disliked her work, her earlier comments make it clear that she did have fun with her co-workers and enjoyed working in her department. She wondered about what her life would have been like if she had chosen another career path, such as hairdressing, but maintained that she always planned to be a stay at home mom. For

⁴⁷ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

⁴⁸ Interview with Joyce, 30 November, 2011.

Joyce, whose husband's salary was enough to support a family, working while raising children was not an attractive option.

Leisure Time

Leisure time is very important to a person's physical and emotional well-being. Leisure time and breaks inside the workplace can make employees' days pass more quickly and make their work appear less tiring and difficult. A lack of leisure time outside of work is a problem faced by many working women. Working mothers and wives struggled with the difficulties of a double day. After finishing a shift, women were expected to go home and care for husbands, children, or other family members. Whether or not a woman felt she had any or enough leisure time was largely dependent on her familial responsibilities. These responsibilities varied from preparing meals for husbands, children, and boarders or helping care for siblings. In 1980, Marianne Herzog effectively describes the difficulties faced by working mothers, familiar now as then, when she compares her own after-work routine to that of a co-worker who had children:

I can have a moan when I get into the kitchen, or I can ask for my back to be massaged. I can decide to eat first or to have a bath. But when Frau Schuster gets home she is faced with three children. She's not allowed to moan, the children want everything from her all over again. She hasn't got a bath, so the first thing she does is put her feet in a basin of water.⁴⁹

Herzog finds her job, in a factory in West Germany, extremely difficult but finds relief in the short hours after she returns to her apartment where she can relax and talk to her roommate. She believes that working mothers have the added difficulty of putting their own needs second to those of their children. The interviewees with children explained that they had very little social time. For the single mothers, socializing outside of work

⁴⁹ Marianne Herzog, *From Hand to Mouth: Women and Piece-Work* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1980), 79.

was limited to family or church-related interactions. The women interviewed who were childless and unmarried while working at Moir's generally felt that they were able to maintain a fairly lively social life.

For a young, unmarried girl who had yet to have children, a factory job held the promise of increased financial independence. Linda recalled that she enjoyed her leisure time even more the summer she worked at Moir's because she had spending money. When asked if she ever did anything with the other women from Moir's outside of the factory, she explained: "No, no they were older. No most of them I think were family women and they were just too busy."⁵⁰ Although Linda developed friendly relationships with the women she worked with she did not socialize with them outside of working hours. Before she had children, Muriel believed her shift lent itself well to enjoying leisure time outside of working hours. She recalled that on evenings and weekends she would go for walks, go shopping or see a show.⁵¹ The working mothers generally reported little time for leisure activities. After she had her children, Mary explained that she had no social life: "I never socialized when I had kids. I never did nothing. I went nowhere, nothing. I never had a social life. I worked and came home looked after my house and my kids."⁵² Mary, like the working mother described by Herzog, experienced the strain of a double day.

Only two of the women interviewed for this study were single mothers while they worked at Moir's. These women found that they had little time for leisure activities because the time they spent outside of work was reserved for domestic chores and

⁵⁰ Interview with Linda, 8 November, 2011.

⁵¹ Interview with Muriel, 2 November, 2011.

⁵² Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

childcare duties. Dorothy explained that she did not attend many social events because she was busy taking care of her son and home:

Well on the weekends mostly had to stay home and do the house work and well we brought those two boys up and my mother worked and I worked and when they got older they were trained to do the same in the house as a girl. And they were very good at it. My son is a good cook. He's good at [it], both those boys were and they liked to bake and they did everything they, at that time we had a washer that with a wringer on the top of the washer and we would do the wash but they'd have to hang it out the next day.⁵³

The 1957 survey of married women working for pay found that many working mothers reported catching up on household chores on weekend. Many of these women had their children and husbands help with household chores.⁵⁴ Dorothy and her widowed mother worked together sharing domestic and childcare duties to ensure that they could each work. When their sons were old enough, they shared in the domestic chores. There is little scholarly evidence of husbands and male children helping with domestic chores, but for working-class families sharing duties was essential to maintaining the household. Although these duties were primarily the responsibility of women, in some instances men and male children helped too.⁵⁵

Millie and her mother also helped each other with domestic responsibilities. When asked to compare her school days to her working years, Millie explained that she did not have leisure time anymore:

No. No. Prior to that I used to bowl, play baseball, stockcar racing, paddle puff. That was before I got married. I was into a lot of things. Then after I got married

⁵³ Interview with Dorothy, 28 September, 2011.

⁵⁴ Department of Labour, *Survey of Married Women Working for Pay: In Eight Canadian Cities* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1958), 51, 54.

⁵⁵ The survey indicates that one working mother characterized running the household as "a family affair." The survey maintains that wives are still primarily responsible for household chores but explains that husbands and older children helped working wives "a good deal." However, the specific types of chores performed by husbands and children were not indicated. It is also important to recognize that men were often responsible for masculinised household chores. A few examples of masculinised chores are: mowing lawns, fixing cars, and taking out the garbage.

where it didn't work out I had a lot of responsibility, my daughter and I was trying to help my mother with my brother. My brother was mentally challenged and so I just devoted that part of my life at that time and the age I was to my mother, to help her and what not. Yes.⁵⁶

With the help of their mothers and other immediate family members, Millie and Dorothy were able to manage working at Moir's and raising a child. They each recognized that they had little social time and understood that at that point in their lives they had to focus on raising their children and helping their mothers.

In order to supplement their income, working-class families often took in boarders well in the post-war era. This meant that the women of the household were responsible not only for the domestic needs of their families, but also for those of their boarders. While Joyce was working at Moir's, she and her husband took in boarders. Some of the boarders were family members, such as Joyce's uncle and her husband's brother. Joyce's mother also worked at Moir's and lived with them and she helped Joyce prepare meals.⁵⁷

Joyce explained the challenges of juggling work and the needs of the boarders:

And then like I say I didn't have my children 'til after I was out of there so that made a difference too. And with having the boarders and stuff, I had to put up lunches and do dinner and supper and now when I think about it I can never even think of it.

(Yeah, how did you manage to kind of juggle everything?)

Yeah, I'd come home at night I'd have to get supper for them. I was usually home a little bit before them but I used to have to get things ready like the night before. Like my vegetables and things I'd cut them up and leave them sit in cold water and then when I come home I'd just change the water and put fresh water on them and a little salt and put them on to cook. But it was hard and making their lunches was the worst and breakfast. I had to get up and get breakfast and [*laughs*] but anyway. Like I say you do things, that when you get older you think, "I don't know, like how did I ever do that?" [*laughs*] But it's the age is the difference. Yeah, yeah. Yeah we had quite a few [*boarders*].⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Interview with Millie, 19 October, 2011.

⁵⁷ Interview with Joyce, 30 November, 2011.

⁵⁸ Interview with Joyce, 30 November, 2011.

Joyce was able to balance her domestic responsibilities and her work life but she believed that this was in part due to the fact that she did not yet have children. Although she believed it was possible to provide for boarders and still keep her job, she did not think she could manage to work once she had children.

Like Joyce, Dorothy rented rooms in her home. When asked why she did not apply to be a supervisor, she explained that she was too busy with her responsibilities at home:

Because you see in those days I had a rooming house and that rooming house people would tell me, “We don’t even know that that is a rooming house, it’s so quiet.” You know when people came to look at my rooms, I had a list for them on the paper and I made them read those rules, and they had to go by those rules. And there’s where, working at the same time I couldn’t go along with too much of anything because you know I was a very strict landlady and they had, the work was, the work wasn’t supervised in the way that I would have been doing it. From the supervisor right down. And so they were let get away with anything. Yeah.⁵⁹

Dorothy was a single mother and she also ran a rooming house to supplement her income. Taking on boarders added to the women’s domestic responsibilities and increased the total number of hours women worked in a day.

Popular debate surrounding working mothers emphasized the importance of women in the home and perpetuated the fear that children would be neglected and become delinquent without their mothers’ constant supervision. Some of the working mothers interviewed for this study struggled to find appropriate supervision for their children at a time when middle-class societal norms refused to recognize the need for regulated childcare services. Working wives and mothers also struggled with the strain of a double day. Although some women were able to share domestic chores with their mothers, children or other relatives, they still felt the exhaustion brought on by their dual

⁵⁹ Interview with Dorothy, 11 October, 2011.

responsibilities. Husbands' involvement in domestic chores rarely increased when a woman entered the paid labour force.⁶⁰ Furthermore, while many men believed they earned their leisure time by virtue of their breadwinning, working wives and mothers were not entitled to leisure time.⁶¹ Women's reproductive responsibilities did not end when they were at work. If a child was sick, had a doctor's appointment or a babysitter quit, a mother would have to leave work and see to her domestic responsibilities. Additionally, if a woman was pregnant or menstruating she had to manage the physical consequences of these states while on the job.

Pregnancy and Menstruation on the Job

The hybrid character of women's bodies meant that their reproductive body work occurred on and off the job. This presented challenges for the women physically and emotionally, and some employers were not sympathetic to these challenges. Sangster explains that in the 1950s and 1960s, employers still had the legal right to fire married and pregnant women. In addition to these rights, there was great social disapproval of pregnant women working. Sangster also asserts these prejudices varied across occupations and maintains that women working in white- and blue-collar jobs were generally permitted to keep their jobs after they married. However, married women with children were less tolerated.⁶² Medical professionals were concerned for the health and well-being of working women. But many doctors were against pregnant women working not for health and safety reasons, but because they believed that it was a woman's moral

⁶⁰ Luxton, *More than a Labour of Love*, 180.

⁶¹ Robert Rutherford, "Fatherhood and the Social Construction of Memory: Breadwinning and Male Parenting on a Job Frontier, 1945-1966," in *Gender and History in Canada*, ed. Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd, 1996), 364.

⁶² Sangster, "Doing Two Jobs," 109.

obligation to provide “consistent maternal care” to her children.⁶³ At this time, women’s reproductive responsibilities took precedence over what was often perceived as an illegitimate need for paid labour. In this way, working women’s struggle to balance their paid and unpaid domestic labour was not formally recognized.

Five of the women interviewed for this study had children while they worked at Moir’s, and others recalled co-workers talking about their husbands and children. In the post-war era, Moir’s does not appear to have fired women with husbands and children. Margaret never had any children, but she recalled other women worked well into their pregnancies:

And in those days, in those days, people worked ‘til they were 7 months pregnant. We had people work ‘til they were 9 months pregnant. And then you were out. You had your baby and then you were back to work in 6 weeks. They came back, they worked. There was never anything, you know what I mean? I don’t ever recall any, any major or any kind of what you would call accidents. Never.⁶⁴

Margaret was discussing workplace injuries and accidents when she brought up her recollection of women working far into their pregnancies. Margaret’s association of these women with a certain toughness is very much in line with cultural images of working-class women at the time. Sociologist Helen Lenskyj asserts that “working-class women were not expected to find menstruation, pregnancy or any other “diseases of women” as disabling as their more privileged counterparts.”⁶⁵ Working middle-class women in some professional occupations may have faced greater pressure to leave work earlier during pregnancy because of these views coupled with greater financial stability.

Much of the pressure to leave work were motivated by moral beliefs regarding mothers’ responsibilities in child rearing, but some of the aspects of assembly line work

⁶³ Ibid., 113.

⁶⁴ Interview with Margaret, 15 December, 2011.

⁶⁵ Helen Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport, and Sexuality* (Toronto, Ont: Women's Press, 1986), 26.

could cause health problems for pregnant women. Sociologist Miriam Glucksmann's explained that one of her co-workers was rushed to the hospital when she thought she was going into labour on the factory floor. However, the woman was not in labour. Her baby's head was stuck against her ribs and this is what caused the pain she believed to be contractions. The doctors warned her that she would need to move around so that the baby would not get stuck again. But her job forced her to sit all day. Ultimately, her only option was to stay in her current position or quit the plant.⁶⁶

Several of the women interviewed were pregnant at one time while they worked at Moir's. Although none of them experienced any serious complications with their pregnancies, they did express having felt discomfort while they worked. Marion remembered that she fainted at work on four or five occasions when she was pregnant with her daughter:

Yes. When I was pregnant for my daughter I used to faint on Mondays. I didn't know at the time what was wrong. So when I went down to the nurse, they took me to the nurse and she sent me home the first time. Second time I don't know. I think the second time I knew because I had gone to the doctor and I told her I said "I know what my problem is" She said, "this girl's just going to have to take a leave of absence." I said, "I know my problem" and I told her and I never got sick in the mornings but Monday mornings when I'd start work I'd pass out. So the doctor said it wasn't unusual, you know. Just one of those things with some women get morning sickness but I never got morning sickness. So I just laid down for awhile. They had a quiet room and I laid there for awhile and I went back to work.⁶⁷

Marion was able to rest after she fainted and then go back to work. Verna did not have any children while she worked at Moir's, but she remembered that some of the women

⁶⁶ Miriam Glucksmann, also known as Ruth Cavendish, *Women on the Line*. (London: Routledge, 2009), 120.

⁶⁷ Interview with Marion, 11 October, 2011.

would faint or be sick to their stomachs when they were at work. She believed that the smell of the chocolate would often trigger the women's morning sickness.⁶⁸

In addition to finding work a challenge while they were pregnant, some women also found it difficult to get to and from work. Mary explained that she used to have to walk from the corner of Morris Street and Dresden Row to the Moir's plant and back every shift. She found this walk especially tiring in the winter during her third pregnancy.⁶⁹ When asked if she found it difficult to work while she was pregnant, Mary recalled:

The hard [part] was sittin' on them stools and packin', right. It's hard on the back, even if you're not pregnant. It's a hard job. The back and my back today is still no good. Oh lord I can't do nothing with my back. It's very hard. I think you'd be, lots of times I'd have to get off and stand up and pack cause I found it so hard on my back to try to sit on the stool and reach for candy. You know this back and forth shit. Oh mercy no wonder I got sore shoulders [*laughs*] I got arthritis all through me right now so but that's what it's from every place I've worked. Laundry for 20 years, hard, very hard. Fish plant lifting boxes, 60, 70, 80 pound boxes of fish.⁷⁰

Mary continued to work at Moir's until she was six months pregnant. She had to leave when her sister-in-law and babysitter became pregnant and was longer able to babysit Mary's child.

Working-class women often feared being fired when employers found out they were married or pregnant. Sangster recounts one instance in which a woman working at a Quaker Oats plant in Peterborough, Ontario, concealed her pregnancy by wearing larger clothes and a girdle.⁷¹ Maternity leave was not available in the post-war era and many working-class women could not afford to stop working early in their pregnancies.

Financial need was often the primary reason women wished to continue working into the

⁶⁸ Interview with Verna, 2 November, 2011.

⁶⁹ Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

⁷⁰ Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

⁷¹ Sangster, "Doing Two Jobs," 111.

later months of their pregnancies. However, for some women, who intended to leave work once they had children, staying at a job for as long as possible could be motivated by the camaraderie in the workplace. Lois worked well into her first pregnancy when she was at Moir's. She was careful about who she told about her pregnancy because she believed she would get laid off if management found out:

Yeah, I think the law was seven months, I think. But they didn't know I was pregnant and I was very small and my smock covered, you know, I wasn't very big, you know. So they didn't know, oh my girl, some of the girls knew. But I never told any of the men or anything like that. Because I know they would lay me off. I never told, some of them knew that's all. But they never said anything. (How come you decided you wanted to stay on longer?) I enjoyed it there, you know? I had, I always had a good time. They were good people to work with, the kids, the girls I mean. You know. I enjoyed them.⁷²

Lois left Moir's after visiting the company doctor for the flu, and he told her she had to stop working. Before that point, the doctor did not know that she was still working. He assumed that she had stopped due to her pregnancy.⁷³ Lois continued working at Moir's well into her pregnancy because she enjoyed her work and did not want to stop working until it was absolutely necessary. For Lois, her desire to stay was influenced primarily by her love for her work and her co-workers. Lois never returned to Moir's after her first child was born. Eventually, when her children had reached school age, she took a job at a restaurant near her home. With this job, she was able to work and contribute to the household income, and her children were able to meet her at the restaurant after school and then go home with her. Although Lois recalled that she was not supposed to work past her seventh month of pregnancy, her small size allowed her to break this rule.

The hybrid character of women's bodies meant that they experienced both the effort of work and the demands of menstruation in combination. The demands of

⁷² Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

⁷³ Interview with Lois, 15 November, 2011.

menstruation have changed historically as technologies for its management have changed and as attitudes have changed. Historian Lara Freidenfelds asserts that in the 1940s and 1950s, women in the United States wanted to manage their menstruation in a “modern” way. This meant that women were permitted to discuss menstruation and the discomfort associated with it. This went against the former social norms surrounding menstruation that caused women to hide menstruation from everyone around them.⁷⁴ However, Freidenfelds maintains that this new approach represented “openness in carefully circumscribed locations and constrained language, just what is needed to support modern desire to make menstruation impinge as little as possible on people’s lives, and no more.”⁷⁵

The experience of menstruation, like the definition of femininity, was also classed. Although working-class women were supposed to be able to handle the alleged pain and discomfort associated with menstruation, doctors and specialist acknowledged absenteeism due to menstruation as a workplace problem. In 1942, Navy surgeon H.E. Billig developed exercises to stretch pelvic muscles to cut down on women’s absenteeism from the aircraft factory.⁷⁶ When she was interviewed for a factory job, Glucksmann was asked if she “suffered from period pains, varicose veins or eye strain.”⁷⁷ Glucksmann explained that at first she was unsure why she was asked this question. However, she learned that the women who did not already have these issues would develop them from

⁷⁴ Lara Freidenfelds, *The Modern Period: Menstruation in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 93.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷⁷ Glucksmann, *Women on the line*, 120.

working at the factory. Sitting all day caused the younger women to suffer from greater period pains.⁷⁸

At the turn of the twentieth century, medical professionals had mixed opinions regarding menstruation. Although menstruation was generally no longer viewed as an incapacitating disease, many doctors questioned whether women actually experienced any true pain or discomfort. Lenskyj asserts that doctor's scepticism surrounding menstrual pain implied that "either menstrual pain was imaginary, or women were so untrustworthy, so self-centred and frivolous that they continued pleasurable activities throughout the month but avoided unpleasant obligations on the excuse of menstruation."⁷⁹ In the early twentieth century, some doctors warned against exercise during menstruation believing that it would put a dangerous amount of strain on a women's uterus.⁸⁰ Lenskyj explains that by 1965, most doctors were encouraging women to engage in "wholesome exercise" during their periods.⁸¹ However, with these new recommendations came increased scrutiny on "menstrual excuses." Dorothy maintained that her period never affected her work but expressed her belief that some women may have used their periods as an excuse to get out of work, but she quickly corrected herself:

Oh not me. Not me, no. Not me. But I guess there were some probably. There would be some that would, anything for an excuse. [*laughs*]
(Do you think that for some people having their period made work more difficult or did they use it as an excuse?)
No. Well I shouldn't say that. I don't know. Some. I never had any trouble. But some probably that were older. In the old building now I remember now people the packers were always passing out, fainting and the men would have to come in and put the packer on the stretcher and take them out and go in the nurse's room until they. And a lot of that had to do with the changing of their, the life of their periods.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Lenskyj, *The Modern Period*, 26.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 27-28.

⁸¹ Ibid., 46.

That's what I was told anyway. Like I never had to go through that so I don't know too much about it. But when I was I never had any trouble that way no. And if it ever came unexpectedly you always had the nurse to go down and she'd give you something to cover, to hold you over until you got home. Yeah.⁸²

Dorothy initially expressed scepticism concerning women who left work because of menstrual pain. This scepticism was characteristic of the time when some women were believed to use menstruation as an excuse to avoid work.

Some of the women believed that they should work through pain and preferred not to miss work. For many of these women, avoiding absences was directly linked to financial need. However, June worked at Moir's for a summer to gain extra spending money and she also expressed her belief that she should not miss work. June recalled that she experienced pain during her period but felt that staying home for the day was not an option:

Oh yeah, yeah. I do remember I used to have bad period cramps at the time and yeah I remember going and not feeling, you know, the best but I didn't leave or come home or anything like that.

(How did you deal with that if you had bad period cramps?)

Well you know. It was just something that you know you went to school you didn't stay. We were brought up you didn't stay home if you didn't have to. You know you walked to school and not like I was ancient times from the 70s, 60s and stuff. But you just did, you just didn't stay home. And you went to school. That was just my first job so. Mum wasn't letting me miss [*laughs*] yeah.⁸³

Despite her discomfort June believed that missing work would not be appropriate based on her school years when her mother also disapproved of her missing school and did not allow her to stay home. In this way, June's actions were falling in line with Dorothy's attitudes that painful menstruation was not a very good reason to miss work.

⁸² Interview with Dorothy, 5 October, 2011.

⁸³ Interview with June, 3 October, 2011.

The women's reports of discomfort working during their periods varied. Some found it very difficult while others were able to work with little difficulty. Mary never had a problem working while she had her period but she explained: "Nope. I never had a problem that way. Course, then again, three years I've had three kids so I didn't have too many periods."⁸⁴ Mary worked at Moir's for five years and had three children within those years. Due to her pregnancies she had little experience working while she had her period. Margaret did not find it difficult to work while she had her period and never "recall[ed] anybody ever having dire problems."⁸⁵ She never had to visit the nurse for menstrual pain herself but believed that other women in the plant may have.⁸⁶ Millie recalled that she would take a day off when she had her period nearly every month:

Oh those days were terrible. Yes. Those days, I remember for myself I would have to stay home at least one of them. And that used to cause a problem. Because you would have to call up and say "Look, I can't come in because I'm sick." And sometimes they would say "Ok." And if they did ask me something personal, I wouldn't tell them. I'd just say "I'm sick." But I don't recall, I mean that's a long time ago. But I remember that those days were uncomfortable, very uncomfortable. Yes.

(Uncomfortable how?)

"Well working, workwise. Like if you were standing that long you were very uncomfortable. For three of those days anyway, right? And with me I always had to take a day off. Probably my second day. I would miss, yes. That was always with me, because some people are different than others. But I found that very hard to work once a month. Those times were very hard to work. And you just couldn't go off all the time but sometimes you would flow heavy and you had to go change. And with me I would go. You know, I wasn't going to, I was the type of person if I had to go, I had to go. And that I found difficult because of working with guys, being the ones that [were] your bosses, because you couldn't talk to them. And I

⁸⁴ Interview with Mary, 24 November, 2011.

⁸⁵ Interview with Margaret, 15 December, 2011.

⁸⁶ Interview with Margaret, 15 December, 2011.

think that's where the women should be working with somebody over you should be a woman, men should work with men. I always thought that.⁸⁷

Millie experienced a lot of pain during menstruation and needed to stay home when her pain was especially bad. In addition to her physical discomfort, Millie found it difficult to discuss her need for a day off or to visit the bathroom to change a menstrual product with her male chargehands and managers. Millie endured the physical pain she felt during her period but felt obligated to conceal her discomfort when interacting with male chargehands and managers. In this way, she was also performing emotional labour through her concealment. As Lenskyj observed, women in the post-war era were no longer expected to hide menstruation from each other, but revealing that they were menstruating to men was still uncomfortable for many women.

The women would sometimes make fun of each other if they believed a woman was irritable due to her period. Verna maintained that women in her department made jokes and teased each other about menstruation.⁸⁸ Joyce also explained that she experienced pain while she was menstruating but also worried about having the appropriate supplies while at work:

Yeah, you'd have to take it, you'd have to take it with you cause I was one that was so unregular. I never knew. You had an idea but that didn't say that it was going to happen then. So you sometimes, usually I sometimes used to carry one all the time, or two, with me. Cause to put you through for a long day from 8 in the morning to 4:30. And then especially when we, I think we started in October or November, we usually worked from 8 to 10 in the evening, two nights a week. That's when I was tired, yeah. But anyway got through it.⁸⁹

Joyce had a female chargehand and did not mind asking to be replaced to go to the washroom "to look after [her]self."⁹⁰ The women interviewed for this study seemed

⁸⁷ Interview with Millie, 9 November, 2011.

⁸⁸ Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

⁸⁹ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

⁹⁰ Interview with Joyce, 9 November, 2011.

comfortable discussing menstruation with each other while they were at work. However, some women were sceptical of women taking time off work due to menstrual pain and Millie expressed discomfort discussing menstruation with male bosses.

Conclusion

In the post-war era, married women and women with children were entering the labour force at an increased rate. Despite this reality, these women's basic needs for childcare resources were not recognized by the Canadian government until well into the 1960s. When a woman goes to work she cannot leave her reproductive body work behind. Although Shilling maintains that much of reproductive body work is not gender specific, the domestic responsibilities that have long been associated with women were especially challenging at a time when working-class women's dual responsibilities in the paid and unpaid labour force were not fully recognized. Women were called away from their work to attend to sick children, or replace a babysitter. Childcare may continue to call women away from work, but in these women's lives, this was always a mother's responsibility and never a father's. Beyond their domestic duties and childcare responsibilities, the reality of women's reproductive bodies while on the job should be noticed. Then as now, women are pregnant and menstruate while at work. In the 1950s and 1960s, being pregnant at work was likely more often a working-class experience. Separating their reproductive body work from their paid labour could not be accomplished at a time when women's dual responsibilities had yet to be recognized.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

When the women went to work at Moir's they were responsible for the work that their jobs entailed but they were also responsible for the job-related, cultural and reproductive body work not found in their job descriptions. Although this labour was not qualified as productive labour it was real. It may not have been exactly required by the job, but it was prompted by workplace conditions and compounded by social conditions. The division of labour at Moir's was representative of the gendered division of labour in factories in the post-war era with many of the women working along conveyor belts. The women employed various coping and self-care strategies to manage the challenges of their work and maintain the physical and emotional well-being. Their attire was in part dictated by a workplace dress code. A lack of resources for working wives and mothers meant that the women's reproductive work and paid labour were impossible to separate. The women's embodied experience as labourers was shaped by their working conditions and societal norms that dictated appropriate occupations, dress, and behaviour for women in the post-war era. However, the women also developed their own peer-regulated systems that sometimes deviated from company regulations.

In order to manage their physical and emotional well-being at work the women developed various coping and self-care strategies. The women's coping strategies included make-work, sabotage, talking, singing, and listening to music. Self-care strategies included taking additional breaks, job trading, and job transfers. The women employed make-work to maintain the appropriate decorum expected of them while giving themselves a break from their work. The women's use of sabotage, make-work and other coping strategies were intended to create needed leisure time in the work place. This interpretation is not meant to imply that there was no conflict between workers and managers. Instead, it is meant to explore the additional motivators that encouraged the women to bend, and at times break, company rules. When the women's coping and self-care strategies are viewed in relation to their reproductive labour it becomes clear that for some women leisure time in the workplace compensated for a lack of leisure activities in the women's lives outside of their work.

The pioneering scholars in the study of emotional labour associate it with white-collar and service sector occupations. However, I have shown that factory workers engaged in different, but demanding emotional labour. In the Moir's plant, this emotional labour generally involved employees' managing feelings of pride and shame in response to company regulations and peer group pressure around cultural standards of femininity. The women's clothing and grooming was regulated by a company dress code and uniform but the women also developed their own ways of wearing their uniforms, hairnets and jewellery that were at times at odds with these regulations. Many of the women wore their hairnets improperly because they did not sit on their heads otherwise. For some women, jewellery was regularly worn to work because they took for granted

that wearing jewellery was part of their everyday dress. However, some Moir's women believed that some of the dress code standards were actually very important and many of the interviewees took pride in keeping a clean uniform. These matters of emotion and self-presentation illustrate the cultural body work that was an important part of the women's jobs. Although the women did not attempt to appear dressed up while at work, they established their own norms regarding what was and was not appropriate dress, make-up and hairstyles to wear while at work and they took pride in meeting these norms. Some of the women believed that their lack of education kept them from leaving factory work and this knowledge no doubt influenced the women's perception of their working conditions. The women expressed an awareness of their social status and their identities as female factory workers. When co-workers attempted to distance themselves from their identity as factory workers the women were quick to discourage this behaviour through teasing and mockery.

The hybrid character of women's bodies, both labouring and reproductive, means that they cannot leave their reproductive bodies at home when they go to work. When women's reproductive work is coupled with paid labour many women lack leisure time and experience fatigue. This was especially true for the Moir's women whose manual labour was physically demanding. With limited childcare and other reproductive labour resources wage-earning wives and mothers in the post-war era were often forced (as wage-earning mothers had always been) to rely on family members for help with childcare. Pregnant workers were sometimes forced to leave their jobs when they did not want to or could not afford to. Some working-class women also supplemented their income by taking on boarders. However, this meant that the women also had to provide

for the domestic needs of their boarders. In the post-war era, these challenges were exacerbated for working-class women by the continued prevalence of the male breadwinner/female homemaker ideology that did not accurately define working-class lives.

Within historical scholarship there is a debate surrounding the importance of the embodied experience versus discursive constructs. Historian Joan Sangster warns against an over reliance on the discursive and calls for more discussion of material bodies. Sangster points to the absence of research pertaining to women's labouring bodies and maintains that women's labour history is lacking without such research.¹ However, Sangster and other scholars, such as Cynthia Comacchio and Kathleen Canning, caution that it is very difficult to separate the material body from the discursive frameworks that surround it.² Canning maintains that the material and discursive should not be viewed as a dichotomy. Instead, she believes that the material and discursive often converge when discussing women's labouring bodies.³ Through the use of interviews with former employees, I have shown that the Moir's women's experiences were at times shaped by the discursive frameworks around them. But in other instances, the women's bodies can set limits on choice or create additional choices. For example, Lois was able to remain at work because her small size allowed her to conceal her pregnancy until she was into her seventh month. Like Canning, I believe that discussing women's labouring bodies sheds

¹ Joan Sangster, "Making a Fur Coat: Women, the Labouring Body, and Working-Class," *International Review of Social History* 52, 2 (2007): 244.

² Cynthia Comacchio, "Mechanomorphosis: Science, Management, and 'Human Machinery' in Industrial Canada, 1900-45," *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 36; Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class & Citizenship* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 137.

³ Canning, *Gender History*, 137.

light on the interactive relationship between the material and discursive.⁴ Exploring this interaction allows for a better understanding of how material bodies influence and are influenced by the discursive frameworks around them.

The semi-skilled manual labour found in the Moir's factory was gradually automated throughout the second half of the twentieth-century which resulted in significant downsizing. In 1956, the Moir's plant underwent an intensive plan for modernization. Before that time, more machines were introduced into the factory and these machines began to eliminate some of the jobs previously performed by hand. Several women recalled new machines being introduced in the plant while they worked there. Verna worked at the Moir's plant in Halifax in the early 1950s and believed that when the machines were brought into the factory the quality standards decreased. She explained that inspectors would carefully examine boxes for quality:

She'd come over and she'd look at the boxes and if she didn't like the way that they were wrapped you had to do it over again. She wouldn't, oh yeah, she wouldn't put up with [poor work]. They used to have an inspector of each place, you see there before they went in the final pack up, yeah, oh yeah and they were supposed to see it. But did you ever get a box of chocolates or something and you see, you go to eat a chocolate and there's a piece of something wrapped up. Did you ever see that? Have like a half a candy there? And you say, "What's going on there?" That's the wonderful machine. That's what the machine does now. We never, we weren't allowed to miss something like that but this machine don't care. [*laughs*] The automatic machine it just wraps it.⁵

Several of the interviewees discussed new machines that were brought into their departments while they worked at Moir's. This modernization process intensified when the Moir's plant moved to its new location in Dartmouth in 1975. Some of the women found the new machines fascinating, and others, like Verna, were sceptical of the

⁴ Ibid., 138.

⁵ Interview with Verna, 14 November, 2011.

machines' supposed skill. With the increase in automation the women's semi-skilled manual labour was phased out of the plant and became a thing of the past.

When left unregulated, manual labour can cause substantial harm to workers' bodies. However, most of the interviewees believed that their jobs as semi-skilled manual labourers were good jobs and they were sad to see these jobs become increasingly automated and eventually leave the area. Some of the interviewees worked at both the Halifax and Dartmouth plants. These women explained that many things changed when the plant moved to Dartmouth. The gendered division of labour began to shift and men's and women's work were no longer as clearly defined. The plant was transformed and the nine floor operation was housed on one floor. Safety standards gained importance in the new plant and employees were expected to wear safety shoes, earplugs and gloves.

Margaret explained that the work pace increased in the new plant:

Well in the 70s things got more nosier because you were doing more, you were doing more of quality and more quantity was going out. Packaging had become different, more speeded up so and more technology was put into stuff. Going into the 70s and that stuff. Not back in the early 60s. That's on packaging department floors, like you know what I mean? No heavy machinery there.⁶

Although automation is meant to make people's jobs easier, Margaret maintained that the automation in the new plant caused people to work faster and they were therefore more susceptible to repetitive strain injuries. Working conditions varied (and continue to vary) substantially within different factories, but many of the Moir's women viewed their semi-skilled labour as good work. The women adapted to the challenges of their semi-skilled manual labour and developed strategies to improve their experiences on the job. With an increase in automation, how workers manage the challenges of their work will change.

⁶ Interview with Margaret, 15 December, 2011.

As the Moir's came under new management, the plant continued to undergo technological advancements. Despite these many innovations, the Moir's plant was shut down in December 2007 and Hershey Co. moved its operations to Mexico. The plant closure was met with anger and frustration from many employees, past and present, and the community at large. Most of the interviewees believed that their jobs at Moir's were quite good. They enjoyed their work and got along well with their co-workers, chargehands, foremen and foreladies. To these women, the plant closing down was not in the best interest of the community and they were sad to see jobs they considered to be good leave the area.

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Appendix A – Recruitment Material

Recruitment Material

FORMER MOIR’S EMPLOYEES wanted for History study

“Femininity and the Factory: Women’s Labouring Bodies in the Moir’s Candy Plant 1955-1970” Research Study

Dalhousie graduate student is seeking women who worked in the **Moir’s Candy plant** for a minimum of six weeks between 1955 and 1970 to interview about their experiences working in a factory.

The purpose of this study is to find out more about how being female made life for a working woman in the 1950s and 1960s different than life for working women today. For example, safety regulations for factory workers today are far stricter than they were in the 1950s and 1960s. I want to know more about how working conditions then affected women’s lives and bodies.

We already know that factory work is physically difficult. I would like to know more about how factory work positively or negatively affected women’s bodies. I would also like to know about women’s physical experiences while working in a factory. For example, I want to know about whether women experienced pain or injuries because of their work.

You will be asked to participate in three one-hour interviews where you will be asked questions about your experiences working in the Moir’s Candy plant. The interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy. The interviews will be held on Dalhousie campus or in your home, which ever you prefer.

Participation time will take about 3.5 hours.

You will be paid \$5.00 for each interview for a total of \$15.00 and refreshments will be provided at each interview.

To participate or for more information contact:

Margaret Mulrooney

[Contact information has been removed for privacy]

FORMER MOIR'S EMPLOYEES wanted for History study

“Femininity and the Factory: Women’s Labouring Bodies in the Moir’s Candy Plant 1955-1970” Research Study

My name is Margaret Mulrooney. I am currently working on my thesis as part of my Master of Arts in History at Dalhousie University.

What is this study about?

The purpose of this study is to find out more about how being female made life for a working woman in the 1950s and 1960s different than life for working women today. For example, safety regulations for factory workers today are far stricter than they were in the 1950s and 1960s. I want to know more about how working conditions then affected women’s lives and had meaningful effects on bodies.

We already know that factory work is physically difficult. I would like to know more about how factory work positively or negatively affected women’s bodies. I would also like to know about women’s physical experiences while working in a factory. For example, I want to know about whether women experienced pain or injuries because of their work.

Who can participate in the study?

You may participate in this study if you are female and worked in the **MOIR’S CANDY plant** for a minimum of six weeks between 1955 and 1970.

What you will be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in three one-hour interviews where you will be asked questions about your experiences working in the **Moir’s Candy plant**. The interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy. The interviews will be held on Dalhousie campus or in your home, which ever you prefer.

Before you can be included in the study, I will talk with you on the phone to make sure that you understand the study and have the time to participate.

How long will participating take?

Participation time will be about 3.5 hours. You will be paid \$5.00 for each interview for a total of \$15.00 and refreshments will be provided at each interview.

To participate or for more information contact:

Margaret Mulrooney

[Contact information has been removed for privacy]

Recruitment will continue until December 1, 2011.

Appendix B – List of Recruitment Materials Posting Locations

List of locations where recruitment information was posted:

Community Centres:

1. North Woodside Community Centre
2. East Dartmouth Community Centre
3. Dartmouth North Community Centre
4. Tallahassee Recreation Centre
5. Bloomfield Centre
6. Citadel Community Centre
7. George Dixon Centre
8. Needham Centre
9. Prospect Road Community Centre
10. South Park YMCA
11. Community YMCA Gottingen

Cultural Centres:

12. Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia
13. MicMac Friendship Centre

Religious Institutions:

14. Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI
15. The Shaar Shalom Office

Retirement communities:

16. The Berkeley
17. Parkland Retirement Living
18. Melville Heights
19. Mountbatten Nursing Home
20. Ocean View Manor Society

Public Libraries:

21. Alderney Gate Public Library
22. Bedford Public Library
23. Captain William Spry Public Library
24. Cole Harbour Public Library
25. Halifax North Memorial Public Library
26. Keshen Goodman Public Library
27. Sackville Public Library
28. Spring Garden Rd. Memorial Public Library
29. Woodlawn Public Library

Classified Ads:

30. Dalhousie Notice Digest
31. The Coast Online Classified Ads

32. Kijji

Appendix C – Consent Form

Consent Form

“Femininity and the Factory: Women’s Labouring Bodies in the Moir’s Candy Plant 1955-1970” Research Study

Margaret Mulrooney

(Contact information has been removed for privacy)

Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Shirley Tillotson

Introduction

My name is Margaret Mulrooney. I am a graduate student at Dalhousie University. As part of my work for school, I am studying women’s work in the 1950s and 1960s. In particular, I am studying some aspects of what it was like to work at Moir’s. This letter puts on paper the invitation I have made to you by telephone to allow me to interview you about working at Moir’s. It is entirely your choice whether you would like to be interviewed. I will explain later on in this letter everything I will ask you to do if you agree to be part of this study and what the study is all about. I explain any kind of risk, inconvenience, or discomfort that you might face if you participate. If you agree to be part of the study, and then decide later that you don’t want to, you can stop, at any time. You can choose to stop participating in the study at any point during, or after, each of the three planned interviews. Participating in the study might not benefit you, but I hope to learn things that will benefit other people. If you have any questions about the study and your part in it, please ask me.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out more about how being female made life for a working woman in the 1950s and 1960s different than life for working women today. For example, safety regulations for factory workers today are far stricter than they were in the 1950s and 1960s. I want to know more about how working conditions then affected women’s lives especially their health, fitness, and appearance.

We already know that factory work is physically difficult. I would like to know more about how factory work positively or negatively affected women’s bodies. I would also like to know about women’s physical experiences while working in a factory. For example, I want to know about whether women experienced pain or injuries because of their work.

Study Design

My study involves women who worked at the Moir’s Candy plant between 1955 and 1970. I will interview these women individually each three times, for

one hour each time. The questions that I ask will be about jobs, working-conditions in the Moir's factory, health, family life and over all experiences while working at Moir's. I will not ask any trick questions.

Who can participate in the study?

You can participate in this study if you are female and worked in the Moir's Candy plant for a minimum of six weeks between 1955 and 1970. I have already talked to you on the phone to make sure that you understand the study and have the time to participate.

Who will be conducting the study?

The study will be conducted by me, Margaret Mulrooney, a student in the Master of Arts program in History at Dalhousie University, under the supervision of Professor Shirley Tillotson.

What you will be asked to do

You will be asked to meet with me three times for interviews that will last about one-hour each. Interviews will be held on Dalhousie University Campus in room 2158 in the Marion McCain Arts and Social Sciences Building, 6135 University Avenue. If you prefer, interviews can be held in your home.

The estimated time I will ask you to spend on this study will be about 3.5 hours.

During the interviews, I will be recording our conversation. The recordings will be transcribed word for word to make sure they are accurate.

In our first interview, I will ask you questions about family life, leisure activities, and your life outside of working at Moir's. These questions are meant to help me understand what else was going on in your life outside of work when you were working at Moir's.

The second interview will discuss your experiences working at Moir's. There will be questions about what your job was like and what you wore to work. The third interview will discuss working conditions, the effects your job had on your body and your attitudes about your job. I will also ask you questions that we may have missed in our first two meetings.

When I am finished my thesis, I will give you copies of the parts of my work where you were quoted. This way you can decide if I quoted you correctly. I will also give you a copy of a summary of my research findings.

Possible Risks and Discomforts

Some people, and maybe you, might feel a bit embarrassed when asked questions about menstruation, bathrooms, and dating. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

Possible Benefits

Talking about your experiences may not directly benefit you, but we might learn things that will benefit others. You may also enjoy participating in the study and find it to be a positive experience.

Compensation / Reimbursement

You will be paid \$5.00 for each interview for a total of \$15.00 and refreshments will be provided at each interview. Unfortunately, I cannot pay for travel expenses.

Anonymity

If you would like, your name will be changed in my work so that no one who reads the results of the study will be able to recognize that you were one of the people I interviewed. If you would like me to use your own name when I write up the results of my research, tell me and I will do that.

Confidentiality

Interview transcripts will be secured in a locker and protected under a password on a computer. I will be the only person who has access to this information. Every effort will be made to keep your identity confidential. When I write about my research in my thesis, I may use direct quotations from what you said to me, but (unless you ask me to use your own name), I will use another name instead of yours when I identify the person I am quoting. If interviews are held in your home and you are considered a dependent, I am under a legal obligation to report any evidence of neglect or abuse that I witness to the authorities. In a situation such as this, confidentiality will be broken.

Questions

If you have any questions about the study, please contact one of the following:

Graduate Student:

Margaret Mulrooney

(Contact information has been removed for privacy)

Thesis Supervisor:
Shirley Tillotson, PhD
Professor

If there is any new information after you give consent which might affect your decision to participate in the study, I will give you this information.

Problems or Concerns

If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this study, you may contact Catherine Connors, Director of Dalhousie University's Office of Human Research Ethics Administration [*contact information removed*]

If you live at a distance from Halifax it is acceptable to call collect.

If you decide to participate, you will receive at the beginning of the study a copy of this consent form and information for you to keep. During the course of the study, you will be provided with any new information that comes up which might affect your decision to participate in the study.

Thank you for considering participation in the study,

Margaret Mulrooney

Consent Form
**“Femininity and the Factory: Women’s Labouring Bodies and the Moir’s
Candy Plant 1955-1970”**

A. I have read the explanation about this study. I have been given the opportunity to discuss it and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby consent to take part in this study. However I realize that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

(Signature of participant) (Name of participant)

Date _____

(Signature of researcher) (Name of researcher)

Date _____

B. In addition, I consent to the use of the following. (please tick all that apply)

- audiorecording of interviews
- use of substantial direct quotations

(Signature of participant) (Name of participant)

Date _____

(Signature of researcher) (Name of researcher)

Date _____

Appendix D – Interview Guide/Questionnaire

Note: The interviews were semi-structured and I therefore allowed for the conversations to develop naturally and the interviewees were encouraged to recount any memories they believed were appropriate. These questions were used as a guide but not every interviewee was asked every question.

Interview Guide/Questionnaire

First Interview:

1. Background information/Family life:
 - 1.1. Where did you live?
 - 1.2. Where did your father work?
 - 1.3. Did your mother work?
 - 1.4. Did you have brothers and sisters? How many?
 - 1.4.1. Where were you in the child order? (Oldest, youngest, middle child?)
 - 1.5. Until what age did you live with your family?
 - 1.6. When did you stop going to school?
 - 1.6.1. Why?
 - 1.7. At what age did you begin working?
 - 1.8. Was there a particular reason you started working when you did?
 - 1.9. Where was your first job?
 - 1.10. If you still lived with your family when you started working, did you contribute to your family's income?
 - 1.10.1. If so, how much of your income did you give to your family?
 - 1.10.2. What did you spend the rest of your money on? (Clothes, leisure, etc)
 - 1.11. When did you start working at Moir's?
 - 1.11.1. If it wasn't your first job, what other jobs had you held before?
 - 1.12. What was your family's attitude about you working at Moir's?
 - 1.13. Were you single or married when you were working at Moir's?
 - 1.13.1. If married, how old were you when you got married?
 - 1.13.2. If married, did your husband work?
 - 1.13.3. If so, where?
 - 1.13.4. Did you have children?
 - 1.13.4.1. If so, who took care of your children while you were at work?
 - 1.13.4.2. Did your children ever call you while you were at work?
 - 1.13.4.2.1. Did you ever get in trouble for this?
 - 1.13.4.3. Did you ever have to leave work because your child(ren) needed you at home?
 - 1.13.4.3.1. Did you ever get in trouble for this?
2. Courtship/If you were single while working at Moir's:
 - 2.1. Did you date anyone from work?
 - 2.2. Was there a lot of dating between men and women workers at Moir's?
 - 2.2.1. If so, were these relationships seen as a positive or negative thing?
 - 2.3. Did you marry someone you met at work?
3. Leisure:

- 3.1. How did your work days compare to school days/pre-work days/other occupations?
 - 3.1.1. Did you still have time to socialize and have fun?
 - 3.2. How much did you sleep?
 - 3.3. Did you go to church?
 - 3.3.1. How often?
 - 3.3.2. Did you attend church outings and social events?
 - 3.4. What did you do for fun on days off?
 - 3.4.1. Did you go to dance clubs?
 - 3.4.2. Did you go to parties?
 - 3.4.3. Did you drink alcohol?
 - 3.4.4. Did you go to movies?
 - 3.4.5. Did you play any kind of sports?
 - 3.4.5.1. Were you on any of the Moir's sports teams?
 - 3.4.5.1.1. Which team(s)?
 - 3.4.5.2. How often did you have practices?
 - 3.4.5.3. How often did you have games?
 - 3.4.5.4. Why did you join the team(s)?
 - 3.4.5.5. Do you think playing on these teams was a positive or negative experience?
 - 3.4.5.6. Why?
 - 3.5. Did you go out with groups of friends?
 - 3.5.1. How many people did you generally go out with?
 - 3.5.2. Did you socialize in groups of men and women?
 - 3.6. What did you like to wear when you went out with your friends?
 - 3.7. Did you have any hobbies?
 - 3.7.1. What were they?
 - 3.8. Did you spend time with other people who worked at Moir's outside of the factory?
 - 3.8.1. Did you consider any of the other women who worked at Moir's your close friends?
 - 3.8.2. Did you feel like you had things in common with these women?
 - 3.8.3. What sorts of things did you like to do together?
 - 3.8.4. When would you get together?
 - 3.8.4.1. After work?
 - 3.8.4.2. On weekends?
4. Media:
- 4.1. What newspapers were you reading while you worked at Moir's?
 - 4.2. What magazines?
 - 4.3. What movies were you watching? Television?
 - 4.4. What radio stations did you listen to?
 - 4.4.1. What was your favourite radio station?
 - 4.5. What was your favourite type of music?
 - 4.6. Who was your favourite band(s) or singer(s)?

4.7. What were your favourite songs?

Second Interview:

5. Job Description:

- 5.1. When did you work at Moir's? (Year(s)?)
- 5.2. In which department of the factory did you work?
 - 5.2.1. Were there more women than men in your department? Or vice versa?
 - 5.2.2. Were there any men in your department?
- 5.3. Did you stay in the same position the entire time you worked for Moir's?
- 5.4. Describe what your job(s) was like?
 - 5.4.1. What did you have to do?
- 5.5. How many hours did you work a week?
 - 5.5.1. Did you ever work over-time?
- 5.6. Were you part-time? Full-time? Seasonal?
- 5.7. How were you paid? Piece-rates? Hourly?
- 5.8. Did the plant ever run out of work and you would have to take some time off?
 - 5.8.1. If so, how much warning were you given about this?
 - 5.8.2. Did you worry about money?
 - 5.8.3. Did you worry there would not be enough work?
- 5.9. Was there a night shift?
 - 5.9.1. When did it start and finish?
 - 5.9.2. Did you ever work the night shift?
 - 5.9.3. How did you get home?
 - 5.9.4. Were you giving money for a taxi?
 - 5.9.5. Did you worry for your safety being out late at night alone?

6. Dress/Fashion/Style/Hygiene:

- 6.1. What did you wear to work?
- 6.2. Was there a uniform?
- 6.3. What kind of shoes did you like to wear?
 - 6.3.1. Were you told to wear a specific type of shoe?
- 6.4. Did you wear any accessories? (e.g. earrings, other jewellery)
- 6.5. How did you wear your hair?
- 6.6. Did you have to wear a hairnet?
- 6.7. What did you like and/or dislike about the uniform?
- 6.8. Did you ever receive warnings in regards violation of the dress code?
 - 6.8.1. (If they were working in November of 1961) Do you remember any notices from management concerning following the company dress code?
 - 6.8.2. Show them a copy of the notice and see what comments they have on the subject.
- 6.9. How often did you wash your uniform?
 - 6.9.1. Did you ever get a warning for not having a clean uniform?
- 6.10. Were there hygiene regulations?
 - 6.10.1. Did you ever get into trouble for not meeting them?
 - 6.10.2. How often were you expected to wash your hands?

- 6.10.3. Did someone check to make sure you had?
- 6.11. Did you paint your finger nails?
 - 6.11.1. Do you remember anything else that was expected of you in terms of physical appearance?
- 6.12. Did you wear your uniform outside of the factory?
 - 6.12.1. Would you change at work?
- 6.13. Did you ever wear pants/slacks?
 - 6.13.1. If so, were you ever told not to wear pants/slacks?
 - 6.13.2. Were there departments that allowed women to wear pants/slacks?

Third Interview:

- 7. Working Conditions
 - 7.1. What was the temperature in the factory like?
 - 7.2. Did the air-conditioning make working more or less pleasant?
 - 7.2.1. If you were cold, were you permitted to wear another layer over your uniform?
 - 7.2.2. Was it ever too hot?
 - 7.3. Was the air stuffy or reasonably fresh?
 - 7.4. What did the factory smell like?
 - 7.4.1. Was it a strong smell?
 - 7.4.2. Did it make work unpleasant?
 - 7.5. Was the plant noisy?
 - 7.5.1. What caused the noise?
 - 7.6. Were you allowed to talk while you worked?
 - 7.6.1. Did you ever get into trouble for talking too much while you worked?
 - 7.7. Were you ever pregnant while working at Moir's?
 - 7.7.1. If so, did you find it more difficult to do your job?
 - 7.8. Were you sitting or standing while you worked?
 - 7.8.1. Or a combination of both?
 - 7.9. How many hours a day were you sitting?
 - 7.9.1. What kind of chair did you sit in?
 - 7.9.2. Was it comfortable/uncomfortable?
 - 7.9.3. Did you ever have aches or pains from sitting too long?
 - 7.10. How many hours a day were you on your feet?
 - 7.10.1. Did you ever have aches or pains from standing too long?
 - 7.10.2. Was there anywhere to sit down?
 - 7.11. Was there somewhere you could go to rest or lie down at work if you weren't feeling well?
 - 7.11.1. Were you permitted to go home if you weren't feeling well?
 - 7.11.2. Did you ever get in trouble for taking time off work because you were sick?
 - 7.11.3. How often did you take sick days?
 - 7.12. How many breaks did you get during a shift?
 - 7.12.1. How long was your lunch break?
 - 7.12.2. Did you have to spend part of your breaks preparing for the job?

- 7.13. Did you have bathroom breaks?
 - 7.13.1. Were you allowed to go to the bathroom whenever you wanted or did you have to ask permission?
 - 7.13.2. Did someone have to replace you while you went to the bathroom?
 - 7.14. Were there separate bathrooms for men and women at the plant?
 - 7.14.1. Were there chairs in the bathrooms?
 - 7.14.2. How much time were you allowed to spend in the bathroom?
 - 7.14.3. Did you ever get in trouble for spending too much time in the bathroom?
 - 7.15. Were there dressing rooms?
 - 7.15.1. Did you have a locker or somewhere that you could leave your things, for example: coat, purse boots, while you were at work?
 - 7.15.1.1. Did you bring a purse to work?
 - 7.16. Did you find working while you had your period more difficult than when you did not?
 - 7.16.1. Did you find it difficult to plan ahead of time to bring enough personal hygiene products when you had your period?
 - 7.16.2. Did you ever tell the other women at Moir's when you had your period?
 - 7.16.3. Did other women working at Moir's tell you when they had their periods?
 - 7.16.4. Did you ever talk about your period with the men who worked at Moir's?
 - 7.16.5. Did the men ever make jokes about women having their periods?
 - 7.17. Were you given paid days off (sick days) if you had your period?
 - 7.17.1. If so, what was the limit on how many paid sick days you would take?
 - 7.18. Was this a valid reason for taking time off work?
 - 7.19. Did you think the policy on sick days was fair?
8. Effects of job on the body:
- 8.1. What was your weight/body size?
 - 8.1.1. Did you lose or gain weight when you started working at Moir's?
 - 8.2. About how many hours a night did you sleep?
 - 8.2.1. Did you sleep well?
 - 8.2.2. Did you ever have problems sleeping?
 - 8.3. Did you suffer any injuries at work?
 - 8.3.1. Aches and pains?
 - 8.3.2. Headaches?
 - 8.4. Repetitive strain injuries?
 - 8.5. Calluses? Sores?
 - 8.6. Recurring injuries?
 - 8.7. What did you do to avoid injuries?
 - 8.8. Did you wear safety equipment of any kind? (Gloves, safety glasses?)
 - 8.9. Did your health get worse while working at Moir's?
 - 8.9.1. If so, how?
 - 8.10. Did your eye sight suffer?
9. Attitudes:
- 9.1. How close to your ideal was your job?

- 9.2. Would you have preferred to work somewhere else?
- 9.3. Do you think you could have found another job?
 - 9.3.1. Did you feel like you had a lot of job opportunities?
 - 9.3.2. Do you think women in general had many job opportunities at that time?
- 9.4. Did you think that women should be working?
- 9.5. Did you think women should only be working until they were married?
- 9.6. Did you think that it was more important for men to be working?
- 9.7. Did you ever feel looked down on for working in a factory because you were a woman?
- 9.8. Do you think you would have been treated differently if you were single? If you were married?
- 9.9. Did you think your work was as valuable as the men's work in the factory?
- 9.10. Do you think your supervisors treated the women differently than the men?
- 9.11. How much did you know about what the men at Moir's were paid?
- 9.12. Did you believe it was fair for the male employees to make more money than the female employees?
- 9.13. Do you think that there was a significant difference in how hard men's work and women's work was?
- 9.14. Were there women in forelady or supervisory roles?
- 9.15. What did you think of these women?
- 9.16. If you were a forelady, describe what your job was like.
- 9.17. Did Moir's have a union when you worked there?
 - 9.17.1. Were you involved with the union?