

Swedish Manual Training The Macdonald Sloyd Fund and Education Reform in the Maritimes, 1903–1917

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Swedish Manual Training: The Macdonald Sloyd Fund and Education Reform in the Maritimes, 1903-1917

A 1904 FEATURE ARTICLE IN THE NEW BRUNSWICK *Farmer's Advocate* celebrated the opening of the new Kingston Consolidated School. Situated “on a beautiful plateau, almost midway between the Kennebecasis and St. John Rivers,” the school welcomed guests and students with its fine exterior and large expansive grounds, featuring playgrounds, a school garden, and an orchard. The multistory building brought together pupils from seven districts. It had large windows, fancy-cut shingles, cherry-stained hardwood floors, and was “furnished with all necessary equipment.” Once inside the entrance, the most important facility greeted the visitor as they took off their coats: “two school rooms for primary grades, and a ‘manual training’ room.”¹ The upper elementary grades on upper floors had rooms for domestic science and laboratory work. But manual training is the first facility described, located prominently by the entrance – a foundational placement for the new progressive curriculum the school would embrace.

This essay investigates the transatlantic circulation of an early-20th-century Swedish system of elementary manual training called *slöjd* (or “sloyd”). Sloyd programs played a significant role in education reform during the early 20th century. A form of sloyd featured prominently at one experimental institution established in each of the Maritime provinces and known as the Macdonald Schools.² William C. Macdonald, tobacco manufacturer and philanthropist, funded these initiatives as part of his wider enthusiasm for advancing agricultural education across Canada.³ Influenced by his employee, James

1 “Macdonald Consolidated School, Kingston, New Brunswick,” *Farmer's Advocate* (c. 1908), James W. Robertson Collection (Robertson Collection), RBSC-ARC-1469, box 4, folder 2b, p. 1038, Rare Books and Special Collections and University Archives, University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver.

2 Sometimes the literature calls them “Macdonald Consolidated Schools.”

3 See William Fong, *Sir William C. Macdonald: A Biography* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

W. Robertson, Macdonald's earliest forays into education philanthropy were in support of the new system, and in the very early years of his education philanthropy he set up a "Macdonald Sloyd Fund" to promote its adoption in Canada.⁴ Macdonald was personally attached to the regions that became key sites for this curriculum: the anglophone eastern townships of Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, especially his home province of Prince Edward Island.⁵ The schools emphasized and publicized new types of courses offered like home economics and nature study – indeed pictures often featured school gardens where students tended neat plots of vegetables. Yet the curriculum that initially inspired and largely drove the entire Macdonald school enterprise were the manual training programs, a curriculum with Nordic roots.

The Macdonald Schools in Maritime Canada are well known in the history of public education as some of the first attempts to consolidate primary schooling; but they were also sites of curriculum experimentation. The Macdonald Schools were a capstone effort in a larger program to encourage the adoption of manual training in Canadian public education. The archival record has very few details of the classroom instruction and the specific curricula of manual training in these institutions. But, through a review of Robertson's various public and personal writings, read against the broader international history of sloyd, careful research can glean important insights into the changing place and purpose of manual training in the Maritime region. From these records, this essay seeks, in part, to understand why manual training did not take hold a century ago, despite the best efforts of these wealthy and determined men. Indeed, manual training was the only component of the new curricula that ultimately failed to find a place in 20th century public education. Examining this failure leads us from experimental education in the Maritimes back to Montreal, then to Boston and Britain, and finally back to Sweden, from where the sloyd system of manual training originated and where it is still taught. In the process, one can see how the demise of manual training can be linked to the failure of the Nordic ideas about health to translate and transition into Anglo-American contexts. Manual training, as a result, fell by the wayside to be replaced by industrial and vocational training in more advanced grades.

4 J.W. Robertson, *Manual Training in Public Schools: The Macdonald Sloyd School Fund* (Ottawa: n.p., 1899).

5 Neil Sutherland and Cynthia Comacchio, *Children in English Canadian Society: Creating the Twentieth Century Consensus*, 2nd ed. (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 182, chap. 12.

What was so transformative about Swedish sloyd? The program that intrigued Robertson and Macdonald had its roots in Nordic understandings of integrated mind-body-spirit health and formation. Loosely translated, it meant a focus on “skill, sagacity, and moral formation.”⁶ In the late 19th century, these understandings coalesced into a formal system of primary school manual training developed by Swedish education reformer Otto Salomon. His system offered teacher training in mixed-gender classes that focused on woodworking, but also textile production, culinary arts, metalwork, and other crafts. For the better part of four decades, spanning the 1870s to the 1910s, he operated the pre-eminent training program in sloyd methods and practice.⁷ Salomon was a gifted promoter, and his sloyd system drew pupils and acolytes, almost equal numbers of men and women, from around the globe.⁸ Most were educators but, because of both the formative and remedial promise of sloyd, his work drew the attention of a wide array of clinicians and early proponents of what we would now call social work as well as physical and occupational therapy; they came by the thousands through the doors of his training centre at Nääs, a large estate north of the city of Gothenburg on Sweden’s west coast.

Sloyd was, for a time, wildly popular and adapted to a wide variety of environments both within and outside of Scandinavia.⁹ By the late 19th century, it saw very enthusiastic uptake in industrial areas of England and Scotland. One early British promoter, John Sutcliffe, hailed it as a “course of training in personal ingenuity.” Sutton argued that the sloyd approach to handcraft offered British elementary schools a “means of promoting throughout the community a taste and skill for the performance of highly-finished productions in mechanical art, proceeding from the simple to the complex, and resulting

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- 6 See, for instance, the several texts that were published and widely distributed in English, such as Otto Salomon, *The Theory of Educational Sloyd* (Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1900) and Otto Salomon, *The Teachers Handbook of Sloyd* (Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1904).
 - 7 Although Salomon died in 1907, the training programs continued posthumously well into the inter-war period.
 - 8 Hans Thorbjornsson has done biographical work on Salomon, though mostly published in Swedish. For an English-language contribution, see Thorbjornsson, “Otto Salomon (1849-1907),” *Prospects: The Quarterly Review of Comparative Education* 23 (1994): 8.
 - 9 Attempting to keep some of the foundational components of the Swedish system, some advocates collaborated with Salomon to bring forth texts in English, such as Otto Salomon, Carl Nordendahl and Alfred Johansson, *The Teacher’s Handbook of Slöjd As Practiced and Taught at Nääs, Containing Explanations and Details of Each Exercise* (Boston: Silver Burdett and Company, 1892). The text was “translated and adapted for English teachers” by Mary R. Walker of St. George’s Training College in Edinburgh and William Nelson, who was affiliated with the Manchester Schools for the Deaf and Dumb.

in a widely diffused facility for all kinds of constructive occupations.¹⁰ British enthusiasts, many of whom trained at Nääs, formed sloyd associations that advocated the inclusion of such manual training in public schools.¹¹ The system also became popular in the northeastern United States, mainly due to the efforts of Gustav Larsson, one of Salomon's strongest supporters, and former students, who set up a Boston School for Sloyd at the turn of the last century.¹² While it is unknown exactly how Robertson became aware of the program, he begins writing about it and promoting it to Macdonald at the turn of the century when global interest was at its height.

We do know that Robertson was interested in the system because of its potential for advancing and improving rural education. Having begun his career as an agricultural expert, he was on the forefront of the scientific farming movement in Canada. But, over the years, he would be drawn further into the field of agricultural science and education. Prominent in public service, in the course of his career he would participate in many national service organizations (such as the Boy Scouts and the Canadian Arts and Crafts Guild) and would eventually chair two royal commissions: one on the prospects for Industrial Training in Canada (1910) and the other an inquiry into the labour unrest among steelworkers in Sydney Nova Scotia (1923).¹³ From 1905 to 1910, when he served as the principal of Macdonald College, he guided and influenced the philanthropic efforts of McGill's primary benefactor,

10 John D. Sutcliffe, *Handcraft: A Text Book Employing A System Of Pure Mechanical Art, Without The Aid Of Machinery; Being An English Exposition Of Slöjd As Cultivated In Sweden And By The Scandinavian Peoples, To Their Great Advantage* (New York: Charles E. Merrell and Company, 1890).

11 Kevin J. Behony, "'Even Far distant Japan' is 'Showing an Interest': The English Froebel Movement's Turn to Sloyd," *History of Education* 27, no. 3 (1998): 279-95.

12 Gustav Larsson is best known for his adapted textbook, *Elementary Sloyd and Whittling* (Boston: n.p., 1906). For more on Larsson's impact on the education systems of Massachusetts and other northeastern states, see Linda C. Morice, *Flora White: In the Vanguard of Gender Equity* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), 103 and Morice, "Balancing Work and Intellectual Activity: Boston's Sloyd Training School," *History of Education Review* 38, no. 2 (2009): 56-68. The program also dovetailed with late Arts and Crafts revivalism, and influenced art education; see June E. Eyestone, "The Influence of Swedish Sloyd and Its Interpreters on American Art Education," *Studies in Art Education* 34, no. 1 (1992-1993): 28-38.

13 He began his public service career as Dairy Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada (1890 to 1904). For additional biographical information about Robertson and details of his career, see J. Pavey, "James Wilson Robertson" (MEd thesis, University of British Columbia, 1971).

Macdonald, and turned Macdonald's attention to education reform.¹⁴ In this way, Robertson became a primary advocate of the sloyd system in Canada.

Robertson used the Macdonald Sloyd School Fund¹⁵ to travel widely and review the impact of this system overseas. Aware of its origins, he nonetheless noted how quickly these programs were spreading beyond Sweden. In Norway, it had been a compulsory part of the school system since 1891, and was, by the last decade of the 19th century, embedded in the school systems the northern industrial provinces of Germany. But most of his attention was focused on evaluating the impact of sloyd in Anglo-American contexts. "In England and Scotland," he wrote, "gifts of money by private individuals and guilds enabled educational reformers to give the system a fair trial in many centers." The result was an enthusiastic uptake by school boards, with both cooperation and financial support from the British Department of Education. He also praised education philanthropists in the Boston area for giving sloyd space in two north end industrial schools, one very likely the school run by the aforementioned Gustav Larsson. Robertson noted how the system was making "rapid headway" in both the US and Britain thanks to the efforts to spearhead reform by many private philanthropists who supported this curriculum reform in the hopes of influencing public education. And it seemed the curricula in North America retained a strong Swedish influence; Robertson stressed that this training he witnessed in Boston did not engage what he called "the commercial side" of manual skill training. Quoting one of the north end instructors, he reported how the woodworking classes for young students instead "teach the nature of trees and the characters of different sorts of wood The main purpose is to train the child in accuracy, carefulness, and self-reliance, whether it takes him one day or many days to finish a task." For these instructors, qualities of "character . . . are developed by these means."¹⁶

From such accounts, carefully documented and filed in his travel notes and referred to in his writings, sloyd itself seemed appealing because of its practical formative value, but also its ability to positively influence the ineffable qualities of "character." While the work ethic and model characteristics also developed ideal workers, what initially impressed Robertson was how sloyd manual

14 See Fong, *William C. Macdonald*, chap. 7.

15 In later writings, Robertson referred to this as the Macdonald Manual Training School Fund. But the original publication used the Swedish term in the title and the text.

16 Notes to Macdonald Sloyd School Fund publication and related material, Robertson Collection, box 3, folder 9, esp. p. 27, Rare Books and Special Collections and University Archives, UBC.

training enhanced personal development. This development brought a child's mind and body together, delivering a "series of experiences, arranged in proper sequence" to train the senses. He particularly extolled the developmental value: "Seeing is enhanced by an appreciation of form, size and colour; feeling developed through touch, particularly the assessment of the temperature and weight of an object; hearing is developed by enhancing an ability to discriminate between sounds."¹⁷

Robertson's notes evolve over the years, bearing evidence of a change in orientation and priorities for manual training as he got down to the brass tacks of implementing manual training in Canadian schools. By the end of his European tour, in fact, Robertson had become intrigued by its potential to make education more accessible and meaningful to rural boys. With this transition, he was becoming influenced more by some of the British variants of the Swedish system (sometimes referred to as "English sloyd") that he witnessed overseas, which evinced a more practical focus.¹⁸ English sloyd, for instance, was often more firmly based in the practice of woodworking, with more emphasis on the technical skills of carpentry – an orientation that influenced an approach popularized by Russian educators. Robertson's later, published accounts overtly admire the work done in primary schools of London, which had sloyd systems in place by 1886:

The manual training was found so thoroughly useful and acceptable that it was speedily extended. In 1890 woodwork was recognized by the Education Department as a school subject. The School Board was thus enabled to expend its own funds upon this branch of school work Now there are about 150 manual training centres; and as nearly as I could learn, about 50,000 boys between the ages of nine and fourteen are receiving courses of instruction in wood-work, iron-work, brass-work or leather work in the Public Board Schools of London.¹⁹

17 Notes to Macdonald Sloyd School Fund publication and related material, Robertson Collection, box 3, folder 9, esp. p. 27, Rare Books and Special Collections and University Archives, UBC.

18 For an example of the British variant, see S. Barter, *Manual Instruction; Woodwork; (The English Sloyd)* (London: Whittaker and Company, 1892).

19 Robertson, *Manual Training in Public Schools*, 14.

And so it seems sloyd's career in Canada is also advanced and supported by the program's observable successes engaging boys in industrial areas of Britain.²⁰ This constituted a philosophical and a practical break, because sloyd emerged in largely rural Nordic countries and was systematized in Sweden as gender-neutral praxis. Crossing the North Sea, and then the Atlantic, the system gained a gender focus. In this journey, it lost both its Swedish name and the emphasis on moral formation and mind-body-spirit health, and focused on cultivating industrial habits of mind and incipient technical skills among male students.

This transition is captured in Robertson's notes and papers. Upon Robertson's return to Canada, the Macdonald Sloyd Fund was anglicized to the Macdonald Manual Training Fund and he and his patron shifted focus to teacher recruitment and training. Macdonald paid for the implementation of woodworking and other manual training facilities in many sites across eastern and Atlantic Canada. The fund that had supported Robertson's travels also assisted municipal and county schools across Canada in the purchase of the materials and equipment for manual training programs to be maintained by the Macdonald Manual Training Fund for a period of three years. Funding through the initial implementation period was critically important because, as Roberson later explained, "Unless this demonstration had been unsuccessful in the towns, the rural citizens would not have been willing to accept the practical manual teaching for their home schools." The Macdonald Fund ultimately provided manual training in 28 public schools, paying for all the necessary equipment but also allowing for the recruitment and financial support of expertise – the hiring of "twenty-seven teachers from England, Sweden and the United States, [and paying] their salaries and the salaries of assistants whom they trained Departments of Education and School Boards, [then] took it entirely over; and now there are 20,000 boys and girls in Canadian schools receiving the benefit of manual training in their regular course under the public school authorities."²¹ The new programs were ultimately more popular in central and western Canada than the Maritimes, but all grew in the early years that the fund supported new programming. By Neil Sutherland's count, "New Brunswick's centres increased from three in 1900 to eighteen in 1910 and to

20 This phenomenon is examined in David J. Whittaker, *The Impact and Legacy of Educational Sloyd: Head and Hands in Harness* (London: Routledge, 2013).

21 Robertson Collection, box 5, folder 9, notes and ephemera, RBSC-ARC-1469, box 4, folder 2b, p. 1038, Rare Books and Special Collections and University Archives, UBC.

twenty-one in 1917. PEI started with three centres in 1900, reached a peak of five in 1905, and declined to one by 1912. The last of these centres closed in 1919.²²

The exemplary institutions with manual training curricula were the three Maritime Macdonald Schools. Macdonald's influence on two schools in Ontario and Quebec has drawn more historical attention because they were built adjacent well-established sites of higher education in central Canada. One sprang up at Saint Anne de Bellevue, adjacent to Macdonald College on the western outskirts of Montreal. The Macdonald Institute at Guelph, which eventually became absorbed into the University of Guelph, narrowed its educational focus to teaching rural women Domestic Science.²³ But, from 1903 to 1905, Macdonald's philanthropy, guided by Robertson, focused on the establishment of rural consolidated schools in each of the three Maritime provinces: in Middleton, Nova Scotia, from 1903 to 1907; in Kingston, New Brunswick, from 1903 to 1906; and in Hillsborough, PEI, from 1905 to 1912.

Neil Sutherland's classic work on early 20th century education examines the "Macdonald-Robertson movement" as a broader project to instill a liberal consensus into primary education in Canada, focusing largely on the archives associated with the agricultural education at these two central Canadian sites.²⁴ Kristin Greene, more recently, has examined the movement for school consolidation within the context of Canadian education reform, in which she emphasizes the movement's desire to standardize curriculum that held to a consistent pedagogy through specialized object lessons. Bringing order to the varied local landscape of rural schooling, and improving rates of school attendance, such education reformers were line with the goals of Progressive era reform of the day.²⁵ Indeed, the schools' success seems to be measured by head counts, and Maritime Macdonald Schools attempted to make attendance as easy as possible by providing horse-drawn transportation to their consolidated feeder districts. While acknowledging that the Macdonald and Robertson did not innovate as much as they "drew on borrowed ideas," future historians might link education reform in Canada to broader transnational evolutions in manual training and its antecedents. This would help evaluate the degree

22 Sutherland and Comacchio, *Children in English Canadian Society*, 184.

23 James G. Snell, *Macdonald Institute: Remembering the Past, Embracing the Future* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2003).

24 See Sutherland and Comacchio, *Children in English Canadian Society*.

25 Kristen Jane Greene, "The Macdonald-Robertson Movement 1899-1909" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2003).

to which the manual training programs ultimately reflected the principals of Swedish sloyd and other European influences.

Meanwhile, Robertson was keen to promote the schools' early successes in Canada. In his published reports and promotional materials, and in keeping with the Swedish model, the programing in the Maritime Macdonald Schools appeared to focus on woodwork in the tradition of the English variants. Photos document work creating a wide variety of rudimentary tools, such as window wedges, square rulers, key racks, flowerpot stands, and fishing line twiners.²⁶ From these materials, we learn one main goal was to increase attendance. In their notes, teachers carefully captured, calculated, and commented on comparative attendance rates at the Macdonald Schools as if mentally comparing these successes to the small, mostly one-room community schools they sought to replace. This focus dominated record keeping, and might distract the researcher from the content of curriculum. Nonetheless, evidence of what came forth in classroom teaching is also extant, mainly in copies of final examinations and the marginal notes that accompanied them.

Details from annual record books from the Maritime schools combined demographic and classroom data. The Hillsborough School in Prince Edward Island, which opened its doors in 1905, pulled together pupils from six adjoining districts in rural areas south east of Charlottetown, with almost equal numbers of girls and boys. Manual Training was an important course from the outset, combining natural history, material culture, and basic woodworking techniques. In year one, the Manual Training final exam asked students questions about proper measurement (underscoring the European origins by using the metric system) and queried the names of and uses for common tools. But it also invited short answer essays evaluating their understanding of and appreciation for the qualities of trees. It invited students, for instance, to "name all the characteristics you know from working with pine, whitewood, and birch" as well as what might be learned about wood from examining the cross section of a tree. The marginal notes, however, confirm that manual training was only for the male pupils. The students who sat the 1905 Hillsborough School final exam for Manual Training were boys completing grades 6 through 9.²⁷ There is no record of manual training for girls in any record books from the school.

26 Photos in his collection seem to have been taken at the New Brunswick site; see Robertson Collection, box 3, folder 9, p. 37, Rare Books and Special Collections and University Archives, UBC.

27 By the end of its first year, the Hillsborough School was servicing pupils from Bethel, Mermaid, Bunbury, Cross Road, Mount Herbert; and Hazelbrook; see Record Book,

From a very careful reading of Robertson's writings and speeches when back in Canada, one might have guessed that Robertson and the Macdonald movement were leaning in this gendered direction. In an address to the May Court Club of Ottawa, as part of a pitch for greater investment in public schools, Robertson extolled the ambitions and achievements of the Macdonald movement, and its impact on normal school curricula in general. At one point he claims that while happily observing the uptake in manual training – "Over 22,000 boys and girls in Canadian schools receive the benefits of manual training in their regular course under the local school authorities" – Robertson took particular pleasure in reporting on boys. Three additional times he singles out male students for special comment: he reported how the Movement had created 45 new teacher specialists in manual training and, elsewhere in his writings, he happily stated that as a result of their widespread employment "more than 7,000 boys were taking the course."²⁸ Though correlation does not imply cause, Robertson often drew a connection between manual training and lower truancy rates and better engagement of male students in Canadian public schools.

One might ask why manual training becomes so closely associated with boys' education when it emerged from a gender-inclusive environment in western Sweden. An answer is suggested by the hybridization of manual training over its brief tenure in Canadian education. Later in his career, when Robertson was interviewing educators as the chair of the Royal Commission on Technical and Vocational Education, he revisited the potential of sloyd with teachers who had been trained and employed by the Macdonald Sloyd Fund. One Swedish instructor named Thomson described how the Canadian version of sloyd programming emphasized sampling and adaptation. "We took for Canada the Swedish Sloyd modified by the Russian and English methods," he explained. "Some of our original teachers had been trained in Sweden as well as in England."²⁹ This suggests some of the reasons why manual training did not survive in elementary education and was subsumed by practical vocational education in higher grades.³⁰ Swedish sloyd strongly influenced

Robertson Collection, box 4, folder 19, pp. 2, 7, Rare Books and Special Collections and University Archives, UBC.

28 Robertson, *Macdonald Sloyd Fund*, 10.

29 Robertson, *Macdonald Sloyd Fund*, 28.

30 It is worth noting the reformist agenda that attached to vocational and industrial education for working class families in many parts of Canada. See, for instance, Craig Heron, "The High School and the Household Economy in Working-Class Hamilton,

the Russian system of manual training to which Thomson refers. But Russian educators applied a practical philosophy to their iteration of manual training, and the programs they adapted and developed were overtly intended to prepare students for employment in industry. This adaptation created a significant distinction, the Russian model taking the focus off of self-improvement and reorienting the curricular focus on productive citizenship. For example, both systems used series of models to teach hand-eye coordination, but the Russian system allowed for the creation of object parts, rather than finished whole items, as if to reflect the realities of assembly line work.³¹ As described above, the distinctions of “English sloyd” also drew from this vocational paradigm.³²

Like the change in the literal spelling of slöjd to sloyd, the goals of the Macdonald Schools began to diverge from those of Swedish system upon their translation for use in rural areas of Canada like the Maritimes. Sloyd came to North America through the efforts of engaged promoters, enthusiastic teacher-converts, and networks of education philanthropists. But as manual training becomes mainstreamed into state-sponsored school system, Nordic ideals of “skill, sagacity, and moral formation” fell by the wayside, whittled away until only a practical, pragmatic, and gender-appropriate technical core remained. Swedish proponents like Otto Salomon accepted they would have to adapt the original precepts and practices to local environments and different state educational systems. As they exported Swedish ideas about manual training to new contexts around the world, they and their collaborators emphasized different types of craft-making and accepted different gender priorities in manual training curricula through the creation of different kinds of workshops

1890-1930,” *Historical Studies in Education* 7, no. 2 (September 1995): 217-59. It featured prominently in reformatories, as shown in Dale Gilbert, “Assister les familles de Québec,” *Revue d’histoire de L’Amérique française* 61, no. 3 / 4 (hiver/printemps, 2008): 469-99. Additionally, in Canada, vocationalism was central to Indigenous secondary education and seen as an important tool of assimilation, as in Brian Tittley, “Industrious, but Formal and Mechanical: The Sisters of Charity of Providence in Residential School Classrooms,” *Historical Studies in Education* 22, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 58-74.

31 See John P. Schenk, *The Life and Times of Victor Karlovich Della-Vos*, trans. Serge Ginsberg (Aberdeen, SD: North Central College, 1984).

32 The late 19th century saw many English and Scottish teachers seek training in the principles and practices of the sloyd system at Nääs. See also Gordon Sutton, *Artisan or Artist?: A History of the Teaching of Arts and Crafts in English Schools* (London: Pergamon Press, 1967), 181-8. Others, like Solomon Barter, who organized manual training for the London School Board at the end of the 19th century, preferred an adapted model that utilized specialized instructors with technical training. See Barter, *Manual Instruction; Woodwork; (The English Sloyd)*.

for different kinds of students.³³ A wider analysis of these adaptation strategies would “reveal” a great deal about different and perhaps competing ideas of “formation,” and how these connect to notions of citizenship ascribed by gender and class and, in some contexts, also race. This case study does suggest that the Swedish program, adapted to suit elementary school systems of the 20th century Maritimes as “manual training,” lost core elements of sloyd along the way. Classic forms of Swedish sloyd, based on the premise and belief that woodworking and other forms of manual training were valuable for both boys and girls, disappeared into the curricular background in Maritime Canada. In Sweden, boys and girls were trained together and undertook all forms of sloyd; in Canada, the program was decidedly gendered and focused on male engagement through practical education with a vocational orientation. Girls were segregated into domestic science and related courses.

By reframing sloyd and manual training in gendered-based practical education, the Macdonald Schools helped consign the program to the dustbin of history. Elementary-level manual training in Canada was abandoned by the inter-war period, even as industrial education and technical training became integrated into secondary schools.³⁴ Before this, educators, reformers, and philanthropists worked together to bring new ideas and programs for education into Atlantic Canadian schools. As this Swedish idea travelled along a series of Anglo-American cultural and political networks to North America, the mind-body-spirit holism of Swedish sloyd was refocused on the narrower ideas and goals of 20th century vocationalism, ultimately thought better-suited for older children in advanced grades. Though further research into the specific programs implemented in Canadian schools is needed, it suggests the philosophies of Swedish sloyd were overtaken by this new focus. It would alter its early focus on general social goals of personal development and character formation and take on the more liberal and gendered goals of productive citizenship.

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33 Women instructors were very important to the transatlantic circulation of the system, and often tried to adapt, with varying degrees of success, the gender inclusivity of Nordic sloyd in North America. Whittaker gives an account of two women sloyd instructors (Chapman and Nyström), who adapted the system to English schools and offered courses to both boys and girls in London in the 1890s. See Whittaker, *Legacy of Educational Sloyd*, 116–19. Flora White, an American educator, took training at Nääs and brought sloyd to Massachusetts, and adapted it for girls. See Morice, *Flora White*.

34 See Sutherland and Comacchio, *Children in English Canadian Society*, chaps. 12 and 13.

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SASHA MULLALLY is a professor of history at the University of New Brunswick, and her book (with David Wright), *Foreign Practices: Immigrant Doctors and the History of Canadian Medicare* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2020) examines the influx of physicians during the second half of the 20th century and the central role they played in the early implementation of universal health care. Her new SSHRC-funded project attends to the origins of occupational therapy and the practice of "therapeutic craft" in early 20th century clinical and educational institutions across Canada and the United States.