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Hearts and minds: Canadian romance at the dawn of the modern era, 1900-1930

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I have determined the meaning of these words mostly from their context – that is, from the many letters I used in my research – and, in part, from *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* and *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Tenth Edition.

**affinity:** a true love; a soul mate

**bachelor:** a man, usually unmarried, keeping house for himself, sometimes with other bachelors

**backward:** shy; bashful; diffident

**benedict:** a newly married man, after a long bachelorhood

**cap-setting:** trying to ensnare or lure a man into marriage; hunting for a husband

**chaffing:** good-natured teasing; joking around

**double up:** to get married

**double-harness:** married

**fall in with:** to get to know (someone)

**flirting:** leading someone to believe you have romantic feelings for him/her

**forward:** bold, almost pushy

**fussing:** caressing or kissing

**to get changed:** to get married

**hitched:** married

**in earnest about:** to love (someone)

**jake:** great; wonderful; terrific

**to jazz:** to dance

**love-making:** courting

**to make love:** to profess one’s love for someone; to court
old maid: unmarried woman, at least twenty-three years old, who typically lives at home and cares for parents (reputed to own many cats as well)

petting: caressing or kissing

prude: a woman who conceals her romantic feelings or shows excessive reserve; who is standoffish, or has little contact, with men

slow: not aggressive, bold, or determined enough in seeking a mate

to spoon: older word for petting; to talk amorously

spunk: courage in pursuit of romance

to tie the knot: to get married

to trifle: to toy with someone’s emotions; to flirt

well-fixed: prosperous; well off
INTRODUCTION: WHY ROMANCE?

1 10 March 1913, p. 6.


4 Ward argues, for example, that women’s “courtship territory” – that is, the physical spaces or venues in which they were most likely to meet men – was more circumscribed than for men, but this is illogical, for a courtship space is, by definition, a place where men and women could interact; it would have to have been equal for both sexes. What he probably means to say is that men had more freedom than women to seek out partners and were therefore more likely to find a partner.

5 In his Introduction, Ward states that he draws “heavily on … the diaries and letters written and read by ordinary men and women,” but this is an exaggeration in my view. A few sentences later he concedes that criticisms such as mine “cannot be dismissed out of hand. For one thing, written records come from the literate population and their use inevitably creates a bias toward the higher social strata” and that “even among the literate, the papers of the noteworthy are more likely to survive than those of ordinary folk.” Ward, 5–6.

6 The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation-building in Western Canada to 1915 (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008).

7 Ibid., especially 6–9, 21–22, 27, 53–54, 78. Less convincing is Carter’s claim that inter-racial marriage was widely proscribed, by medical experts, government officials, and the like. Not only does she provide few examples of this, but her observation that the Territorial government tried to force white men to marry, rather than just live with, native women (to ensure child support in the event of desertion) undermines the argument. Carter, The Importance of Being Monogamous, 68–71.

9 Strange, Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880–1930 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). Strange’s book is an excellent source of information on the efforts of middle-class purity crusaders in Toronto to protect the morality of working girls from the “evils” of city life, but it addresses the issue of romance only indirectly, mostly in its discussion of the greater opportunities for private and unsupervised heterosexual interaction in the city. On the extensive efforts of middle-class spokespersons to protect the chastity of rural women of the West in the same period, see Terry Chapman, “Women, Sex, and Marriage in Western Canada, 1890–1920,” Alberta History 33, no. 4 (Autumn 1985): 1–12.


11 McPherson’s study is particularly useful in pointing out the more forward and sexualized behaviour of student nurses towards male patients after World War I. McPherson, “The Case of the Kissing Nurse”: Femininity, Sexuality, and Canadian Nursing, 1900–1970,” in McPherson et al., Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), 179–98.


in some ways the embodiment of non-romance, or failed romance, their numbers and experiences add some perspective to the subject and should not be ignored. The only other study of this group that I’m aware of is Michele Stairs’ brief analysis of P.E.I. in the late nineteenth century, “Matthews and Marillas: Bachelors and Spinsters in Prince Edward Island in 1881,” in Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie, eds., Mapping the Margins: The Family and Social Discipline in Canada, 1700–1975 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 247–70.


Lynne Marks’ study of associational life and leisure in three late-nineteenth-century Ontario towns, for example, emphasizes the tensions that existed between the “rough” masculinity of young, single, mostly working-class men, with their penchant for loafing, drinking, gambling, and profanity, and the “respectable” masculinity of their married, church-going male elders. Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth Century Small-Town Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 81–106. Carolyn Strange’s work on middle-class Protestant efforts to regulate the leisure activities of Toronto’s “working girls” in the early 1900s reveals a similar dichotomy among women. Toronto’s Girl Problem, 53–88, 116–43. For a discussion of the conflict between working-class and middle-class concepts of masculinity in the sporting world in the early 1900s, see Colin Howell, “A Manly Sport: Baseball and the Social Construction of Masculinity,” in Parr and Rosenfeld, eds., Gender and History in Canada, 187–210.


By 1930, the Family Herald’s circulation was over 200,000, making it the most popular “farm-and-family” magazine of the era. The Western Home Monthly’s circulation was half that. Fraser Sutherland, The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1989), 118, 160.


28 By 1930, the Family Herald’s circulation was over 200,000, making it the most popular “farm-and-family” magazine of the era. The Western Home Monthly’s circulation was half that. Fraser Sutherland, The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1989), 118, 160.

29 2 July 1913, p. 6. For similar accounts, see 23 May 1906, 9 (“Alan Buchanan”); 2 October 1907, 9 (“Diffident”); 27 November 1907, 9 (“Canadian Wild Rose”); 26 June 1912, 9 (“Quinte”); and 3 April 1912, 9 (“Cotton Top”).

30 The editors of both magazines admitted as much. 9 September 1908, 9; Western Home Monthly (hereafter WHM), June 1906, 10.

31 I found no personal columns in any of the other main periodicals of this period: Canadian Courier, Canadian Home Journal, Canadian Magazine, Maclean’s, and Saturday Night. Nor did I find one in the Toronto Daily Star. The Toronto Daily News did have a “Want Ads” section in the early 1900s, containing a few requests for correspondents of the opposite sex, but these ads were brief.

32 14 March 1906, 9.

33 To avoid similar misunderstandings among my readers, I have provided a Glossary of romantic terms and phrases.

34 As Prim Rose told her readers, “the purpose of these columns is to reflect life as it really is in all parts of the Dominion and among all classes.” 25 March 1908, 9.
35 Here is the distribution of population by province, alongside the distribution of letters in the *Family Herald* by province, averaged for the period 1911 to 1924:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Population (%)</th>
<th>Letters (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.E.I.</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.W.T.</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventeen per cent of the letters in the sample were from the *Western Home Monthly*, and the distribution, by region, was as follows: Maritimes (2%), central Canada (8%), prairies (81%), B.C. (5%), foreign (5%).


37 As of 1931, when records of such things began, 57 per cent of Canadians claimed English as their mother tongue. Moreover, for the period 1901 to 1931, an average of 84 per cent were either British (55%) or French (29%) in origin, and the percentage who were Canadian-born, British-born, and other foreign-born were 77, 12, and 11 respectively.

As well, a proportion of French–Canadians and “other foreign born” would have been bilingual – that is, able to read and write English. By 1931, for example, almost one third of French Quebecers were bilingual. In short, the representativeness of the columns extends beyond the 57 per cent of Canadians whose mother tongue was English. *Historical Statistics of Canada*, A125–63, 185–237, 260–69; Paul Linteau et al., *Quebec: A History 1867–1929* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1983), 51.

38 *WHM*, January 1910, 17.

39 27 July 1921, 26.

40 Historians have been unable to provide definitive portraits of the ideal mate because the sources they have had to work with have been so few and so elitist. This has led some to conclude, incorrectly, that there was no common ideal mate – that there were as many ideal mates as there were individuals. See, for instance, Ellen Rothman, *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 201–2.

41 By the 1930s, the circulation of the *Family Herald* was 217,000. Sutherland, *The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines* (Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1989), 118.

of marriage was, in fact, a worldwide phenomenon carried over from the previous century. Chapman, “Women, Sex, and Marriage,” 1; Coontz, *Marriage, A History*, 172–73.


This letter is also a strong indictment of bachelorhood. See also 22 September 1909, 9 (“Merrie Anne”); 13 October 1909, 9 (“Barney”); 2 March 1910, 11 (“W.G.”); and 10 December 1924, 32 (“Mickey the Third”).

For the instruction of boys, see 8 February 1913, 11 (“Ulster Scot”); 31 May 1911, 11 (“Cornella”); and 27 September 1911, 11 (“Plain Jane”).

For the strongest indictments, see 22 March 1911, 11 (“Sodbreaker”); 29 March 1911, 11 (“Sympathizer”); 16 July 1913, 6 (“Mountain Girl”); and 23 November 1910, 11 (“Winnipeg”).

For a harsh critique of how girls were raised with such single-minded purpose, see 7 January 1914, 6 (“Independent Thinker”). The new employment opportunities for women account, in no small way, for the declining marriage rate among women in the late nineteenth century. Ward, *Courtship, Love, and Marriage*, 51.

The family magazines of these years conveyed the same message: marriage guaranteed life-long happiness. The glorification

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43 *WHM*, May 1914 (“Honey Dew”).


For the strongest indictments, see 22 March 1911, 11 (“Sodbreaker”); 29 March 1911, 11 (“Sympathizer”); 16 July 1913, 6 (“Mountain Girl”); and 23 November 1910, 11 (“Winnipeg”).

10 September 1913, 6 (“Mustard”) and 12 November 1913, 8 (“Mother”) (quotes); 5 June 1912, 9 (“Gypsy”); 6 August 1913, 6 (“P.J.K.”); 18 February 1914, 6 (“Cymro II”).


48 Coontz, *Marriage, a History*, 185.

49 16 May 1906, 9. The family magazines of these years conveyed the same message: marriage guaranteed life-long happiness. The glorification

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19 May 1909, 11 (“The Broncho”) (quote). This letter is also a strong indictment of bachelorhood. See also 22 September 1909, 9 (“Merrie Anne”); 13 October 1909, 9 (“Barney”); 2 March 1910, 11 (“W.G.”); and 10 December 1924, 32 (“Mickey the Third”).

30 August 1905, 6. See also 5 June 1907, 9 (“An E.T. Business Girl”); 5 June 1912, 9 (“Stenographer”); 25 January 1911, 13 (“Single Blessedness”); 26 April 1911, 11 (“ Tried and True”); 16 April 1913, 6 (“Jane Ann”). For a harsh critique of how girls were raised with such single-minded purpose, see 7 January 1914, 6 (“Independent Thinker”).

For the instruction of boys, see 8 February 1913, 11 (“Ulster Scot”); 31 May 1911, 11 (“Cornella”); and 27 September 1911, 11 (“Plain Jane”).


21 October 1908, 9 (“House Comfort”). See also 30 January 1906, 8 (“A.H. Olmage”); 1 July 1908, 9 (“Miss M.C.”); 21 October 1908, 9
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55 30 August 1905, 6.

56 Saskatchewan’s “Harry O,” for example, wrote that “some of these men in Western Canada are looking forward to the time when they will have wives who will help them to be nobler and purer.” 22 April 1914, 6. See also 8 April 1908, 9 (“Riverdalite”); 29 April 1908, 9 (“B.C. Bachelor”); 7 October 1908, 9 (“Penelope”); 16 March 1910, 11 (“E. Pluribus Unum”); 25 May 1910, 9 (“Constance”); 16 August 1911, 9 (“Scotchy”); 14 May 1913, 6 (“Jayhawker”); 17 September 1913, 6 (“Adam”); 25 March 1914, 6 (“Not for Long”).


58 27 April 1910, 11 (“Notta Doctor”); 14 September 1910, 9 (“Lawley”). The call for a bachelor tax was especially strong in western Canada, and in the American West, too; the state of Montana introduced such a tax ($3 for single men over 21) in 1922. Carter, The Importance of Being Monogamous, 82.

59 In the 1910s alone, the percentage of marriage-aged women and men (age 15 and over) who married rose from 52 and 57 per cent respectively, to 57 and 59 per cent, and in the early 1900s the proportion of married women, specifically, rose to the highest level in half a century. Alison Prentice et al., Canadian Women: A History, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), Table A. 2, 468; Beth Light and Joy Parr, eds., Canadian Women on the Move, 1867–1920 (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1983), 109.


The image of “spinsterhood” did improve, however, in the early 1900s, as unmarried women channeled their energies into social reform causes and demonstrated more independence in general, making their state of singleness appear more deliberate than forced. Nor did unmarried Canadians in P.E.I., whose families relied more heavily on their contributions to the family farm, carry the same stigma as those in other provinces. A. B. McKillop, The Spinster and the Prophet: Florence Deeks, H.G. Wells, and the Mystery of the Purloined Past (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter and Ross, 2000), 46–47; Rothman, Hearts and Hands, 252; Stairs, “Matthews and Marillas,” 247–67.

61 See, for example, 29 November 1905, 9 (“Locksley Hall”); 26 October 1910, 11 (“School Trustee”); and WHM, July 1907, 15 (“Trixie”).

62 See, for example, 8 April 1914, 6 (“Western Bachelor”) and 4 September 1912, 9 (“Lonesome Manitoba” in Condensed Letters).

63 Peter Ward notes that love was the most common basis of marriage throughout English Canada in the nineteenth century. Courtship, Love and Marriage, 59, 149, 165. This was also true in Europe and the rest of North America. Coontz, Marriage,
Much of the highly sentimental “romantic” fiction Canadians read at this time presented an idealized vision of life – life as it should be, not as it was. Those writing in the romantic style were optimistic about life. So although fictional couples experienced hardship and difficulties, in the end they found eternal love and happiness in each other’s arms. Even the inexpensive “dime novels” of the era, produced in the United States and sold widely in Canada, although they helped subvert traditional definitions of proper female behaviour during courtship – especially for working women – ended with couples happily married.


The WHM and Family Herald contain too many references to the necessity and beneficence of love to cite, but a perusal of the Family Herald from January to July 1913, and the WHM from May to November 1906, yields an unusually high number of testimonials.

Maud Cooke, Social Etiquette, or, Manners and customs of polite society: containing rules of etiquette for all occasions (London, ON: McDermid & Logan, 1896), 117. At one time, however, romantic love between man and woman, to the extent it distracted them from religious devotion, was feared and shunned as a form of idolatry. Coontz, Marriage, A History, 179.
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7 11 April 1906, 9 (“Young Bruin”). See also 3 June 1906, 9 (“Young Benedict”). It seems that widowers, with young children to care for, also preferred potential wives with domestic ability.

8 21 February 1906, 9 (“A Bunch of Prairie Wild Flowers”). See also 11 July 1906, 9 (“Stupid”) and 4 September 1907, 9 (“Red Rose”).

9 The editor noted, for example, that “A Highland Lassie” from New Brunswick, “refined, educated, sympathetic, and thoroughly domesticated, would like to correspond with a nice bachelor or widower in good position, between the ages of 40 and 50 years.” 5 September 1906, 9 (Condensed Letters).

10 9 May 1906, 9 (“Scottie”).

11 6 March 1912, 11 (“Canadian Wife”). See also 30 July 1913, 6 (“Grumble”), who said that men want a wife “who can cook. What girl can’t, who is brought up on a farm? Of course, I don’t refer to those who are living in towns, who loll away their time either reading some frivolous work or spend their evenings at balls, whist parties or tennis courts.”

12 23 September 1908, 9.

13 10 April 1907, 9. See also 23 September 1908, 9 (“Jack of All Trades”), who noted that many of the young women of his day “care for nothing but to gad and dress, [and] care nothing for literature or the beauties of nature.” The kinds of women needed in the West, he said, are those who would be willing to do vigorous farm work in the fresh
country air and “stop idly strumming the piano, making lace, and wasting time on other make-believe occupations.”

14 26 January 1910, 11 (“Rara Avis”). In a similar vein, “Riverdalite” from Ontario, asked “Isn’t it better to enjoy the free serene life of a single man, than run the lottery risk of marrying a giddy, frivolous creature, who is entirely ignorant of the duties of house keeping, with little or no regard for the serious dignity of life, and consumed by thoughts that never rise above the ten-cent novel or the ball-room?” 12 February 1908, 9.

15 27 May 1908, 9 (“Bee Bee”). See also 12 August 1908, 9 (“Simon Tappertit”).

16 1 November 1911, 11. See 20 September 1911, 11 (“L.B.”), for the accusation.

17 21 September 1910, 11 (“Farmer’s Daughter, Wife and Mother”). See also 26 February 1913, 6 (“Farmer’s Daughter of the Prairie”).

18 14 May 1913, 6.

19 16 January 1907, 9. See also 5 December 1906, 9 (“Sweet Nora O’Neill”).

20 See 31 January 1912, 11 (“Eccentric”).

21 16 December 1908, 9 (“Ontario Bookkeeper”); 11 November 1908, 9 (“Steno”).

22 18 April 1906, 9 (“Another Bachelor”). See also 20 August 1913, 6 (“Trefoil”), who notes, statistically, the bias among western farmers against marrying teachers.

23 27 February 1907, 9. See also 22 January 1908, 9 (“Opeongo”) for a similar perspective.

24 See letters from “Bawn,” either 25 March 1908, 9 or 8 April 1908, 9; 15 April 1908, 9 (“Rouge Gorge”); 30 December 1908, 9 (“A Mere Man”); 8 March 1911, 13 (“Man in the Street”).

25 Teaching was the second most common employment for women, after domestic service. Prentice et al., Canadian Women, 133, 475.

26 22 May 1907, 9 (“Samantha Jenkins”).

27 8 April 1908, 9 (“Lehrer”) (quote). See also 11 November 1908, 9 (“A Canadian Teacher”), 8 August 1906, 9 (“Lenora”), 27 March 1907, 9 (“Marguerite”), 3 April 1907, 9 (“Hawthorne”), and October 24, 1906, 9 (“Glengary Girl”).

28 22 January 1908, 9. See also “Germanicus,” who complained that “women these days seem frequently to strive to attract attention by loud talk and flashy dress! Anything to be admired by serious, thoughtful men is denounced as old-fashioned and out-of-date,” and “Mountaineer,” who didn’t care “for the forward type of woman” and “would rather have a quiet, reserved woman.” 28 May 1913, 6. For a representative female voice, see “Mother of Six,” who felt that “a girl who voiced her opinions would be a ‘slim’ candidate for matrimony…. Women know this, and they show their wisdom by silence.” 20 May 1914, 6.

29 Roberts, “‘Rocking the Cradle for the World,’” 16 (quote); Coontz, Marriage, A History, 194–95. In 1901, 13 per cent of all gainfully employed workers were women. This rose to 15 per cent by 1921. Prentice, Canadian Women, 130, 133, 474.

30 22 April 1908, 9 (“Moralist”).


32 “If we feel that office work appeals to us more strongly than any other
kind,” wrote a Quebec office worker, “why should we not have the liberty to engage in it, without being considered unwomanly?” 4 August 1909, 11 (“Gussie”). See also 23 April 1913, 6 (“Dew Drop”); 30 April 1913, 6 (“Donald Dinny”); 3 April 1912, 9 (“Working”); and 12 March 1913, 6 (“Rosebud”).

14 February 1912, 11 (“Broncho Buster”).


1 June 1910, 9.

7 December 1910, 11 (“Toghrul Beg”).

24 December 1913, 8 (“Just Another”).

2 July 1913, 6 (“Daddy’s Housekeeper”).

10 December 1913, 8 (“Teddy of Oliver”) (quote). See also 14 May 1913, 6 (“Slow Match”); 10 September 1913, 6 (“Orangeman”); and 8 October 1913, 6 (“The Homble Will”).


At this time, women were not allowed to own homesteads, except as widows.


25 October 1911, 11 (“Terra Nova”).

One man recalled that a lot of the farm boys in his area of the West married girls who, unlike themselves, had graduated from high school because these girls were able to do the math required for the farm’s accounts. Barry Broadfoot, The Pioneer Years, 1895–1914 (Toronto: Doubleday, 1976), 184.

See 31 May 1905, 6 (“A.G.”); 5 July 1905, 6 (“Sunshine”); 31 May 1905, 6 (“A Young Farmer”); and 15 November 1905, 6 (“Lonely Bachelor”).

18 February 1914, 6 (“D’Allegro”).

20 June 1906, 9. See also 5 August 1908, 9 (“Blue Nose Boy”), 3 May 1905 (“Algoma Bachelor”), 13 March 1907, 9 (“Rob the Rover”), and 4 February 1914, 6 (“Husband and Chum”). Several of these correspondents cited a preference for the presumably more cultured “eastern” girl over the “western girl.”

For a similar defence, see also 17 October 1906, 9 (“The Mother’s Hope”) and 18 November 1908, 9 (“Rosey Raffles”).

24 June 1908, 9. (“O.K”).

30 January 1907, 9 (“Shocks”). See also 4 August 1909, 11 (“A Welsh Boy”), who said that “of all things else, my partner must be a good musician.” Given the prevalence of such views, women not musically inclined felt themselves to be at a distinct disadvantage. “I would be glad to correspond with some of the Western bachelors,” lamented one such woman, from Quebec, “but they all seem to want a girl who can sing and play, so that I am denied the pleasure.” 9 September 1908, 9 (Condensed Letters).

17 October 1906, 9 (“Ontario Bachelor”).

14 April 1909, 11 (“Idealist”).

68 4 October 1911, 9 (“Patricia”).

69 24 June 1914, 6 (“Greenhorn”). See also 13 January 1909, 9 (“Kid”), and 10 November 1909, 9 (“Professional”).

70 As always, some correspondents doubted men’s sincerity on this point. One young woman, for example, believed that men were not really looking for a “practical, everyday wife,” but for the “stylishly-dressed” woman. “Men ridicule fashions,” she wrote, “but let ever so charming a girl go modestly dressed to mingle in the gay throng and at once you will behold the wall-flower of the evening!” Given the strong language most men used to dismiss the heavily made-up or fashion-conscious woman, however, and in view of their other preferences, their comments ring sincere enough. 10 August 1910, 9 (“Eastern Tom-Boy”).

71 23 May 1906, 9. See also 29 May 1907, 9 (“Yorkshire Tyke”) and editor’s reply.

72 26 August 1908, 9 (“A Man of the West”). See also 23 October 1912, 11 (“Pipe Dream”) and 5 March 1913, 6 (“Steadfast”).

73 See, for example, 7 August 1907, 9 (“Saskatonian”); 8 September 1909, 9 (“Eastern Lawyer”); 6 December 1905, 6 (“Still Another Bachelor”); and 5 March 1913, 6 (“Steadfast”).

74 The historical literature on female social reform efforts in the period 1880 to 1920 is extensive. A good place to start, however, is with Linda Kealey, ed., *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada* (Toronto: Women’s Educational Press, 1979), which brings together a number of early articles on the subject. Also useful is Veronica

75 2 March 1910, 11 (“W.G.”).

76 22 August 1906, 9. See also 21 October 1908, 9 (“House Comfort”).

77 17 August 1910, 9 (“Morning Albertan”).

78 12 June 1907, 9. See also 1 November 1911, 11 (“Black Eyes”) and 1 August 1906, 9 (“Gray Eyes”).


81 9 September 1908, 9 (“Westward Ho!”). See also 18 March 1908, 9 (“Uno Hoo”), 16 February 1910, 11 (“Highland Mac”), and 15 May 1912, 9 (“Florence Nightingale”). In western Canada, writes Sarah Carter, “the white men who married Aboriginal women were derisively labelled ‘squam men.’” Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous*, 68.


84 17 August 1910, 9 and 7 September 1910, 9.

85 The argument against inter-racial marriage was made by a fellow calling himself “Viking,” who argued that husbands and wives of different skin colour were bound to have a different “mental make-up … which sooner or later may lead to contrary viewpoints on daily questions and finally even to marital disaster.” 19 March 1924, 32. This aside, Sarah Carter’s contention that such attitudes “were exemplified in colonial discourses that denounced race-mixing” is not borne out by the grandest “discourse” of the day – namely the personal columns. Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous*, 6. For liberal views of natives and foreigners, see 5 March 1913, 6 (“I.W.W.”) and 25 December 1907, 9 (“Canadian Nell”).

86 18 February 1914, 6. Many Scotch men did, however, request Scotch women as correspondents. In fact, Scottish correspondents were really the only clannish group in the column. See, for instance, 14 December 1921, 26 (“Scotland’s Pride”). That ethnicity (as opposed to religion) figured only slightly in the romantic criteria of Canadian men (and women) is echoed in Ward’s study of marriage in nineteenth-century English Canada, where ethnic criteria became less important over time. By the 1890s, only 25 per cent of Canadians were marrying someone of their own nationality – down from 50 per cent at

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87 See 9 October 1907, 9 (“A Defender of the Foreigners”) and 10 November 1909, 9 (“Pat”).


89 Coontz, Marriage, a History, 165; 22 April 1908, 9 (“Moralist”); 10 December 1913, 8 (“June”); 2 July 1913, 6 (“Reform”); 24 December 1913, 8 (“Scotch Canadian”); WHM, October 1909, 19 (“Scotland Yet”); WHM, May 1908, 22 (no name); WHM, October 1913, 70 (“Rose Bush”).

90 17 February 1909, 11 (“Unknown Wellwisher”). See also 5 August 1908, 9 (“A Blue Nose Boy”); 4 November 1908, 9 (“Nuff Sed”); 23 June 1909, 9 (“Sim”); 15 February 1913, 11 (“Indian Head”); and 12 February 1908, 9 (“Barnie”). Ellen Rothman found a similar attitude among American men in these years, specifically with respect to the male sex drive: that they wanted and respected women who rebuffed their sexual advances. Hearts and Hands, 188.

91 16 December 1908, 9 (“Rex”).

92 17 December 1913, 8. See also 23 September 1908, 9 (“Another Pioneer”); 25 April 1906, 9 (“Scottie”); and 5 March 1913, 6 (“I.W.W.”).

93 11 April 1906, 9 (“Young Bruin”).

94 7 November 1906, 9 (“A B.C. Rancher”). Female suffrage arrived first in the western provinces, though in their letters western men seemed no more supportive of suffrage in these years than men elsewhere in Canada. Only B.C. men showed stronger support for suffrage, and also for adventurous women eager to take on the great outdoors.

95 See 15 February 1911, 13 (“New B.C.”) and 4 December 1912, 11 (“Bushwacker”).

96 See, for example, 3 June 1906, 9 (“Maritimus”); 16 January 1907, 9 (“Jerry Jinks”); and 27 October 1909, 9 (“Nil Desperandum”).

97 See, for example, 30 January 1907, 9 (“Shocks”), who stressed that “the ideal wife should have, if possible, a college education, or at least a very good common education.” See also 12 September 1908, 9 (“Universitas”). For an indication of how much respect was accorded to teaching and scholarship in the region, historically, see D.C. Harvey, “The Intellectual Awakening of Nova Scotia,” and A.G. Bailey, “Creative Movements in the Culture of the Maritime Provinces,” in George Rawlyk, ed., Historical Essays on the Atlantic Provinces (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1967), 99–121, 239–40. And on the religious rivalries that gave rise to many institutions of higher learning during the colonial period, see W.S. MacNutt, The Atlantic Provinces: The Emergence of Colonial Society (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1965), 165–68.

98 Two good examples are 12 February 1908, 9 (“Agricola”) and 22 May 1912, 9 (“St. Cecilia”).

99 1 May 1912, 9 (Condensed Letters).

100 That Canadians tended to marry within their own class was as true in the nineteenth century as it was in the early twentieth, at least in English Canada. Ward, Courtship, Love, and Marriage, 60.

101 28 May 1913, 6.

102 See, for example, 28 May 1913, 6 (“Agitator”), and 3 June 1906, 9 (“Young Benedict”). For the self-righteous views of urban middle-class
Protestants, see Carolyn Strange’s rich and fascinating book, *Toronto’s Girl Problem*.

103 10 March 1909, 11 (“Canyon Orator”). See also 17 July 1912, 9 and 14 July 1909, 9 (“Scarlett Pimpernel”).

104 30 January 1907, 9 (“Shocks”).

105 6 May 1914, 6 (“Huronian”).

106 22 July 1908, 9 (“Plato”).


108 12 February 1908, 9 (“Barnie”).

109 9 September 1908, 9 (“Westward Ho!”). Further evidence of this was furnished by a B.C. teacher (“School Marm”), familiar with the habits of bachelors, who noted that “most of the bachelors seem to be great readers, and are remarkably well-informed, so much so that ordinary girls who think of little but cooking and dressing themselves, and the house, are not always interesting to them.” 10 November 1909, 9.


2: THE MAN OF HER DREAMS

1 See chapter 4.

2 27 September 1911, 11. See also 1 November 1911, 11 (“Black Eyes”), who believed that “women have their share in the making of the ideal man.”

3 14 July 1909, 9.

4 26 August 1908, 9. See also 4 October 1905, 6 (“Miss Columbus”); 22 November 1905, 6 (“Eastern Jewel”); 28 February 1906, 9 (“Bluenose”); 29 January 1913, 6 (“Happy-go-lucky”); and 14 October 1908, 9 (“Modest Mary”), who felt that “land” was an important asset of a desirable man.

5 25 June 1913, 6. See also 17 January 1906 (“Holly”), 8.

6 18 April 1906, 9 (“Another Bachelor”). One bachelor-homesteader, from Saskatchewan, told Prim Rose readers that bachelors were common in the West because “the men out here want to be in good circumstances so as to give the woman as much luxury as they can to keep her from getting lonely; and to do so they must have a pretty big crop.” 26 March 1913, 6 (“Ben Roy”).

7 23 September 1908, 9 (“Another Pioneer”).

8 3 April 1907, 9. See also 7 July 1909, 9 (“Gideon”); 7 April 1909, 11 (“Defender”); and 8 November 1905, 6 (“Happy Bachelor”).

9 See, for example, 27 July 1910, 9 (“Condensed Letters”), and 8 June 1910, 11 (“Homebird”).

10 4 September 1907, 9 (“Red Rose”).

11 29 January 1913, 6. See also 3 August 1910, 9 (“Eastern Tom-Boy”), and 18 July 1906, 9 (“Mandrake”).

12 See 1 November 1905, 6 (“Maple Leaf” and “A True Manitoban”).

13 8 November 1905, 6. In a 1910 survey of 250 American women, only 2 per cent considered wealth important to a happy marriage. Cited in “The Ideal Husband,” *Family Herald*, 21 December 1910, 11. What’s more, the North American definition of the ideal man may have changed since the nineteenth century, when being a good provider was the central aspect of manly virtue. Coontz, *Marriage, A History*, 168, 188.

and Marriage, 61–2, 68–9; Karen Dubinsky, “‘Maidenly Girls’ or ‘Designing Women’?: The Crime of Seduction in Turn-of-the-Century Ontario,” in Iacovetta and Valverde, eds., Gender Conflicts, 43–4. For examples of upper-class snobbery in the personal columns, see 17 February 1909, 11 (“Miss Somebody”), and Prim Rose’s comments in the same issue.

15 See, for example, “Condensed Letters,” 16 February 1910, 11 (“A Lonely Englishwoman”), and 7 June 1911, 11 (“Lancashire Lass”).

16 12 August 1908, 9 (“Girl with the Apron”). See also 27 September 1905, 6 (“A Lover of Nature”); 14 May 1913, 6 (“Ess 24”); and 4 October 1905, 6 (“Miss Columbus”).

17 29 July 1908, 9 (“Zenobia the Fearless”).

18 29 September 1909, 9 (“Veteran”).

19 8 June 1910, 11 (“Mother”); 1 December 1909, 9 (“A Dane in B.C.”).

20 Mark Zuehlke, Scoundrels, Dreamers and Second Sons: British Remittance Men in the Canadian West, 2nd ed (Toronto: Dundurn, 2001), 9–26. The poor reputation of Englishmen extended beyond the rural West. Apparently, many urban factories and stores had signs that read: “No Englishman need apply.” Cited in Read, ed., The Great War and Canadian Society, 75.

21 Zuehlke, Scoundrels, Dreamers and Second Sons, 9.

22 7 November 1906, 9 (“A B.C. Rancher”).

23 16 January 1907, 9 (“British Fair Play”).

24 15 January 1908, 9.


26 18 August 1909, 9 (“Alexandria”).

27 11 May 1910, 11 (“A Western Girl”).

28 15 January 1908, 9. See also 21 August 1907, 9 (“Homely Meg”); 26 November 1913, 8, “Condensed Letters” (“Happy Violet”); 11 November 1908, 9 (“Steno”); and 4 March 1908, 9 (“Canadian Nell”).

29 19 March 1913, 6 (“Traveler”).

30 7 August 1907, 9 (“Saskatonian”). From what we know about such matters, the men who wrote such reassuring letters were likely telling the truth. Only male immigrant farmers from continental Europe were likely to expect their wives to toil long hours on the farm and at the same time fulfill their domestic duties. Joe Cherwinski, “Early Working-Class Life on the Prairies,” in R. D. Francis and H. Palmer, eds., The Prairie West: Historical Readings (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 547.

31 12 July 1905, 6 (“Union Jack”); 9 January 1907, 9 (“Uncle Silas”); and 10 April 1907, 9 (“Up and Down”).

32 For a personal account, see 19 September 1906, 9 (“A Hired Woman”).

33 Craig Heron, Booze: A Distilled History (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 80–81.

34 18 March 1908, 9 (“Uno Hoo”); 25 November 1908, 9 (“A Man of the West”); James Gray, Booze: When Whisky Ruled the West (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1995), 76.

35 Gray, Booze, 76, and Red Lights on the Prairies, 183.

36 10 January 1907, 6 (“Pink Cheeks”). See also 29 August 1906, 9 (“Kinistino”).

37 8 November 1905, 6 (“Agricola Manitoba Bachelor”).
38 27 September 1905, 6 (“A Lover of Nature”); 7 January 1914, 6 (“Bright Sunshine”); 2 September 1908, 9 (“Optimistic Nellie”); and 28 November 1906, 7 (“Minnehaha”). See also “Condensed Letters” section of any issue.

39 17 January 1906, 6.

40 14 November 1906, 9.

41 1 August 1906, 9. See also 11 July 1906, 9 (“A Spunky Wife”), and 27 December 1905, 6 (“Sarah Otis Monticello”).

42 18 August 1909, 9 (“Gooseberry”). See also 19 February 1908, 9 (“True Western Maid”); 11 July 1906, 9 (“Happy Bee”); and 21 February 1906, 9 (“Blanquetté”). For the bachelor’s point of view, see 27 April 1907, 9 (“Quo Vadis”) and 14 August 1907, 9 (“Pathfinder”).

43 See 14 November 1906, 9 (“Mollie”), and 28 February 1906, 9 (“Lottie”).

44 25 March 1908, 9 (“One of the Old Guard”).

45 20 March 1907, 9.

46 7 February 1906, 8. See also 25 November 1908, 9 (“A Man of the West”).

47 28 August 1907, 9 (“Veni, Vidi, vici”). See also 22 April 1914, 6 (“Black Sheep”), who stated that “my experience from seven years of homestead life is that those men who are not too narrow-minded to smoke, drink, etc. make by far the best husbands.”

48 23 June 1909, 9.

49 See, for example, 6 August 1913, 6 (“Home Lover”); 15 June 1905, 6 (“Betty”); 14 February 1906, 8 (“Jack O’Brien”); 22 January 1908, 9 (“A Soldier’s Boy”).

50 31 July 1907, 9 (“Sahile Bahadur”).

51 15 June 1905, 6 (“Betty”).

52 21 June 1905, 6; 7 July 1909, 9. See also 16 June 1909, 9 (“Ein Bauer Maedchen”), and 4 October 1905, 6 (“Miss Columbus”).

53 13 January 1909, 9 (“A Spectacle Wearer”).

54 An excellent study of the emerging social criticism in this period, as it pertained to the exploitative nature of the capitalist system in particular, is Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), especially chapters 7 and 8; see also Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), ch. 7, who discusses the anti-materialist and anti-capitalist views of prominent Canadian imperialists like Andrew Macphail and Stephen Leacock.

55 11 July 1906, 9 (“Leamington Spa”).

56 2 August 1911, 9 (“Grey Eyes”). See also 3 June 1906, 9 (“Old, Old Maid”).

57 *WHM*, November 1906, 8, and January 1909, 14.

58 25 August 1909, 9 (“East Wind”). See also 1 August 1906, 9 (“A Widow”).

59 3 July 1907, 9 (“A Farmer’s Happy Wife”).

60 29 April 1908, 9 (“B.W.X.”).

61 2 January 1907, 9 (“Peggasis”).

62 29 July 1908, 9 (“Western Teacher”) (quote). See also 30 December 1908, 9 (“Con Amore”); 1 May 1907, 9 (“Condensed Letters”).

63 21 August 1907, 9.

64 9 March 1910, 11.

65 2 July 1913, 6 (“44–40 Winchester”).

66 9 January 1907, 9 (“A Lonely Bachelor”).
87 4 September 1907, 9
(“Straightforward”).

88 15 August 1906, 9 (“An Adviser”).

89 27 June 1906, 9 (“Broady”). See also 20 February 1907, 9 (“Ox-Breaker”).

90 26 June 1907, 9.

91 12 April 1905, 6. See also 8 November 1905, 6 (“Happy Bachelor”); 6 September 1905, 6 (“A Yukon Prospector”); 15 November 1905, 6 (“Lonely Bachelor”); and 29 August 1906, 9 (“Jubilate Deo”). Historian Cecilia Danysk has argued that western bachelors heralded their helplessness in domestic matters – to affirm their essentially “masculine” identity – but the letters in the personal columns suggest otherwise.
a superabundance of vitality. The life is calculated to produce hardy, self-reliant, and self-poised men.” 90.

92 23 August 1905, 6. See also 20 February 1907, 9 (“Ox-Breaker”).

93 2 January 1907, 9 (“Ever Hopeful”).

94 23 August 1905, 6 (“Curly”);
6 September 1905, 6 (“Yukon Prospector”).

95 6 September 1905, 6.

96 16 May 1906, 9 (“S.E.T.”). See also 25 July 1906, 9 (“Rolling Stone”).

97 27 June 1906, 9 (“Braody”).

98 30 October 1907, 9 (“Don Pedro”).

99 6 November 1907, 9.

100 12 August 1908, 9.

101 25 September 1907, 9.

102 30 June 1909, 9 (“Rocky Mountain Goat”).

103 See 22 April 1908, 9 (“Prospector”), and 21 November 1906, 7 (“Phonographicus”).

104 6 May 1908, 9.

105 19 August 1908, 9 (“Leek”). See also 29 June 1910, 11 (“The Foreigner”), and 13 October 1909, 9 (“Barney”).

106 10 March 1909, 11 (“J.L.”).

107 See, for example, 12 February 1908, 9 (“Barnie”). Some women felt this too. See 30 January 1906, 8 (“[Mrs.] A.H. Olmage”).

108 Emily Murphy, Janey Canuck in the West (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1910), 11. Her sensuous and heroic description of Western lumberjacks is too good to not mention: “There is nothing of the milk sop about them. Forest blood ever runs hotly. A man who wields an axe breathes deeply, and tingles with life in every vein. He drinks life from the pines and highly ozonised atmosphere. He has health and energy to throw away in

109 Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 302–4. For an excellent overview of efforts of railway and government officials, and others, to “sell” the West to prospective emigrants, see Ronald Rees, New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home (Saskatoon: Prairie Books, 1988), 4–27. British emigration societies also highlighted the region’s romantic possibilities – literally – by informing prospective female emigrants that their chances of finding a husband were very good. Lisa Chilton, Agents of Empire: British Female Migration to Canada and Australia, 1860s–1930 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 88–89.

110 5 July 1911, 9.

111 See also 2 April 1913, 6, “Condensed Letters” (“Lonely Ann”).

112 18 November 1914, 7 (“Peppin”).

113 For some elite observers, the rise of cities and industry had more serious implications: it rendered the Anglo-Saxon race less vigorous and thus more likely to weaken the British Empire. Berger, The Sense of Power, 178–81.

114 18 November 1908, 9.

115 4 March 1914, 6.

116 29 November 1905, 6. See also 8 November 1905, 6 (“A Bachelor’s Friend”); 14 November 1906, 9 (“Topsy”); and 27 December 1905, 6 (“Marguerite”).

117 17 July 1912, 9 (“Honey Bunch”).

118 18 November 1908, 9 (“Rosey Raffles”).

119 See 26 June 1907, 9 (“Desperandum”); 17 July 1907,
I have been unable to determine the exact number of women who moved to western Canada from points east, but from Ontario alone, 250,000 men and women made the move in the period 1891 to 1914. Even if only 15 per cent of these were women, the number (38,000) would be impressive. About 35,000 Maritimers migrated to the West in this period. Kerr and Holdsworth, *Historical Atlas of Canada: Addressing the Twentieth Century*, Plate 27.

Notes

151 7 May 1913, 6. See also the letter from “Patriot,” 17 April 1912, 9, who also defends the cowboys.


153 13 May 1908, 9. In her recent study of Victorian and post-Victorian female emigration societies, historian Lisa Chilton notes that a key objective of British imperialists was to populate colonial frontiers with respectable middle-class “gentlewomen” whose civilizing influence could help keep men in line. “For those who wished to turn frontier spaces into civilized outposts of the British Empire,” she writes, “the absence of appropriately respected female settlers was a central aspect of the frontier problem.” Agents of Empire, 69.

154 25 March 1908, 9. See also 3 June 1914, 6 (“Orange Blossom”); 13 November 1907, 9 (“Eleanor”); and 23 August 1911, 9 (“A Canadian Woman”).

155 22 August 1906, 9. See also 15 July 1908, 9 (“A Railroad girl”), and 27 October 1909, 9 (“Thelma”).

156 For an example of the bias of upper-class women, see 17 February 1909, 11 (“Miss Somebody”).

157 27 September 1905, 6.

158 29 January 1908, 9 (“Condensed Letters”).

3: THE DOS AND DON’TS OF ROMANCE

1 The column began in April 1906. Prior to this, Prim Rose’s etiquette advice appeared in the “Condensed Letters” section of her regular column or in articles on the same page. The etiquette column ended in 1914. It reappeared briefly, but sporadically, in 1916–17.

2 In the United States, by contrast, the etiquette advice of the early 1900s was disseminated primarily to the middle-class. Beth Bailey, From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 8, 15.

3 The following books – Cooke, Social etiquette; Manners; and E. Holt, Encyclopedia of etiquette: what to write, what to wear, what to do, what to say: a book of manners for everyday use (New York: Syndicate Publishing Co., 1915, rev. ed.; first published by Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1901), which went through many editions up to 1926 and was also reprinted by a Toronto firm in 1901 – appear to have been the main etiquette books of this period. They were easily accessible to most Canadians through their local library; the Manners book was also “recommended by the minister of Education for Use in School Libraries in Ontario.” I have drawn on these books to clarify or supplement details mentioned by Prim Rose in her etiquette column and, occasionally, to highlight differences.

4 2 December 1908, 9; 28 August 1907, 9 (quote).

5 29 May 1907, 9.

6 6 February 1907, 9.

7 24 July 1912, 9; 15 May 1912, 9.

8 5 June 1907, 9 (quote); 4 August 1909, 11.

9 8 December 1909, 9.

10 16 May 1906, 9 (quote); see also 10 August 1910, 9; Manners, 9; Holt, Encyclopedia of Etiquette, 8. Maud Cooke repeated this rule but felt that women should be careful about refusing introductions, as it might
cause embarrassment for the man. 
*Social Etiquette*, 26, 251.

11 6 December 1916, 9. According to Prim Rose, “she may say almost anything except ‘pleased to meet you.’”

12 Cooke, *Social Etiquette*, 28; Holt, *Encyclopedia of Etiquette*, 4, 376. Holt also said that it was the woman’s role to initiate a bow (or not), and that “under no circumstances can a gentleman refuse to return a woman’s bow.”

13 2 October 1907, 9.

14 28 November 1906, 7.


16 17 January 1906, 6.

17 14 February 1906, 8.

18 18 August 1909, 9.

19 1 September 1909, 9; 17 September 1919, 11. See also Cooke, *Social Etiquette*, 122.

20 Ibid.

21 27 March 1907, 9.

22 10 April 1907, 9.

23 Rural bachelors, especially in the West, had far fewer opportunities to socialize with eligible women. See chapter 4.

24 4 August 1909, 11.

25 2 October 1907, 9 (quote); 23 November 1910, 11.

26 28 November 1906, 7; 16 October 1912, 11; *Manners*, 52; Holt, *Encyclopedia of Etiquette*, 376. When encountering a woman indoors, a man was supposed to remove his hat entirely.

27 29 November 1916, 9. Apparently no female signal was required when a man wished to ask a woman’s permission to escort her home after church services. “It is not necessary to wait for her recognition,” Prim Rose told one inquirer. “Just ask her bravely,” and if she refuses “just say you are sorry, and take your leave quite cheerfully and pleasantly.” 11 October 1916, 9.

28 2 October 1907, 9 (quote); 15 May 1907, 9. Holt said that a man introduced to a woman was required to request a dance or “otherwise pay them some attention.” Holt, *Encyclopedia of Etiquette*, 157.

29 There was a minor discrepancy on this point between Prim Rose and the etiquette books. Both *Manners* and *Social Etiquette* placed a limit of two on the number of times a man should ask the same woman to dance (even if the couple was engaged, said one), but Prim Rose implicitly placed no such limits, limiting only the number of dances a woman could accept from the same man. *Manners*, 39; Cooke, *Social Etiquette*, 252; Holt, *Encyclopedia of Etiquette*, 152 (quote).

30 25 August 1909, 9; 27 November 1907, 9; 17 March 1909, 11 (quote).

31 27 November 1907, 9.

32 Cooke, *Social Etiquette*, 252.

33 12 February 1908, 9. See also *Manners*, 39.

34 28 November 1906, 7.

35 27 January 1909, 11.

36 6 March 1907, 9.

37 3 December 1913, 11. Prim Rose felt it was acceptable for a man to ask if he could call on a woman, but this was at odds with an older social etiquette manual. Cooke’s *Social Etiquette* of 1896 stated that “a gentleman, as a rule, should not ask a lady for permission to call upon her. It is very easy for her, if she desires his company, to say ‘I receive Thursdays,’ or ‘I shall be at home Monday’” 75. Emily Holt added a further wrinkle
by noting that rural men could call on Sunday mornings, whereas urban men had to wait until the afternoon. Holt, Encyclopedia of Etiquette, 18.

38 24 July 1907, 9 (quote); 5 June 1907, 9.

39 3 March 1909, 11. Holt qualified this rule. “In fashionable society,” she wrote, “a single woman, until she has had several years of social experience, does not invite young men to call upon her,” but has her mother or chaperone do it. Other women, however, were not bound by this rule. Encyclopedia of Etiquette, 26.

40 11 March 1908 (quote), 9; 29 August 1906, 9; Cooke, Social Etiquette, 75.

41 Manners, 11.

42 10 April 1907, 9.

43 16 October 1912, 11.

44 26 December 1906, 9.

45 Manners, 90.

46 29 August 1906, 9; 26 December 1906, 9 (quote).

47 26 December 1906 9; Manners, 87.

48 29 August 1906, 9.

49 15 April 1908, 9; Manners, 89.

50 15 April 1908, 9.

51 29 August 1906, 9.

52 Cooke, Social Etiquette, 331.

53 17 July 1907, 9.

54 14 February 1912, 11; 5 June 1907, 9; Manners, 53. When a woman planned to sit in her family’s pew, however, or if an usher showed the way at the theatre, she would precede her escort.

55 Manners, 35.

56 Cooke, Social Etiquette, 245.

57 Ibid., 329.

58 4 September 1907, 9. The writer of Manners emphasized, in the introduction, that the essence of a “well-bred person” was modesty and restraint with respect to emotions, gestures, and clothing. Manners, 7.

59 22 June 1910, 11 (quote); 15 April 1908, 9.

60 25 July 1906, 9.

61 10 April 1907, 9.

62 24 October 1906, 9.

63 Cooke, Social Etiquette, 48.

64 11 July 1906, 9.

65 16 October 1912, 11 and 12 December 1906, 9 (quotes); 4 July 1906, 9; 24 October 1906, 9.

66 2 December 1908, 9.

67 16 October 1912, 11; 26 December 1906, 9; Manners, 86.

68 12 December 1906, 9. 4 August 1909, 11. Cooke stated that “expensive presents … are not in the best taste,” even between engaged persons. Social Etiquette, 124.

69 10 June 1914, 9; Strange, Toronto’s Girl Problem, 89–91, 121.

70 28 October 1908, 9 (quote); 24 October 1906, 9.

71 The Manners book was more strict: “no really fashionable party [of young people] is made up without a chaperone.” In fact, the writer recommended two or three married women as chaperones for such a gathering. Manners, 47–48.

72 7 July 1909, 9; 21 August 1907, 9 (quote); Manners, 54. Generally speaking, women, whether escorted or not, were not supposed to attend any public function or amusement unchaperoned. Cooke insisted on a chaperone in such instances, as did Prim Rose (except for tennis, croquet, and tea parties), but the
Manners book – reflecting, perhaps, the more liberal norms of the post-Victorian era – felt that two female friends could do so, with some restrictions. “Two women may attend, with perfect propriety, a place of amusement without an escort,” it noted, but “they should be under such circumstances exceptionally quiet in their manners and their dress.” As for simply appearing in public, the experts advised women to not be seen on the streets, alone, after dark. Manners, 89; Cooke, Social Etiquette, 256, 336; “Chaperonage,” Family Herald, 1 February 1905, 6.

73 28 October 1908, 9 (quote); Manners, 48. An exception to the chaperone rule, and a sign of the growing independence of middle- and upper-class women, was a bicycle ride with a man. This seems to have been acceptable, as long as women rode their bikes in a genteel, lady-like way. Strong-Boag, “The Canadian Campaign for Woman Suffrage,” Canada’s Visual History (Ottawa: National Film Board, 1994); Roberts, “‘Rocking the Cradle for the World,’” 16.

74 1 September 1909, 9; Manners, 53, 57.

75 28 October 1908, 9; 29 May 1907, 9; Manners, 57. The latter also noted, not unlike Prim Rose, that “there is very great harm in young girls meeting young men in secret; the men will have no respect for the girls, and nothing but mortification for the girls will be the result.” Manners, 87.

76 21 August 1907, 9; 11 March 1908, 9; 6 March 1907, 9; 24 November 1909, 9; 17 April 1907, 9 (quote).


78 29 August 1906, 9. See also 6 March 1907, 9.

79 4 August 1909, 11.

80 6 March 1907, 9.

81 29 August 1906, 9. See also Cooke, Social Etiquette, 331.

82 23 November 1910, 11 (quote). See also 4 July 1906, 9 and 11 July 1906, 9. Holt was less strict on this point. She allowed that “after nightfall” a woman could accept a man’s arm, provided “she does not hook her arm through his, as is too often the ungraceful habit.” Encyclopedia of Etiquette, 378.

83 4 September 1907, 9.

84 See Cooke, Social Etiquette, 35, in which the author discourages all forms of public affection, even towards children. On Canadian attitudes towards dancing, see Azoulay, Only the Lonely, 109–26.

85 29 August 1906, 9.

86 1 November 1916, 9. In those days, western society assumed that men had uncontrollable sexual urges and that it was up to women – considered asexual and inherently “pure” – to help men keep their urges in check. Rothman, Hearts and Hands, 184–88.

87 29 August 1906, 9. At the time, the term “lover-like” described a person who professed his or her love for a member of the opposite sex; it did not imply sexual relations.

88 12 December 1906, 9.

89 7 July 1909, 9.

90 6 February 1907, 9 (quote). See also 31 March 1909, 11 and 24 October 1906, 9. Prim Rose did distinguish, in one instance, between “accepted suitors” and “casual admirers.” She felt women could be more “intimate” with the former. 10 April 1907, 9.

91 24 October 1906, 9; 1 November 1916, 9.

92 Ibid.
Prim Rose never used the term “used goods” but implied as much when she said physical laxity “cheapened” a woman. See 6 February 1907, 9; 7 July 1909, 9; 4 September 1907, 9.

Prim Rose acknowledged this “strange theoretical” right, but discouraged its use. “It is far preferable,” she wrote, “for the proposal to come from the male side.” “The Leap Year Privilege,” 19 February 1908, 9.

The procedure was slightly different for correspondence courtship. First the man professed his love, indirectly, and if his girlfriend reciprocated, he proposed marriage. 15 May 1907, 9.

Again, some discrepancy existed between Prim Rose and Cooke. Reflecting, perhaps, the more reserved Victorian persona, Cooke said that strong expressions of love or affection should be avoided during courtship: “extravagance of feeling should be carefully repressed as an offence against good breeding.” Social Etiquette, 116.

117 18 August 1909, 9. Again, some discrepancy existed between Prim Rose and Cooke. Reflecting, perhaps, the more reserved Victorian persona, Cooke said that strong expressions of love or affection should be avoided during courtship: “extravagance of feeling should be carefully repressed as an offence against good breeding.” Social Etiquette, 116.
“vulgar” and “second-rate.” 16 October 1907, 9.

128 21 November 1906, 7; 23 June 1909, 9; 17 April 1907, 9.

130 This was even true for couples not formally engaged, but who had merely exchanged expressions of love and agreed to one day marry. 28 April 1909, 11; Cooke, Social Etiquette, 133.

131 20 January 1909, 11; emphasis added.

132 Even engaged couples, however, were not completely chaperone-free. One manual noted that “if a young girl were very ill, there would be no impropriety in her mother bringing her betrothed to see her, although, of course, the mother would remain in the room during his visit.” Manners, 89.

133 22 May 1907, 9.

134 Even engaged couples, however, were not completely chaperone-free. One manual noted that “if a young girl were very ill, there would be no impropriety in her mother bringing her betrothed to see her, although, of course, the mother would remain in the room during his visit.” Manners, 89.

135 Maud Cooke was even less permissive in her advice, recommending that relations between engaged couples remain “intellectual” rather than “affectional.” To do otherwise, she stated, somewhat vaguely, was physically dangerous: “Allow no amatory excitement, no frenzied, delirious intoxication with it; for its violence, like every other, must react only to exhaust and paralyze itself by its own excesses.” Social Etiquette, p126, 131 (quote).

136 23 June 1909, 9.

137 13 October 1909, 9; 26 August 1908, 9 (quote); 12 May 1909, 11. Maud Cooke also advised against a long engagement. She felt it could foster a “coolness of feeling” between the couple, Social Etiquette, 134. In the previous century, by contrast, engagements seem to have lasted two to three years. Ward, Courtship, Love, and Marriage.

138 14 August 1907, 9.

139 11 August 1909, 9; 13 October 1909, 9; 13 October 1909, 9 (quote).

140 31 October 1906, 11.

141 18 August 1909, 9. Men did not usually request consent, however, from their own parents – only their blessing. Ward, Courtship, Love, and Marriage.

142 7 July 1909, 9. Maud Cooke was even less permissive in her advice, recommending that relations between engaged couples remain “intellectual” rather than “affectional.” To do otherwise, she stated, somewhat vaguely, was physically dangerous: “Allow no amatory excitement, no frenzied, delirious intoxication with it; for its violence, like every other, must react only to exhaust and paralyze itself by its own excesses.” Social Etiquette, p126, 131 (quote).

143 31 July 1907, 9, and 5 December 1906, 9.

144 21 November 1906, 7; 18 September 1907, 9.

145 16 January 1907, 9.

146 18 September 1907, 9. It was acceptable, if unusual, for women to return the favour, but Prim Rose discouraged the practice; men who wore jewellery, she said, were
a boyfriend. *Improper Advances*, 46–9, 58.

2 16 May 1906, 9 (anonymous).


4 In typical fashion, one bachelor-farmer told the Prim Rose column’s readers that “I think it is anything but manly and certainly it is cowardly for a man to ask a girl to marry him before he has a fit place for her to live in.” 18 April 1906, 9 (“Another Bachelor”). See also *WHM*, February 1909, 11 (“Handy Andy”) and 14 (“Two Lonely Bachelors”); 10 May 1905, 6 (“A Young Bachelor”); 19 February 1913, 6 (“Lumber Jack”); 9 July 1913, 6 (“K.R.R.”); and 10 April 1907, 9 (“Up and Down”).


6 9 May 1917, 7 (“One of the Bunch”) (quote). See also 26 March 1913, 6 (“Ben Roy”).

7 See, for example, the following heart-felt letters from older bachelors: *WHM*, 7 January 1920, 12 (“Doctor”); 31 July 1918, 9 (“Prairie Kid”); 29 October 1913, 8 (“Still Thinker”); 30 January 1918, 9 (“Logic”). See also the letter from an Ontario farmer’s daughter who confirms that women could wait around for western bachelors to propose: 19 December 1923, 44 (“Cecilia”).

8 22 December 1920, 28 (“Timothy”).

9 11 June 1913, 6. For similar tales of regret, see 22 January 1913 (“M.R.N.S.”); 16 October 1912, 11 (“Monitor”); and 16 October 1912, 11 (“Onlooker”).

4 April 1917, 7; 16 October 1918, 10 (“Watching and Waiting”). See also 22 October 1913, 8 (“Gas City”); 29 July 1908, 9 (“True Blue”); 9 April 1913, 6 (“Square Deal”); and 26 March 1913, 6 (“Bud”).

30 September 1908, 9 (“Talum Shud”).

31 May 1905, 6 (“B.C. Farmer”) (quote). One westerner, whose parents took in a teacher as a boarder, recalled that on Sunday evenings “every bachelor [in the area] would come to visit the teacher. Sometimes there would be eight or ten of them there.” Cited in Broadfoot, The Pioneer Years, 301. See also 28 July 1909, 9 (“Lancashire Lad”).

16 February 1910, 11. For similar comments, see 18 March 1908, 9 (“Uno Hoo”); WHM, February 1909, 14 (“Pipe Dream”) and May 1911, 87 (“Reggie”).

29 August 1917, 7 (“Brown Eyes”). See also 12 January 1916, 9 (“Pete Bentley”); 6 May 1914, 6 (“Sandy Jim”); 18 September 1907, 9 (“The Loneliest One”); and, for a first-hand account, 1 May 1918, 7 (“Miss Billie”).

4 October 1916, 9 (“Leicester”). See also 20 March 1918, 7 (“Justice to One and All” and “Farmer”) and 1 May 1918, 7 (“Want to Know”).

6 March 1907, 9 (“Ladies A’ Co’ Garth”). Emphasis added.

Carter, The Importance of Being Monogamous, 83. There is evidence that hired men had relationships with farmers’ daughters and with domestic servants, but some farm families did not want their daughters mingling with such men, including ranch hands (i.e., cowboys). Furthermore, several correspondents, including Prim Rose herself, made disparaging comments about hired men. Danysk, “A Bachelor’s Paradise,” 167–69;
Maritimes, except northern New Brunswick and, in the early 1900s, eastern New Brunswick. One student of the phenomenon writes that “almost all rural districts outside the West lost population through out-migration, and generally on a scale that offset natural increase, resulting in absolute declines in population.” Kerr and Holdsworth, eds., *Historical Atlas*, Plate 28.

27 In 1911, the Toronto *Globe* reported, with a palpable sense of alarm, that “there is scarcely a county in Ontario devoted chiefly to agriculture in which there are not many more men than women.” “The Girl and the Farm,” 23 December 1911. Cited in Jeffrey Keshen and Suzanne Morton, eds., *Material Memory: Documents in Post-Confederation Canada* (Toronto: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998), 87. As well, the Prim Rose column for 1905 and 1906 is full of letters discussing the rural exodus. See also 24 June 1908, 9 (“Thoughtful”); *WHM*, April 1916, 61 (“Starlight”), and January 1923, 28 (“Mavourneen”).


30 4 November 1908, 9 (“A Little Brownie”). See also “Condensed Letters,” 5 June 1907, 9 (“Ellen”); 8 June 1910, 11 (“Straw Berry”); 5 May 1909, 11 (“Miss Helen”); and 14 January 1914, 6 (“Dorothy”).

31 26 June 1918, 7. See also 12 June 1912, 9 (“Audrey”), 7 May 1913, 6 (“Beautiful lass of somewhere”); 13 November 1907, 9 (“A Little Canadian Girl”); and 30 August 1905, 6 (“Young Mother”). Evidently, Ontario farm bachelorettes had been lamenting this situation for years. See the excellent poem written in 1880 by a young woman from Norfolk County, in Dubinsky, “Maidenly Girls,” 53.


34 Dawson, *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces*, 67, 216. See also the comments of “Gallant Little Wales,” 22 April 1908, 9.

35 Read, *The Great War and Canadian Society*, 44.

36 Cited in Broadfoot, *The Pioneer Years*, 258. Whether, on balance, the church enhanced romantic opportunities is debatable. One could easily argue, for example, that Canada’s Protestant churches, in their successful drive to replace commercial and recreational activities on Sundays with solemn church services and social visits (the Lord’s Day Act of 1906, for example) actually reduced opportunities for romantic heterosexual interaction. “Throughout the greater part of the prairie region,” noted one 1930 study, “the official day of rest has come to
be marked by closed moving picture theatres, deserted athletic grounds, and absence of organized sports.” And sometimes anti-romanticism was precisely the motive. The various boys and girls clubs established under church auspices, for example, such as the CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training), were set up in part to give teenagers something to think about besides their girlfriends and boyfriends. Dawson, *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces*, 66, 243 (quote).


38 25 September 1907, 9. See also 20 March 1918, 7 (“Justice to One and All”).

39 4 April 1917, 7 (“De Wolfe”) and 18 December 1918, 8 (“Southerner, 2”) (quotes); 7 July 1909, 9 (“Shorty Mac”); 1 May 1918, 7 (“Want to Know”); 16 October 1918, 10 (“Watching and Waiting”); 18 July 1917, 7 (“Prairie Lee”).


42 *WHM*, January 1908, 14 (“White Pine”).


44 9 May 1917, 7 (“One of the bunch”) (quote); 31 May 1905, 6 (“B.C. Farmer”) (quote). See also 13 June 1917, 7 (“Gay Lad”); 4 September 1918, 10 (“Thirty-eight Years”); *WHM*, February 1909, 14 (“Two Lonely Bachelors”); Rees, *New and Naked Land*, 66.

45 29 August 1917, 7 (“Newtown Ardtoe”).


47 *WHM*, February 1914, 62 (“Thirty Two”). See also May 1915, 61 (“Silent Alf”).


49 The surplus of men over women in the urban centres of the West peaked in 1911 at 33 per cent, before falling to 3 per cent in the 1920s. Dawson, *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces*, 309.

50 19 February 1913, 6. See also 21 December 1910, 11 (“Little Ned”).

51 Cited in Gray, *Red Lights on the Prairies*, 76.

52 4 July 1923, 28 (“Lumberjack 2”).

53 1 June 1910, 9 (“An Isolated One”).

54 16 May 1906, 9. See also 21 August 1907, 9 (“Clover Bar”); 25 August 1909, 9 (“Nobody’s Bachelor”); 18 February 1914, 6 (“Elad Wollem”); 15 April 1914, 6 (“Cockney Canuck”); and 2 July 1913, 6 (“Batchy Bum”).

55 4 August 1909, 11 (“Dion”).
The song was called “The Alberta Homesteader.” Danysk, “‘A Bachelor’s Paradise,’” 158.


22 August 1917, 7; WHM, March 1906, 39 (“Young Bachelor No. 2”). See also 2 January 1918, 9 (“Sydobemos Gnirrad”); 12 February 1919, 10 (“Frozen up 35”); 22 December 1920, 28 (“Timothy”); and WHM, July 1908, 14 (“Dolphin”).

10 October 1917, 7 (“Lonesome”). See also 1 June 1910, 9 (“An Isolated One”); 6 February 1907, 9 (“Rolling Stone”); and 24 May 1911, 11 (“Broncho Buster”).

As late as the 1930s, three-quarters of prairies farmers supplemented their income with such part-time work. Friesen, The Canadian Prairies, 319.

4 September 1918, 10 (“Thirty-Eight Years”); 30 January 1918, 9 (“Logic”).

WHM, May 1912, 93 (“Defense”); 10 July 1907, 9 (“New Chum”).

WHM, April 1906, 14 (“Alberta Boy”).


4 October 1905, 6 (“B.A.M.”); 20 September 1905, 6 (“A Roving Bachelor”).

15 May 1907, 9. See also 30 April 1913, 6 (“Conservative”); 19 March 1913, 6 (Condensed Letters); 3 May 1905, 6 (“Girls’ Friend”).

WHM, March 1907, 14 (quote). See also 12 February 1908, 9 (“Barnies”); 30 October 1907, 9 (“Kathleen Mavourneen”); 28 July 1909, 9 (“Lancashire Lad”).

27 May 1908, 9. See also 30 April 1913, 6 (“English Violet”).

See 11 October 1905, 6 (“Mae”), who expresses her fear of losing men’s respect by writing to the column. See also 17 October 1906, 9 (“The Mother’s Hope”) who notes that young people sometimes did not admit to writing to the personal columns. And see 3 August 1910, 9 (“Eastern Tom-Boy”) and WHM, July 1909 (“Editor’s note”).

13 February 1907, 9 (quote); 8 November 1911, 11 (“Roderick Dhu”) (quote). See also 29 January 1913, 6 (“Believing”).

3 July 1907, 9 (“A Farmer’s Happy Wife”). See also 27 February 1918, 9 (“Gus-to-No”); 11 June 1913, 6 (“Irish Pat”); and WHM, December 1906, 66 (“Ambitious”).

4 August 1909, 11 (“Timberwolf”).

23 August 1905, 6, (“Happy Jay”) (quote); WHM, February 1909, 14 (“Beecham’s Pill”) (quote). See also 26 August 1908, 9 (“Just Me”); 8 November 1911, 11, (“Roderick Dhu”); 31 July 1918, 9 (“Prairie Kid”).


11 October 1905, 6 (“Anonymous”).
14 August 1907, 9 ("Pathfinder"). See also 17 December 1913, 8 (Condensed Letters), and 7 May 1913, 6 (Condensed Letters).

14 August 1907, 9.

23 December 1908, 9 ("Champion"); 30 March 1921, 26 ("Masquaqua").

Note that the term “dating” only appeared in the 1890s, and then only as a working-class slang term. Not until the 1910s did it become a respectable term. It is being used here to mean, essentially, middle- and upper-class courting.

Read, The Great War, 82; 21 May 1913, 6 ("Sourdough II"); Rothman, Hearts and Hands, 209.

WHM, April 1906, 14. See also 26 September 1917, 7 ("S.D."); 22 August 1917, 7 ("W.H. Sproule"); 14 August 1918, 9 ("In Earnest"); 3 May 1905, 6 ("Girls' Friend"); and WHM, July 1906, 20 ("Bachelor Girl").

WHM, October 1918, 46; December 1918, 62. See also February 1910, 22 ("Goo-Goo Eyes").

31 October 1917, 7 ("Saskie").

WHM, August 1919, 38 ("Not a Crank").

2 October 1907, 9 ("Diffident"); 18 April 1917, 9 ("Sundog"); 4 August 1909, 11 ("Timberwolf").

11 May 1910, 11. See also August 1914, 6 ("Sunset Bill"); 2 November 1910, 11 ("Contentment"); 21 January 1914, 6 ("Twilight"); 13 May 1914, 6 ("Kathie A. Canadian"); WHM, January 1915 ("Sammy"); June 1907, 16 ("Wokapa Boy"); December 1914, 70 ("Brunette"); July 1915, 47 ("Tot Bot"); Grace Craig, But This Is Our War (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 22.

19 February 1913, 6 ("Canab"); 8 January 1913, 6 ("Ex R.N.W.M.P."); 19 February 1913, 6 ("Lumber Jack"); 2 April 1913, 6 ("One of Them"); 30 April 1913, 6 ("S.B.O.").

Half the letters in the Family Herald’s “Condensed Letters” section for January 1910, for example, are from men asking women to write first. See also WHM, August 1909, 20 ("Forget Me Quick"); and August 1907, 18 ("Another Scotch Lassie").

28 May 1913, 6.

WHM, June 1907, 17 ("Angeleno"). See also WHM, November 1908, 16 ("Cingalee") and January 1909, 15 ("A Juggler").

WHM, August 1918, 46 ("Bashful Kid"). See also WHM, December 1906, 67 ("Jack and John"). One man felt women should be less reserved in expressing their romantic feelings as well. 8 April 1908, 9 ("Junius").

3 May 1905, 6. See also 27 May 1908, 9 ("Plough Pilot"); 2 September 1914, 9 ("Geo. E.").

18 September 1907, 9. For another critique of this practice, see WHM, August 1909, 20 ("Forget Me Quick").

29 August 1906, 9 ("Sister"); 12 August 1908, 9 ("Match-making Brothers"); 1 April 1908, 9 ("Bawn").

WHM, August 1916, 35. See also 29 August 1906, 9 ("Sister"); and WHM, April 1914, 69 ("Farmer's Daughter"), who complains about boys calling her "stuck up" for her reserve.

28 May 1913, 6.

WHM, June 1907, 17 ("Angeleno"). See also WHM, November 1908, 16 ("Cingalee") and January 1909, 15 ("A Juggler").

WHM, August 1918, 46 ("Bashful Kid"). See also WHM, December 1906, 67 ("Jack and John"). One man felt women should be less reserved in expressing their romantic feelings as well. 8 April 1908, 9 ("Junius").

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18 September 1907, 9. For another critique of this practice, see WHM, August 1909, 20 ("Forget Me Quick").

29 August 1906, 9 ("Sister"); 12 August 1908, 9 ("Match-making Brothers"); 1 April 1908, 9 ("Bawn").

WHM, August 1916, 35. See also 29 August 1906, 9 ("Sister"); and WHM, April 1914, 69 ("Farmer's Daughter"), who complains about boys calling her "stuck up" for her reserve.
100 5 March 1913, 6 (“Emerald Isle”); 12 March 1913, 6 (“Aunt Melinda”); 21 May 1913, 6 (“Stenographer”); 10 February 1909, 11 (“Hoosier School Marm”); WHM, July 1909, 36 (“Seldom Seen”).

101 WHM, June 1909, 21 (“A Young Wife and Mother”). See also 1 November 1905, 6 (“B Man”); 6 September 1905, 6 (“Yukon Prospector” and “Perplexity”); and 3 May 1905, 6 (“Girls’ Friend”).

102 14 January 1914, 6.

103 See also 17 June 1908, 9 (“Biddy McGinn”). See also 27 November 1907, 9 (“Canadian Wild Rose”); 11 December 1918, 8 (“Gift of Britain”); comments by Prim Rose, 11 September 1918, 10; and for sympathetic male views, 18 December 1907, 9 (“Down Easter”); 7 May 1913, 6 (“Widower”); and WHM, October 1910, 76 (“Globe Trotter”).

104 See, for example, 27 August 1919, 12 (“Thirty”).

105 12 August 1908, 9 (“Match-making Brothers”). See also 13 November 1907, 9 (“Aenone”).

106 The WHM usually published, in each issue, a list of letters forwarded on behalf of readers. In 1907–08, for example, at least 15 per cent of the letters it forwarded were from women to men.

107 23 September 1908, 9 (“Multum in Parvo”). See also the excellent letter by “Sober Sides,” 17 May 1911, 11.

108 29 April 1914, 6 (“Hopeful Ida”). See also 8 July 1908, 9 (“Medallion”); 18 June 1913, 6 (“Nova Scotia Girl”); 5 November 1913, 8 (“Pickles II”); WHM, January 1907, 12 (“Penelope”).


110 May 1908, 18.

111 10 March 1909, 11 (“Amethyst”). See also 1 July 1908, 9 (“Katie”); 10 May 1911, 11 (“A Happy Primrose”).

112 Ward, Courtship, Love and Marriage, 64–89.

113 Cited in Broadfoot, Next-Year Country, 221; 29 January 1913, 6 (“School Ma’am”). See also Dubinsky, Improper Advances, 118, who cites an 1880 poem written by an Ontario girl lamenting the departure of all her boyfriends to the Northwest and expressing her determination to follow them. Some women also applied to men in the personal columns for jobs as housekeepers when, in fact, they were applying for positions as wives. See 24 September 1919, 12 (“The Old Doctor”).


115 WHM, September 1908, 14 (“Arrah Wanna”); July 1910, 94–95 (“Wild Rose”); June 1911, 84 (“Lily of the Valley”).


117 Dubinsky, “‘Maidenly Girls’,” 57 (quote); Broadfoot, The Pioneer Years, 256–57. See also Dubinsky, Improper Advances, 117.

118 24 September 1919, 12 (“The Old Doctor”).

Notes
last decades of the nineteenth century,” she writes, “were a time when middle-class women involved themselves in the courtships of their male and female children,” especially the latter. *Hearts and Hands*, 218.

121 See, for example, 4 September 1907, 9 (“A.O.L.E.”), who told Prim Rose readers that “I have read letters from more than fifty different bachelors that were sent to my daughters.” Further proof of parental power is the fact that parents who disapproved of their daughter’s boyfriend sometimes charged him with the crime of “seduction” — of tricking their daughter into having sex by promising to marry her — as a way of breaking up the relationship, even when they had no proof. Dubinsky, “‘Maidenly Girls,’” 46.

122 Dubinsky, *Improper Advances*, 122. Peter Ward says that by the 1900s parental power over their daughters’ marriage plans had “largely disappeared.” This is a dubious claim, particularly in view of the substantial power parents wielded over courtship. Parents were unlikely to veto marriage plans if they had already approved of the suitor. And as Denise Baillargeon tells us, even as late as the 1930s, Catholic parents in Montreal had unquestioned authority over whom their daughters chose as suitors. Ward, *Courtship, Love, and Marriage*, 136; Baillargeon, “Beyond Romance,” 208.

123 3 February 1909, 11 (“Prodigal”). This is in accord with Rothman’s findings in the United States. “The last decades of the nineteenth century,” she writes, “were a time when middle-class women involved themselves in the courtships of their male and female children,” especially the latter. *Hearts and Hands*, 218.

124 *WHM*, July 1913, 87. See also *WHM*, October 1913, 71 (“Blondy”).

125 19 May 1909, 11 (“Onlooker”). See also 31 July 1907, 7 (“Shy Irma”). The latter claimed that to avoid family conflict “the majority of girls,” herself included, married the men their parents wished them to marry.

126 It is also possible that a working-class woman had more freedom in her choice of partner, as some have suggested, because her family ties were weaker and her family’s property (that she, and therefore her husband, might inherit) less substantial. Light and Parr, *Canadian Women on the Move*, 110.


129 *WHM*, December 1907, 30. See also 9 February 1910, 11 (“Married”).

130 5 March 1913, 6 (“Steadfast”); 22 April 1914, 6 (“Farm Hand”); *WHM*, March 1914, 68 (“Trixie”) and May 1910, 91 (“Toddy”).

131 3 February 1915, 7.


133 In the United States, such women were labelled “charity girls” and strictly speaking, their behaviour could not be called “romantic.” Although romance might develop
out of such relationships, the main purpose of such women was to acquire goods and entertainments they could not otherwise afford. Coontz, *Marriage, A History*, 192; Rothman, *Hearts and Hands*, 205.

134 3 August 1910, 9 (“Eastern Tomboy”); 7 August 1918, 9 (“City Girl”); 5 May 1915, 7 (“Belge-Francais”).


137 26 July 1916, 7 (“Mary Ann”).


139 28 March 1906, 9.

140 14 January 1914, 6 (“Widdyman”).

141 22 April 1914, 6 (“Farm Hand”).

142 13 December 1905, 6.

143 Historians remind us that deception could also take the form of “seduction,” where a man promised to marry a woman if she agreed to have sex with him, but then reneged on the promise. Not only was seduction a federal crime, but it could damage a woman’s “chaste” reputation and, in some cases, leave her to bear the stigma and financial burden of an illegitimate child; such deception was common, and many women, in Ontario at least, sued their seducers under this law. Dubinsky, “‘Maidenly Girls,’” 43; Chapman, “Women, Sex, and Marriage in Western Canada,” 6–7.

144 13 January 1909, 9 (“Gwalla’s Son”); 9 March 1910, 11 (“Mary of Argyle”).

145 11 August 1909, 9 (“A Voice from the Klondike”); 17 April 1918, 7 (“Silent Al”); 17 June 1908, 9 (“Westward Ho”); 22 June 1910, 11 (“Deserted One”); 29 October 1913, 8 (“Still Thinker”); 19 February 1913, 6 (“Idle Thoughts”).

146 27 December 1911, 11 (Condensed Letters).

147 11 September 1918, 10.

148 26 July 1916, 7.

149 1 October 1913, 6 (“Dum Spiro, Spero”).


151 12 July 1911, 9. See also 30 April 1913, 6 (“Apron String”); *WHM*, October 1909, 20 (“Gandy”); April 1914, 69 (“Farmer’s Daughter”).

152 6 September 1911, 9.

153 24 September 1913, 6 (“Kismet”) (quote). See also 5 November 1913, 8 (“Pickle II”); 14 January 1914, 6 (“Widdyman”); *WHM*, April 1909, 16 (“College Kid”).

5: Love and War


2 Kerr and Holdsworth, *Historical Atlas of Canada*, Plate 26; Desmond...


11 Craig, *But This is Our War*, 95–96.

12 Jack Brown to Olga Brown, 7 September 1918, CLIP.


16 Charles (Dick) Richardson to Edna, 23 February 1917, CLIP.

17 Louis Duff to Aunt Lily, 3 November 1917, *Canadian Military Heritage Program* (CMHP); Alexander Matier to Aunt Lil, 8 January 1918, CMHP; *Family Herald*, 4 December 1918, 6 (“Bachelor Brit”).

18 John McArthur to Hazel, 31 December 1916, CLIP.

19 James Evans to wife, 25 August 1918, CLIP.

20 Louis Keene, *‘Crumps’: The Plain Story of a Canadian Who Went*” (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917), 72. See also Jack to Kitty, 11 February 1917, and Murray Wellington to Margaret Munroe, 23 June 1918, CLIP.

21 John Newton to wife, 7 November 1917; Robert Hale to Alice, 23 May 1915; and John McArthur to Hazel, 31 December 1916, CLIP.
22 For an example of a Canadian soldier who refused to write to his former girlfriends for fear they would interpret his correspondence as a serious romantic commitment, see Gwyn, *Tapestry of War*, 208.


26 *WHM*, April 1918, 47.

27 *Family Herald*, 2 May 1917, 7. See also *Family Herald*, 20 December 1916, 7 (“Twenty-Four”), and 4 October 1916, 9 (“Tom-All-Along”).

28 11 July 1915, *CLIP*.

29 *Family Herald*, 2 January 1918, 9 (“Sydobemos Gnirrad”). See also *WHM*, December 1918, 62 (“Lonely Boy”). That Canadians had less time for romantic matters was clear, as well, from the abrupt contraction of the personal columns during the war; the number of letters in the *Western Home Monthly*, for example, fell by half. For correspondents who blame the war for this, see *WHM*, April 1918, 47 (“Isabel”), June 1918, 46 (“Kentish Hop”), and August 1918, 47 (“A Farmer”).


32 *WHM*, November 1917, 63 (“Pocahontas”).


34 *Family Herald*, 30 January 1918, 9 (“Virginia”).

35 Marie Beastall to Fred Milthorp, 12 December 1917, *CLIP*.


40 15 September 1915, 7. See also *Family Herald*, 29 September 1915, 7 (“Mollie”), and 5 April 1916, 7 (“Francisco”).

41 Cited in Read, *The Great War*, 90.


43 Hale to Alice, 9 December 1917, *CLIP*. See also James Evans to wife, 29 March 1918, *CLIP*, and Private
Douglas Buckley, who was engaged to be married, but who wrote to his sister that “I would not change my ragged old suit of khaki for one of mufti, for anything.” Buckley to Abbie Tory, 1915 (quote), and Buckley to John Tory, 29 August 1915. I am very grateful to my friend Phil Buckley for granting me access to his grandfather’s letters.


45 Cited in Read, The Great War, 103.

46 Scott, The Great War, 105. See also Mathieson, My Grandfather’s War, 177.

47 Irwin and Orwell Ennis to Lilian, 22 October 1915, KC.


49 Hale to Alice, 15 May 1915, CLIP. See also Basil to father, 11 November 1916, in Craig, But This is Our War, 96–7; and Wellington Murray Dennis to Margaret Munroe, 4 May 1917, CLIP.

50 See John McArthur to Hazel, 31 December 1916 and Wellington Murray Dennis to Margaret Munroe, 5 August 1915, CLIP.


52 June 1916, 45.

53 Maurice Pope, Letters from the Front 1914–1919 (Toronto: Pope and Co., 1993), 48. See also the article by Pearson for Maclean’s, which notes that men suppressed sentimental thoughts while at the front, in Benedict, Canada at War, 6–7.

54 McArthur to Hazel, 31 December 1916, CLIP. See also McArthur to Hazel, 2 November 1916.

55 Christie, Letters of Agar Adamson, 245, 296 (quote).

56 Private George Pearson wrote in Maclean’s that “there is more room for time and sentiment in the hospital than out there,” at the front, and “the mind reverts back to what it has seen and seeks sentiment in quick relief.” Benedict, Canada at War, 6. See also Family Herald, 27 February 1918, 9 (“See It Through”).


58 Family Herald, 13 December 1916, 7 (“Cussadoona”).

59 Family Herald, 13 October 1915, 7 (quote); WHM, October 1918, 46 (“Sunshine”).

60 See WHM, April 1916, 61 (“Rocky”, “Chronic Kicker”), and November 1918, 47 (“Kentish Hop”), for spirited defences of dancing. See also letters in June 1918 issue of WHM, 46–7.

61 WHM, February 1916, 53.

62 See WHM, April 1916, 60 (“A Nova Scotian” and “One Willing to Serve”), and August 1916, 25 (“Restless”).

63 To enlist, males had to be eighteen, able to shoot, and physically fit, and, until August 1915, married men needed the permission of their wives. Morton and Granatstein, Marching to Armageddon, 9.

64 Cited in Read, The Great War, 190. See also Family Herald, 30 October 1918, 10 (“Lanky”).

65 Family Herald, 22 May 1918, 7 (“Only a Girl”). See also the letter from “Canadian Lily,” who lambasts a fellow for his suggestion that bachelors avail themselves of all the single women enlisted men left behind. Family Herald, 4 December 1918, 8.
66 *Family Herald*, 15 May 1918, 7 ("Constance").

67 See, for example, *Family Herald*, 25 December 1918, 8 ("Old Ex-Soldier").

68 *Family Herald*, 14 August 1918, 9 ("Sapphire").

69 See, for example, *Family Herald*, 21 March 1917, 7 ("Excelsior"); 23 January 1918, 9 ("Snowshoe Jim"); 23 January 1918, 9 ("Old Soldier"); and 3 July 1918 issue, 7. Bachelors also solicited letters from war widows specifically.


71 Craig, *But This is Our War*, 31.


74 Wilson, *Ontario and the First World War*, 143.

75 *Family Herald*, 3 July 1918, 7 ("A Willing Worker") (quote); *WHM*, November 1918, 47; see also *Family Herald*, 10 May 1916, 9 ("Ex-Farmer"), 31 January 1917, 7 ("Occidental"), and 3 November 1915, 7 ("Canadian Mac"). On patriotic women seeking male correspondents, see *Family Herald*, 25 October 1916, 7 ("A Buxom School Ma'am") and 15 May 1918, 7 ("My Rosary").

76 *Family Herald*, 3 January 1917, 7 ("Dutchy") (quote). See also *WHM*, June 1917, 45 ("Spitfire"), April 1918, 54 ("Pocahontas"); *Family Herald*, 12 July 1916, 7 ("Woodland Nymph"), 22 September 1915, 7 ("Canadian Lass"), and 10 May 1915, 11 ("Nurse").


79 *Family Herald*, 12 April 1916, 9 ("Jan Ridd"). See also *WHM*, 16 July 1916, 46 ("Amethyst").

80 Ibid.

81 *WHM*, February 1918, 47. See also *WHM*, April 1917, 54 ("Pocahontas"); January 1918, 46 ("Shamrock"); *Family Herald*, 23 February 1916, 7 ("N.B. Butterfly"), 15 March 1916, 7 ("Sunlight Sue").

82 Macfie, *Letters Home*, 78.


85 *Family Herald*, 1 November 1916, 9 ("Vivian"). See also Jack Brown to his sister Olga, 16 February 1917; Charles Richardson to Edna, 23 December 1915; and Curtie Allin to Joe McCartney, 8 March 1918, *CLIP*.

86 *WHM*, August 1917, 38 ("Bonehead").

per cent of soldiers passed through them in less than a week. At the same time, however, the same historian notes that infection from wounds was recurrent and “contributed to long periods of hospital care and convalescence.” Morton, *When Your Number’s Up*, 187–95.

97 Benedict, *Canada at War*, 10. See also K. Fosters, “*Memoirs of the Great War, 1915–1918*,” who alludes coyly to his bedside physical intimacy with nurses. *CLIP*.


101 Alexender Matier to Aunt Lil, 8 January 1918, *CLIP*.

104 Wilson-Simmie, Lights Out, 146.

105 Mann, “Introduction,” xxv; Andrew Wilson Diary, 10 July 1918, CLIP; Gilroy to Emily, 12 September 1917, and Clarence Gass to Lilian, 31 January 1917, CLIP.

106 Nicholson, Canada’s Nursing Sisters, passim; Wilson-Simmie, Lights Out, 117–19; Mann, “Introduction.”

107 Mann, xxxiii, 74; Wilson-Simmie, Lights Out, 31.

108 Mathieson, My Grandfather’s War, 152–60.

109 Pedley, Only This, 6.

110 Cited in Read, The Great War, 148 (quote). Wilbert Gilroy to Father, 12 November 1916, CLIP.

111 Roderick Anderson to Mother, 16 February 1917; Roderick to Todd, 24 March 1917; William Calder to Father, 20 March 1916, CLIP; Macfie, Letters Home, 131; Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, 100. Information on the wartime experiences of Canadian nurses is limited. Although many kept diaries and sent letters home, few of these artifacts are yet available to researchers.

112 Family Herald, 3 March 1915, 7 (“Hope III”). See also Family Herald, 22 September 1915, 7 (“Canadian Lass”).

113 Family Herald, 13 June 1917, 7.


115 Hale to Alice, 16 June and 22 June, 1915; Ethel Drader to Mother, 2 July 1916; Alice Leighton to Arthur, 29 September 1915, CLIP.

116 Cited in Read, The Great War, 217. Emphasis added. See also 212–13 for a similar account, and Gwyn, Tapestry of War, 202, for the war’s effect on Ottawa debutantes whose boyfriends had been killed overseas.

117 Jean to Aunty Lily, 26 February 1915, CMHP. See also the recollections of a Manitoba teacher, 16 March 1921, 26 (“Twenty One”).

118 Bertram Cox to Leila, 25 March 1918, CLIP.

119 Alice Leighton to Arthur, 4 November 1915, CLIP; Read, The Great War, 189–91.

120 Read, The Great War, 189–90; Hale to Alice, 3 June 1915, CLIP.

121 Gray, Canada, 304.

122 30 October 1918, 10.

123 Kitty to Jack, 29 April/17, CLIP. See also Evans to wife, 13 August 1918, and John Newton to wife, CLIP; and Family Herald, 15 November 1916, 7 (“Khaki Puss”).

124 Mathieson, My Grandfather’s War, 256; Cited in Read, The Great War, 181, 192 (quote); Family Herald, 14 November 1917, 7 (“Peggy”); Craig, But This is Our War, x. The constant anxiety took its toll, aging women several years in some instances. See Bertram Cox to Mamma, 12 April 1918, CLIP.

125 Hale to Alice, 28 July 1915, CLIP. See also Evans to wife, 28 May 1918, CLIP, and Family Herald, 30 October 1918, 10 (“A Very Lonely Girl”).

126 Robert Hale to Alice, 11 April 1915 (quote), 10 May 1915, and 15 May 1915, CLIP. See also Charles Richardson to mother, 21 December 1916; Hale to Alice, 28 July 1915; Jack Brown to Olga, 8 April 1917 and 20 May 1917; and John McArthur to Hazel, 17 December 1916, CLIP.
heartsick soldier, see the touching correspondence between John Ellis and his wife Kitty, CLIP.

132 James Evans to wife, 8 July 1918; Charles Richardson to Edna, 23 February 1917, CLIP.

133 Macfie, Letters Home, 168. See also Hale to Alice, 14 October 1917, for a similar situation.

134 John McArthur to Hazel, 2 November 1916; Archie MacKinnon to Jeanie Gregson, 19 November 1916, CLIP.


136 Ibid., 244. See also John MacArthur to Hazel, 31 December 1916, CLIP.

137 Christie, Letters of Agar Adamson, 364.

138 Hale to Alice, 28 July 1915, CLIP.

139 Robert Hale to Alice, 9 February 1917, and 28 July 1915; John McArthur to Hazel, 11 February 1917, CLIP.

140 Jack Brown to Olga, 25 February 1918, CLIP.

141 The pre-war divorce figure was 40 per year, but by the early 1920s it had soared to 500 annually. The incidence of simple abandonment, which cost less and was easier, was much higher. Desmond Morton, Fight or Pay: Soldier’s families in the Great War (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 162.

142 Robert Hale to Alice, 3 June 1915, and Bertram Cox to Leila Cox, 15 August 1917, CLIP; Rogers, Gunner Ferguson’s Diary, 13; Corporal John (Cannon) Stothers to Steve Stothers, 12 January 1918, KC; Family Herald, 21 May 1919, 10 (“Ancient”), 2 July 1919, 12 (“Loyalla, Alberta”), 13 August 1919, 12 (“Ontario Girl 3”), and 16 July 1919, 12 (“Pro et Contra”).

143 Robert Hale to Alice, 9 December 1917, CLIP.
Read, The Great War, 93; Miller, Our Glory and Our Grief, 112–114; Wilson, Ontario and the First World War, 20, 124; Family Herald, 11 August 1915, 7 (“Jock”).

Family Herald, 5 April 1916, 7.


Family Herald, 14 March 1917, 7 (“Happy Canuck”).

Family Herald, 9 October 1918, 10. See also 29 August 1917, 7 (“Worcester Sauce”) and 20 October 1915, 7 (“Jock II”).

Family Herald, 5 April 1916, 7 (“Rider of the Plains”); 31 January 1917, 7 (“Wild Rose”); 28 November 1917, 7 (“Sad and Weary”).


Family Herald, 21 March 1917, 7 (“Nobody’s Own”). See also 30 August 1916, 7 (“Vancouver Kid”).

Family Herald, 25 April 1917, 9 (“A merry kit Bag”). See also Family Herald, 3 January 1917, 7 (“Ninrod”) and 20 October 1915, 7 (“Jock II”).


Family Herald, 16 September 1914, 9 (“Texas Bill”).

Family Herald, 11 April 1917, 7 (“Independent Susy”).


Mathieson, My Grandfather’s War, 102 (quote); Murray Wellington to Margaret Munroe, 23 June 1918, CLIP; Macfie, Letters Home, 167; Pope, Letters from the Front, 144–45; Family Herald, 30 April 1919, 10 (“Amiens”), 16 April 1919, 10 (“A Nobleman”), and 5 February 1919, 10 (“Cuich in Rhi”).

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2 27 August 1919, 12 (“Maple Leaf”) (quote). See also letters in 4 December 1918, 8; 15 January 1919, 10 (“Midget”); 12 February 1919, 10 (“Rural Sunflower”); 30 April 1919, 10 (“Autumn Leaves”); 2 April 1919, 10 (“Ruby”); 23 April 1919, 10 (“Miss Joe”); 27 July 1921, 26 (“Dimples”); 19 November 1919, 12 (“Jolly Kid”).

3 See, for example, 18 December 1918, 8 (“Englishman”); 25 December 1918, 8 (“Seek”); 26 November 1919, 12 (“All Alone”); 16 July 1924, 32 (“Homesteader, 2”); 26 August 1925, 32 (“Tid bits”); WHM, November 1919, 63 (“Newcomer”).
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12 4 May 1921, 26 (“A Westerner”).

13 24 October 1923, 28. See also 3 January 1923, 28 (“Brown-eyed Anna”).

14 For the denials, see 26 December 1923, 32 (“Lou Gubrious”); 19 December 1923, 44 (“Cecilia”); 20 February 1924, 32 (“Mystery 21”); 1 April 1925, 32 (“Western Girl”). For a humorous exception (and gold-digging *par excellence*), see 22 October 1924, 32 (“Spitfire 2”).


17 12 May 1920, 12 (“Grandpa”) (quote); *WHM*, September 1920, 62 (“Steve”) (quote); 23 December 1925, 32 (“Six-Foot-Four”); 22 April 1925, 32 (“Frenchy”); 10 February 1926, 32 (“Douglas”).

19 WHM, April 1923, 63 (“Yankee doodle Boy”).

20 See, for example, 27 January 1926, 32 (“Uno”); 28 January 1925, 32 (“Forest Roamer”); 26 January 1927, 32 (“Sailor-Farmer”); 28 January 1925, 32 (“Sweet William 24”). For female examples, see 29 April 1925, 32 (“Just 24”) and 24 November 1926, 32 (“Just Twenty”). The latter wrote: “Will ‘Lone Wolf’ please write as I am very anxious to hear about his travels in foreign lands?”

21 19 August 1914, 6 (“Muskoka Wanderer”).

22 Gwyn, Tapestry of War, 191–93.

23 29 April 1925, 32.

24 20 June 1928, 35. See also 16 May 1923, 28 (“Ja-da”); 8 July 1925, 32 (“Huron Friend”); and WHM, March 1924, 40 (“Barrie 22”).

25 WHM, May 1920, 62. See also WHM, October 1920, 63 (“Irish”) and July 1920, 63 (“Lonesome”). One historian argues, as well, that the greater prosperity and leisure time of the 1920s made even the working-class bachelor value more highly the fun-loving qualities of a prospective wife, as opposed to her domestic abilities or wage-earning potential. Morton, “The June Bride,” 408–25.

26 “The Hostess,” 7 April 1920, 11.


28 14 December 1927, 32.

29 See 16 November 1921, 26 (“Slippery”); 2 February 1921, 26 (“Gollywog”); 30 April 1924, 32 (“Count Me In”); 24 September 1924, 39 (“Fair Ball”).

30 16 December 1925, 32 (“Josephine”).

31 20 January 1926, 32 (“Supporter”). See also 30 December 1925, 30 (“Brain Wave”); 24 November 1926, 32 (“Knight of the Key”); 14 October 1925, 32 (“Mr. Pratt”); 6 December 1922, 28 (“M.G.”); and 19 March 1924, 32 (“Chunda Lal”).

32 2 February 1921, 26.

33 Note the predominance of such letters in the early 1920s: 30 April 1924, 32 (“Young Hopeful 3”) (quote); 13 July 1921, 26 (“Bantam”); 11 August 1920, 12 (“Chesterfield”); 14 December 1921, 26 (“Filer”); 30 August 1922, 28 (“Valley Dweller”); 10 December 1924, 32 (“Observer”); 2 March 1921, 26 (“Hillside”); 6 July 1921, 26 (“Canadian”); 6 February 1924, 32 (“Bachelor 36”); 29 July 1925, 32 (“Poplar Bluff”).

34 21 March 1923, 28 (“Get ‘Em”).

35 WHM, January 1922, 37 (“Just a Canuck”). See also 16 March 1921, 26 (“Buddie”); 9 November 1921, 26 (“Farmer John”); 30 May 1923, 28 (“Plough Boy”); 14 February 1923, 28 (“Broken Dishes”).

36 8 June 1921, 26 (“A Forget-Me-Not”). See also 11 May 1921, 26 (“Dream Girl”).

37 1 November 1922, 28 (“Always a Pal”). Emphasis added.

4 February 1920, 12 ("Pearl of Worth"); WHM, October 1922, 61 ("Onoway"); WHM, December 1922, 77 ("Jazz Baby"). At least one women’s magazine noted that because flappers were so physically appealing, women over forty risked divorce should their husbands come in contact with such women. Cited in Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 85.

See, for example, 20 January 1926, 32 ("One Who Knows"); 6 August 1924, 32 ("Meteor"); 27 January 1926, 32 ("Phoenix"); 10 February 1926, 32 ("Bachelor Me"); 8 July 1925, 32 ("Montana Cowboy"); 10 February 1926, 32 ("Alkill"); 3 February 1926, 32 ("Busy Farmer"); 30 December 1925, 30 ("Brain Wave"); WHM, August 1922, 44 ("Rover"). Perhaps the best comment came from a writer called “Whiz Bang”: "I noticed in the last issue that ‘A Flapper’ wanted to know if boys like girls with their hair bobbed. Why, of course they do. It improves their looks a hundred per cent." WHM, February 1923, 51.

10 February 1926, 32 ("Mutton Chops").

WHM, December 1922, 77; WHM, April 1923, 63 (quote). See also WHM, September 1923, 65 (Editor’s Notes) and 22 August 1928, 35 ("Fifty and Bobbed").

20 April 1927, 32 ("Silent Chauffeur").

In her study of interwar Canadian women, Veronica Strong-Boag discusses the powerful effect of beauty advertising on women, and how girls were raised to attract potential husbands by concentrating, above all, on their physical attractiveness. “No more than their mothers,” she writes, “could they entirely ignore the barrage of advertising directed at female Canadians of all ages that insisted [as one 1932 soap ad did] that ‘You are in a Beauty Contest every day of Your Life.’” *The New Day Recalled*, 12 (quote), 86; see also Rothman, *Hearts and Hands*, 226.

27 January 1926, 32 ("I’m the Guy"). See also 3 February 1926, 32 ("Pau-Puk-Keewis"); 18 April 1923, 28 ("Palo Alto"); WHM, December 1923, 35 ("Huckleberry Finn").

16 January 1929, 41.


Simmons, “Modern Sexuality,” 168. Canadian historians have said little about this important postwar social and cultural development, but the following sources are useful, at least in demonstrating the extent of the hedonism: Alan Seager and John Thompson, *Canada 1922–1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1985), 58–75, 176–80; and James Gray, *The Roar of the Twenties* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975).

WHM, February 1923, 51 ("Whiz Bang"). See also 2 May 1923, 28 ("O Be Joyful 2"); 16 May 1928, 35 ("Western Dreamer"); 19 March 1924, 32 ("Gloom Chaser"); 29 October 1924, 32 ("Meteor").

Cited in David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850–1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 197. See also 10 December 1924, 32 ("Cheerful Westerner"); 2 December 1925, 32 ("Old-fashioned Girl"); 7 December 1927, 32 ("Madam of Sunnydale");


This change took place even earlier for the average working class couple, who before the war spent little time inside the crowded, drab confines of the typical working-class home. Strange, *Toronto’s Girl Problem*, 116–17. This was just as true in the United States. See Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat*, 17, and Rothman, *Hearts and Hands*, 203.

Strong-Boag says “the flapper” was the predominant image of women in the popular culture of the 1920s. *The New Day Recalled*, 7.

Ibid., 219, 222.

*WHM*, December 1919, 70. See also *WHM*, June 1920, 63 (“A Pioneer Wife”); 17 March 1920, 12 (“ Vimy Ridge”); 29 May 1929, 41 (“Bramshott”).

*WHM*, December 1919, 70 (“Tolerable”).


Dance halls and movie theatres spread to rural areas as well and were popular among youth. 6 June 1923, 28 (“Rose”); Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 76; Seager and Thompson, *Canada 1922–1939*, 176.
example, does not distinguish between dating and courtship, but defines courtship broadly to include dating, and other activities. I, on the other hand, define courtship narrowly, as a specific form of romantic interaction that predominated in the pre-war years (with all its customs and its presumption of marriage), but which dating eventually replaced. Defining courtship broadly, in my view, leaves no adequate label for the uniqueness of pre-war romance, to which Bailey applies the term “calling,” but that amounted to much more. Even the term “courtship” fell out of use by the 1920s. Rothman, *Hearts and Hands*, 285.

78 Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 72.

79 30 December 1925, 30 (“Brain Wave”).

80 McPherson, “‘The Case of the Kissing Nurse,’”184–88.


83 Cited in Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 69. See also the letter from Hilda Willison to Art Stromberg, 30 August 1926, in which she discourages marriage by reminding him that if he remained single he could “take out any girl you wished” and “pet to your soul’s satisfaction.” Gresco, *The Book of Love Letters*, 61.

77 Some historians adopt a different nomenclature here. Bailey, for example, does not distinguish between dating and courtship, but defines courtship broadly to include dating, and other activities.


69 Cited in Strange, *Toronto’s Girl Problem*, 120. Emphasis added. See also Ward, *Courtship, Love, and Marriage*, 86–87. This is not to say that heterosexual interaction was entirely without regulation or adult supervision. Boarding houses, apartments, and universities, for example, often had strict rules about how their male and female occupants interacted. But as Rothman writes about the average university dean, for example, “there was little she could do to keep them out of the dance halls and movie theatres.” Rothman, *Hearts and Hands*, 209, 211 (quote).


71 *WHM*, January 1919, 62. See also 11 February 1920, 12 (“Lens”) and 14 December 1921, 26 (“Jack Canuck”), both from former soldiers.

72 21 March 1917, 7. For a similar observation, see 22 May 1918, 7 (“Only a Girl”).

73 Gwyn, 193 (quote), and 446.

74 Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 69.

75 *WHM*, May 1920, 62. See also *WHM*, November 1920, 71 (“Cowpuncher”).

76 *WHM*, November 1920, 71. See also *WHM*, July 1920, 63 (“Hokus Pokus”); 3 June 1925, 32 (“Unbobbed Girl”).

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flappers were exchanging sexual favours with men in automobiles, to the peril of both.

85 7 July 1926, 28 ("June Rain").

86 Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 77–81. The percentage of illegitimate births (as a percentage of all live births) rose from 2% to 3.2% in the 1920s. Leacy, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Series B1-14. Studies of American behaviour revealed that in the 1920s, 92% of college women girls admitted to engaging in “petting” – caressing body parts below the neck – and that one-third to one-half of young women had had premarital sex, twice the rate of their parents’ generation. Coontz, *Marriage, A History*, 200.

87 See “Etiquette” column for 12 November 1919, 11, and 1 October 1919, 11.

88 Pitsula, “Student Life at Regina College,” 122.


91 According to Beth Bailey, “necking and petting were public conventions” among American youth in the twenties, “expected elements in any romantic relationship between a boy and a girl.” *From Front Porch to Back Seat*, 81.

92 13 February 1924, 32 (“Pedigoguess”). The changes of the 1920s likely had less impact on rural, Catholic, and immigrant youth, for whom chaperonage and other traditional rituals remained common, but we still cannot say for sure. Comacchio’s study, *The Dominion of Youth*, 75–77, offers some possible answers, but she bases her conclusions on only a handful of examples. James Pitsula notes, however, that students from rural Saskatchewan who attended Regina College, a residential high school, were not nearly as reckless and rebellious as students from Regina itself. “Student Life at Regina College,” 122–39.


94 “The Hostess,” 31 March 1920, 11. The “Hostess” and Prim Rose were one and the same.

95 See, for example, 7 December 1921, 26 (“Happy Bachelor”); 31 January 1923, 28 (“Spuds”); 8 October 1924, 32 (“Silver Sands”); and 3 June 1925, 32 (“Vulcan”).


97 Pringle, *Etiquette in Canada*, 15, 124, 199, 204. The absence of chaperones at parties was confirmed by three young flappers in a shocking 1922 exposé, in *Maclean’s* magazine, of the flapper lifestyle. Prentice, *Canadian Women*, 262.

98 3 September 1919, 11.

99 17 September 1919, 11.

100 15 October 1919, 11.

101 1 October 1919, 11; 12 May 1920, 11 (quote).

103 29 May 1929, 41 (“Lonesome Pal”).
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What was romance like for Canadians a century ago? What qualities did marriageable men and women look for in prospective mates? How did they find suitable partners in difficult circumstances such as frontier isolation and parental disapproval, and when they did, how did courtship proceed in the immediate post-Victorian era, when traditional romantic ideals and etiquette were colliding with the modern realities faced by ordinary people?

Searching for answers, Dan Azoulay has turned to a variety of primary sources, in particular letters to the “correspondence columns” of two leading periodicals of the era, Montreal’s Family Herald and Weekly Star, and Winnipeg’s Western Home Monthly. Examining over 20,000 such letters, Azoulay has produced the first full-length study of Canadian romance in the years 1900 to 1930, a period that witnessed dramatic changes, including massive immigration, rapid urbanization and industrialization, western settlement, a world war that killed and maimed hundreds of thousands of young Canadians, and a virtual revolution in morals and manners.

Hearts and Minds explores four key aspects of romance for these years: what average Canadians sought in a marriage partner; the specific rules they were expected to follow and in most cases did follow in their romantic quest; the many hardships they endured along the way; and how the defining event of that era – the Great War – affected such things. To explore these issues, Azoulay distills and analyzes evidence not only from letters of correspondents – featuring often poignant excerpts that bring the era to life for us – but also from contemporary general etiquette manuals, scholarly studies of courtship in this period, and, for the war years, a selection of soldiers’ letters, memoirs, and diaries. The result is an unforgettable and groundbreaking portrait of ordinary people grappling with romantic ideals and reality, trials and uncertainty, triumph and heartbreak, in a rapidly changing world.

DAN AZOULAY teaches in the Department of History at McMaster University. He is the author of Only the Lonely: Finding Romance in the Pages of Canada’s Western Home Monthly, 1905–1924, as well as numerous articles on the history of the CCF.