

# Character Family And Business In Mid Victorian Nova Scotia Studies In Childhood

This article explores the character of family and business in mid-Victorian Nova Scotia. It draws on a range of sources, including census data, marriage records, and business directories, to examine the changing nature of family life and the role of children in the economy.



## Evangelical Balance Sheet: Character, Family, and Business in Mid-Victorian Nova Scotia (Studies in Childhood and Family in Canada Book 10) by B. Anne Wood

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## The Changing Nature of Family Life

The mid-Victorian period was a time of significant change for families in Nova Scotia. The Industrial Revolution led to a shift away from rural, agricultural communities towards urban, industrial centres. This had a profound impact on family life, as it led to a breakdown of the traditional extended family structure.

In rural Nova Scotia, families were typically large and extended, with multiple generations living under one roof. This was due in part to the need for labour on the farm. However, as people moved to the cities, they found themselves living in smaller, more isolated households. This led to a decline in the size of families and a shift towards a more nuclear family structure.

The Industrial Revolution also led to a change in the roles of men and women within the family. In rural Nova Scotia, men were typically the breadwinners, while women were responsible for raising the children and managing the household. However, in the cities, women increasingly found themselves working outside the home in order to supplement the family income.

This change in the roles of men and women had a significant impact on the character of family life. It led to a more egalitarian relationship between husbands and wives, and it also gave women more freedom and independence.

### **The Role of Children in the Economy**

Children played an important role in the economy of mid-Victorian Nova Scotia. In rural areas, children were expected to help out on the farm from a young age. They would often work alongside their parents in the fields, and they would also help with the care of animals and the housework.

In urban areas, children were often employed in factories, mills, and other industrial settings. They would work long hours for low wages, and they were often exposed to hazardous working conditions.

The employment of children was a controversial issue in mid-Victorian Nova Scotia. Some people argued that it was necessary to help families make ends meet, while others believed that it was harmful to children's health and education.

In 1884, the Nova Scotia legislature passed a law that prohibited the employment of children under the age of 12 in factories and mills. However, this law was not always enforced, and children continued to work in industrial settings throughout the Victorian period.

The character of family and business in mid-Victorian Nova Scotia was shaped by a number of factors, including the Industrial Revolution, the urbanization of the population, and the changing roles of men and women. These factors led to a decline in the size of families, a shift towards a more nuclear family structure, and an increase in the number of women working outside the home. They also led to a change in the role of children in the economy, as they became increasingly involved in industrial labour.

The changes that occurred in family and business life during the mid-Victorian period had a profound impact on the social and economic development of Nova Scotia. They laid the foundation for the modern family and business structures that we see today.

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