“My Heart has a Strange Courage: Challenging the Female Life-Course in Depression-Era Halifax”

By

Joyce Thomson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Atlantic Canada Studies at Saint Mary's University Halifax, Nova Scotia October 14, 2005

© Joyce Thomson

Approved By:

Dr. Gillian Thomas
Supervisor

Dr. John Reid
1st Reader

Dr. Toni Laidlaw
External Examiner
NOTICE:
The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Canada
Abstract

Joyce R. W. Thomson

“My Heart has a Strange Courage:”
Challenging the Female Life Course in Depression Era Halifax

October 14, 2005

Encouraged by recent trends in social history, this thesis analyzes the clandestine diary of Bessie Melvin Wamboldt, written in Halifax from 1932 to 1936. This micro-historical exploration contributes a first person perspective to our understanding of the lived experience of Canadian women during the 1930s. Through an interdisciplinary examination of this diary and its historical, social and cultural contexts, this thesis seeks to understand what it meant, in multiple and contradictory ways, to be a never married, adult woman in Depression era Halifax.

Conditions of modernity and the coercive pressure of a mass consumer culture challenged young women of Bessie Wamboldt’s generation to make behavioral choices that would determine their success or failure to fulfill their ‘biological’ destiny as sweethearts, wives and mothers. Bessie’s creative navigation of the female life course during the 1930s, through the device of her diary, shows her response to historical forces that shaped her experience.
Acknowledgements

So many individuals have contributed to the production of this thesis that I hardly know how to thank them all. I give particular thanks and appreciation to Dr. Gillian Thomas, whose thoughtful insight and enthusiasm assured me of the value of this project throughout its lengthy inception and birth. I thank Dr. John Reid and Dr. Colin Howell for opening my awareness to the literatures of social and cultural history, without which much of my understanding of Bessie Wamboldt’s diary would have remained frustratingly shallow. I also must thank Sandra Hamm, Doug Vaisey and Ken Clare for their tolerance of my information appetite (and my repetitive accrual of library late fees!)

I am sincerely grateful to Rev. Neil Bergman and his wife Shirley Bergman, for their sharing of Wamboldt family photographs with me. These photographs bring to life the lived experience of Bessie Wamboldt and her family in a special way, unmatched by any other sorts of documentary evidence. Thank you both for contributing this special blessing.

To my colleagues and co-workers I owe a special debt of thanks, for the endless support and encouragement given. This project also would not have been possible without the generous support given by Saint Mary’s University, especially Madeleine Lefebvre, University Librarian, and the Atlantic Canada Studies department, who encouraged and supported my attendance at several major conferences where I gained valuable feedback from other scholars in the fields of social history and life writing research.

I must thank my dear, dear husband, John Thomson, without whom I could not have kept body and soul together as the demands of this research progressed. He is my “One Man,” as Bessie says, and I am deeply honoured by the time and energy he sacrificed to enable me to complete this work.

Finally, I thank the many women whose stories have taught me how to live. Above all others, I thank my mother, Hazel Wentzell, whose deep wisdom and capacity for love inspires me to make a difference in this world. And most especially, I thank Bessie Melvin Wamboldt, whose courage has made all of this possible.
# Table of Contents

Foreword: Bessie Wamboldt’s Diary v  
*Ethical Intentions* xi  
*The Anticipated Reader* xii  
*Meeting the Challenge* xvi  
*Thesis Outline* xix  
*Research Conventions* xx  

Chapter 1: “Most Worthy of Remembrance”:  
Diaries and the Discipline of History 1  
*Relevant Research Traditions* 5  
*‘Identity’ in a Postmodern Research Context* 20  
*Diaries and the Discipline of History* 25  

Chapter 2: "These Sweet Days":  
Freedom and Responsibility in Bessie Wamboldt’s World 28  
*Industrial Time: Working for a Living* 32  
*Family Time: Daughter, Sister, Friend* 50  
*Life Course Time: Becoming a Woman in 1930’s Halifax* 72  

Chapter 3: "Such Temptingly Pretty Things":  
Consumption and the Pursuit of Romantic Fulfillment 98  

Chapter 4: "The Poetry and Music of Life":  
Bessie Wamboldt’s Therapeutic Response to Modern Living 128  

Chapter 5: "This Perplexing Problem":  
Forging an Independent Path in Depression Era Halifax 173  

Bibliography 197  

Appendix ‘A’: A Wamboldt Family Album 207  

Appendix ‘B’: The Manuscript Diary of Bessie Melvin Wamboldt, 1932-1936 218
**Table of Figures**

| Figure 1-1: Front cover, manuscript diary of Bessie Wamboldt, 1932-1936 | vii |
| Figure 1-2: Title page, manuscript diary of Bessie Wamboldt, 1932-1936 | vii |
| Figure 1-3: Line-a-day formatting, manuscript diary of Bessie Wamboldt, 1932-1936 | vii |
| Figure 2-1: Bessie Wamboldt at nursing school, Cambridge, Massachusetts, pre-1930 | 35 |
| Figure 2-2: Barrington St., Halifax, Nova Scotia, circa 1932 | 36 |
| Figure 2-3: Dental Assistant, suitably attired, circa 1932 | 46 |
| Figure 2-4: Wamboldt Home, Front Elevation, Cross-Section and Rear Elevation | 53 |
| Figure 2-5: Wamboldt Home, floor plans | 53 |
| Figure 2-6: Crokinole Board, circa 1934 | 66 |
| Figure 2-7: Nova Scotian Hotel, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1932 | 68 |
| Figure 3-1: Hollywood glamour contest advertising | 110 |
| Figure 3-2: “Cultivate Your Charms” Miss Hills’ Beauty Salon advertisement | 115 |
| Figure 3-3: Drama group, Y.P.S., Disciples of Christ Summer Camp, c.1932 | 119 |
| Figure 3-4: Assembly of actors, Y. P. S., Disciples of Christ Summer Camp, c. 1932 | 119 |
| Figure 4-1: Virginia Vane, *Halifax Chronicle*, February 2, 1934, 7 | 138 |
| Figure 4-2: Morse Wave application instructions | 140 |
| Figure 4-3: Esther, Bessie, Nina, Margaret and others, Hammonds Plains, c1926 | 143 |
| Figure 4-4: Canoeing at Kinsac camp | 144 |
| Figure 4-5: Fred Wamboldt (right), and unidentified person at Kinsac camp | 144 |
| Figure 4-6: Fred Wamboldt fishing at Kinsac camp | 145 |
| Figure 4-7: Interior decoration of the Capitol Theatre, Halifax, N.S. | 158 |
| Figure 4-8: Capitol Theatre interior, with heraldic flags and heroic mural | 158 |
| Figure 4-9: Stage and auditorium decor, Capitol Theatre, Halifax, Nova Scotia | 159 |
| Figure 4-10: Rest area adjacent ladies’ and mens’ rooms, lower level, Capitol Theatre | 159 |
| Figure 4-11: Feminine glamour and old fashioned rugged manliness, example I | 161 |
| Figure 4-12: Feminine glamour and old fashioned rugged manliness, example II | 162 |
| Figure 4-13: “Poor Pa,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 2 February, 1934, 7 | 164 |
Foreword:

Bessie Wamboldt’s Diary
In 1932, at the age of 29, Bessie Melvin Wamboldt began to record her everyday experiences in a tiny, five-year, line-a-day diary. In small spaces, measuring less than one by four inches each, she wrote about things most important to her: family, friends, work, love, longing, and loss. I know this because I purchased this diary at a flea market in 1982, a few short months after the writer’s death.

I wasn’t sure why I had bought the diary. Each time I looked at it, I wondered: Was it right that I should read a stranger’s diary? Maybe not, but the writer was anonymous and I knew none of the people mentioned in the text, so who could it hurt? I had paid money for the diary – didn’t that make it mine? Besides, it seemed a shame not to read something that someone had taken so much care and time to write. The precise script was both legible and literate, so, randomly and self-consciously, I began to explore the pages of the diary. My discomfort gave way to curiosity, then fascination, as I delved further and further into the jumbled text. By turns I encountered wonder, love and hope.

---

2 See illustrations of this line-a-day format, Figures 1-1, 1-2, 1-3.
Figure 1-1: Front cover, manuscript diary of Bessie Wamboldt, 1932-1936.

Figure 1-2: Title page, manuscript diary of Bessie Wamboldt, 1932-1936.

Figure 1-3: Line-a-day formatting, manuscript diary of Bessie Wamboldt, 1932-1936.
interspersed with frustration, resignation and regret. Each time I opened the little book, the handwriting rushed me to center stage in another young woman’s life, a lifetime away, in the heart of a working-class family, during the darkest years of Depression era Halifax. Yet it wasn’t all dark. In fact, the text bubbled with life.

I felt myself reading over the shoulder of the writer, sometimes looking up to see her world from her first-person perspective. Ever-placed in the present moment, I felt myself participating in, rather than passively observing, the unfolding story. The more I read, the more I wanted to read, to learn all I could about this unknown person and the life she had lived. Scarce details, sketched in the shortest possible strokes of intense emotion, both tantalized and mystified me. Fictional narratives had never drawn me so intimately into the heart of human experience.

Almost immediately, I realized that this woman had composed a secret diary, a text that she genuinely would not have wanted others to read in her lifetime. Alongside the mundane details of daily living, the author had mustered her “strange courage”\(^3\) to write about her secret sweetheart, an affair of the heart unknown to family and friends. I too became secretive about the manuscript, putting it away and only examining it when friends were not around to ask to “see it,” as they all had asked when I first had brought it back to the university residence I then called home. I felt responsible to protect this secret text, in the absence of the original writer. Still, I felt licensed by the anonymity of the author and age of the text to continue reading. I felt dazzled and provoked by what I read, and longed to discuss, with other young women, the questions that haunted each page.

\(^3\) Wamboldt diary, September 11, 1935.
When I acquired my first computer, I began to transcribe this stranger’s diary. Somehow it seemed more respectful to read her words in type, rather than in her original handwriting. Through transcription, I felt I could establish a comfortable distance between my world and that of the diary. I imagined that such distance might enable me to share the text with others.

I couldn’t have been more wrong. The act of transcription only increased the intimacy with which I experienced this other woman’s story. No longer merely peering over her shoulder, I felt myself sitting in the writer’s chair, her words echoing inside my brain, coursing down my arms to the tips of my fingers, transmitting across time, onto my electronic page. Not only had I entered into the story; the story had, in fact, entered into me. By the time I had finished typing the last written words in the diary, the sensation of the writer’s tangible presence in my life had grown stronger than ever. I was now convinced that something important was being said in this text, something powerful that I could neither point to nor explain. Still with more questions than answers, I knew I needed to know more.

Through this visceral experience of transcribing the manuscript, I came to understand that diary writing, so seemingly trivial and mundane, possessed the potential to communicate meaning regarding human experience in a manner unique from literary prose narratives. The immediacy of voice and intensity of emotion, expressed in the ever present now, contribute an intimacy to the reader/writer relationship I had never before experienced. This diary’s language, so matter-of-fact, yet so provocative, made me wonder deeply about the life roles women navigate, how our ideas of self are constructed,
and how those ideas evolve (or don’t) over the passage of both personal and historical time.

Through this reading and “writing” experience, I discovered for myself what scholars of life writing already knew: that diaries, letters, and similar, privately composed texts, can project upon the mind’s eye of the reader a powerful impression of the lived experience of an individual. Through this diary, I felt I had found a unique and invaluable point of entry into the lived experience of an earlier generation.

I realized, however, that such subjective evidence demanded more than reading the words on the page. The underlying significance of notions taken for granted by the writer could be completely lost on a reader not grounded in the same understandings. For someone seeking to understand the lived experience of others through personal diaries, the price of admission is participation. In exchange for the pleasure of the “you-are-there” quality of this reading experience, life written text challenges the reader to reach beyond the written words, to discover the underlying contexts that unify an otherwise fragmented narrative. In pursuit of that “something important” that I could not yet name, I turned to archival and historical sources, to discover the contextual details upon which the writer had rested the foundations of her text. Gradually, identity displaced anonymity, as the multiple contexts of Bessie Wamboldt’s diary writing emerged from the shadows of history.

This thesis represents the synthesis of research I pursued to enable my fuller reading of Bessie Wamboldt’s diary. Through this work I seek to derive meaningful historical understanding from the fragmented, subjective evidence embedded within the 1932-1936 diary text of Bessie Melvin Wamboldt. By connecting the evidence derived
from this micro-historical investigation to larger historical, social and cultural patterns, I intend to establish some understanding of circumstances affecting the shape and meaning of women’s lives in Canada during the 1930’s.

**Ethical Intentions**

As a student of the so-called “new” social history, I recognize that private diaries of ordinary, working-class women, such as Bessie, provide an excellent starting point for exploring history “from below.” Similarly, as a women’s studies scholar, I am committed to bringing to light the experiences of unknown women such as Bessie, who have been omitted from the traditional historical record. However, I cannot ignore the knowledge that Bessie Wamboldt’s diary was originally constructed as a secret document, a clandestine record of a socially scandalous relationship. My readers may wonder along with me: when might a private document be considered “too private” to be used as historical evidence?

Numerous scholars have commented on the ethical challenges inherent in biographical research. From them I have distilled the following guidelines to inform my investigation of Bessie Wamboldt’s diary and life:

It has been suggested that the judgment regarding what constitutes essential evidence depends upon the historian’s ability to thoroughly study, carefully interpret, and cautiously speculate about the relationship of such evidence to the historical project at hand. The evidence must be faced honestly, objectively, accurately, and fairly.

---

4 This now-commonplace phrase was popularized by E.P. Thompson’s article: “History from Below,” *Times Literary Supplement* (7 April 1966): 269-80.
scholar must weigh the facts, but must not pass moral judgment on them. The full complexity of lived experience must be embraced, and oversimplification must be avoided. The researcher must recognize the subjective truths of an individual’s life, rather than project upon the individual a life she wishes had taken place. While harm to individuals, living or dead, should be avoided, the scholar must also weigh the determination of harm against the benefits that will flow from the writing of sound, thorough, emancipatory history.

It is clear to me that keeping secrets is very often a response to the oppression of thoughts or actions. Recognition of such survival strategies is fundamental to releasing our forebears from that struggle. Enabling the full understanding of those oppressions is our responsibility as historians of social experience. I hope my readers find that I have fulfilled my intention in this regard.

The Anticipated Reader

Did Bessie Wamboldt really intend that no one should read her diary? After a careful examination of her text, it is my contention that, despite her overt declarations of secrecy, Bessie Wamboldt nonetheless imagined and anticipated some form of readership for the narrative she was composing. Throughout her diary, Bessie makes it clear that she considers herself to be a writer, producing poems, short stories and numerous

---

9 Edel, 92.
10 Andrew Hassam, “Reading Other People’s Diaries,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Spring 1987): 438.

xii
unidentified "scribblings." It is impossible to conceive that her writer's mind did not imagine a reader for every word she wrote.

Bessie's initial declaration of the secrecy of her diary contains several indications that suggest an anticipated readership:

My dear little new Diary. As I opened your leaves & fondled you again tonight I decided that from henceforth you must hold my secrets. ...

[March 21, 1932]

Most obviously, like a "no boys allowed" sign on a girls' clubhouse door, the very fact that she feels compelled to overtly declare the secrecy of her diary suggests that she imagined a reader to whom such a point must be emphasized. Bessie personifies her diary, both through grammatical capitalization and by addressing it directly through the pronoun "you." Her choices of the words "fondled" and "henceforth" tease the reader with dramatic tension, contrasting sensual intimacy against flamboyant, public declaration.

It is sometimes suggested that the physical diary itself is the only intended audience of the writer's story, undermining my argument that Bessie anticipated a further readership. Bessie herself belies this, however, since within a week of committing to regular diary entries, she provides an editorial note for her imagined reader. Blaming the physical diary itself for possible confusion in her text, she signals to her readers lest they get lost:

These pages stuck and misled me so dates have to be changed. ... [March 30, 1932, written on page for March 28.]

11 See examples of Wamboldt diary entries where Bessie discusses her creative writing efforts: July 29, 1932; August 13, 1932; December 28, 1932; July 17, 1933; August 5, 1933; November 28, 1933; April 22, 1934; May 15, 1934; May 22, 1934.
Her accidental entering of accounts for March 28 and March 29, 1932 on the pages labeled March 30 and March 31 forced Bessie to enter her notes for March 30 and March 31 on the skipped pages for March 28 and March 29. Likely the fault of the sticky edge-gilding on the new diary pages, she is correct that this will likely confuse her future readers. Exhibiting an author’s concern for clarity, she carefully explains and relabels these four entries to guide her reader.

The manner in which Bessie identifies her secret sweetheart in her diary also points to an evolving awareness of the possibility that someone may read her text. In the earliest diary entries, Bessie identifies him euphemistically as “my sweetheart,” and “my dear one,” but more often refers to him directly by his given name, “Fred.” Ten days into her regular entries, she signifies him with the initial “F.” Within a month of beginning her regular entries she completely disguises his identity, using either the symbol “Φ,” or “Phi.” Perhaps with some ambivalence, Bessie makes no effort to delete her early references to her sweetheart by name. She is, for the most part, successful in adopting the signifiers “Phi” and “Φ.” After April 1932, his given name appears only in four more entries: September 17, 1932, January 26, 1933, May 1, 1933, and July 14, 1933.

A full year into the diary, Bessie-the-narrator speaks apologetically to her audience:

My very irregular way of keeping these notes would make this book a puzzle perhaps to all save myself. That I should wish, for one feels the need of one safe and sure confidante. ... [March 9, 1933]

Implicit in her first sentence is an acknowledgement that, in fact, someone could and might read this book. Bessie’s use of the qualifier “perhaps” further signals her
awareness of this possibility. In this statement there is no sense that it is Bessie’s actual intention to make her book into a puzzle. Instead, her sentence suggests a tone of personal criticism, a momentary chiding of herself for not producing a more straightforward, accessible narrative for her imagined reader. In pointing out the “irregularity” of her note keeping, she implies an expectation that there is a “regular” method of diary keeping, a standard of writing that she has failed to meet. Her use of the verb “should” in the next sentence signals her conflicted suppression of this fleeting acknowledgement of her imagined reader. Her identification of the diary as her “confidante” further reinforces the personification of the diary as someone to whom her story is to be told.

Several entries indicate who Bessie imagined her potential audience to be: those who have been similarly “initiated” in love would understand and appreciate her puzzling text:

... This perhaps understandable only to us two. [April 1, 1932];

Only the initiated would ever be able to follow my thoughts in this. ...

[January 20, 1934]

Throughout the diary Bessie interjects coy, ironic, witty and dramatic remarks, suggestive of a conscious effort to engage and entertain her imagined reader, much as one might converse with a close friend over tea or on the telephone:

... Tried to curl Ess’s hair tonite but didn’t make much of a success. [May 19, 1932];

---

12 In all cases here, the italic emphasis is mine.
... Out tonite and we had to drive all the time on account of the blood thirsty flies. Our talk was in a very serious vein by the way. [July 11, 1932];

Dr. Johnson [Bessie’s employer] back from his vacation. Got my two weeks today with the delightful news that they’d have to be without pay.

... [August 20, 1932];

... Doc Johnson doing his best to cut my all-ready [sic] finely reduced salary.... [October 29, 1932];

... Took my new dress down to show Φ. It would indeed have been a catastrophe had he not liked it. ... [March 27, 1933];

Felt well all day until five o’clock when entrez-vous black spots & dizziness. ... [October 3, 1934]

She further confirms her conception of her writing as a kind of conversation, in an entry on July 18, 1933: “Speaking or rather thinking of Church Work....”

This evidence within Bessie Wamboldt’s text of her anticipated readership assures me that it is reasonable to pursue the research I propose in this thesis. Bessie Wamboldt risked the writing and preservation of her secret diary, that we might know and understand her story, at this now safe and sure distance of fifty years hence. It is time that we learn what we can from her efforts.

Meeting the Challenge

I believe that the valuing, reading and researching of women’s private life writing constitutes the completion of a political act begun by the diary writers themselves. Katie
Holmes, in her investigation of Australian women’s diaries of the 1920’s and 1930’s, reminds us that women’s diary writing constitutes an assertion of personal rights and values:

In writing about their lives, women took the time to record the things that were important to them.... They asserted the worth of their lives within a culture that rated women’s ideas, thoughts and work as peripheral.... Women who wrote diaries claimed a right which had been denied them elsewhere: they named the things that were important to them and they named, gave priority to, and at times even celebrated, the activities of the domestic sphere.  

Clandestine diary texts, especially, constitute the creative expression of personal resistance within cultures that have consistently dismissed women’s thoughts and feelings as frivolous and unimportant. Researchers desiring a fuller understanding of women’s lives, from any academic perspective, must recognize the value of these texts that speak so directly from the heart of women’s lived experience. In short, we must read diaries, even secret ones, because women wrote them. As Holmes insists, we must acknowledge that “diary writing was a means of valuing their experiences, of making sense of them, asserting order and control over feelings which may otherwise have seemed too powerful, alien or strange to understand.” We must honour the notion that “no matter how ‘private’ or secret a diary might appear, its writer had hopes for its future: it was an act of faith in herself, a belief that her life may last beyond its given moment.”

---

13 Katie Holmes, Spaces in her Day: Australian Women’s Diaries of the 1920’s and 1930’s (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1995), xviii.

Inspired by feminist historiographical traditions, the study of women’s periodic life writing aims to give back to women their voices, allowing them to express that which may have been forbidden. To do this, we as readers must listen carefully, with empathy and openness, to allow these texts to reveal the subjective truth of these lives. Margo Cully characterizes life writing as an act of self creation. She suggests that “all diarists are involved in a process, even if largely unconscious, of selecting details and creating a persona,” and further notes that “some evidence exists that the persona in the pages of the diary shapes the life lived as well as the reverse.”

Diary writing can be seen as an example of Carolyn Heilbrun’s notion that “a woman may write her own life in advance of living it, unconsciously and without recognizing or naming the process.” If we recognize life writing to be integral to women’s construction of self identity, it would be destructive to ignore or silence these creative acts. Research addressing the clandestine life writing of women is not an act of violation. It is, in fact, an assurance and extension of deep, abiding respect for the lived experience of these women, experiences that they valued, secretly wrote about, and preserved for future eyes, hearts and minds.

Social history in general, and women’s history in particular, must concern itself with the lived experience of ordinary individuals. Personal diaries, even the most secret ones, therefore must be considered crucial primary documents testifying to that experience. It would be professionally irresponsible to suppress or ignore essential evidence contained in a secret diary text.

Above all, scholars are responsible to recognize and resist the personal biases that may stand between them and the fair assessment of scandalous evidence. It is natural to feel discomfort when examining personal aspects of people's lives. That discomfort keeps us honest, and reminds us to be fair and thorough in our examinations, but should not be used as an excuse to turn away. Suzanne Bunkers suggests that diary scholars “bear the continuing responsibility for not violating the diarist's trust by misrepresenting her perceptions, by dismissing her life as unimportant, or by relegating her diary once again to the status of a forgotten text.” I believe there is no ethical turning back from an opened diary. To do so is to perpetuate the silence that forced the secret keeping to begin.

**Thesis Outline**

*Chapter One* of this thesis reviews the historiography of social and cultural history, specifically in relation to the exploration of the history of women and gender. Examined together with some of the interdisciplinary scholarship on women's life writing and various concepts of “identity,” this chapter places my proposed research within its relevant scholarly contexts.

*Chapters Two, Three, and Four* explore the historical, social and cultural contexts that influenced Bessie Wamboldt’s understanding and experience of her life. As well as documenting economic and social realities of her daily life, Bessie’s writing also reflects currents of popular culture prominent in daily newspapers and other mass media of the period. Ideologies of romantic consumerism and liberal Protestantism, together with sentiments of modernism and antimodernism, collectively constitute the complex cultural

---


xix
landscape within which Bessie lived her life. A fuller picture of the many possible shapes of what it could mean to be a woman in 1930’s Halifax emerges from this examination of Bessie’s text within these multiple, inter-related contexts.

Chapter Five examines the Wamboldt diary text as an instrument of emotional management, applying methods developed by sociologists and historians of emotion, to understand Bessie Wamboldt’s behavioural choices within the context of the socially constructed life course she was expected to follow in 1930’s Halifax. Building upon the observations of previous chapters, this analysis reveals the extent to which Bessie Wamboldt actively embraced or resisted the expectations of her society.

While intending to contribute to research in the fields of Canadian social history and life writing research, my aim here has also been to enable other readers to experience and appreciate the narrative text of Bessie Wamboldt’s diary. I hope that such an interpretative analysis will inspire others to explore, preserve and promote the appreciation of similarly undervalued and overlooked life written texts, produced by our perhaps unknown but not unknowable forbears.

Research Conventions

In this thesis I have used a number of conventions not common to traditions of academic writing. Most noticeable, in some cases I have quoted multiple, seemingly repetitive diary entries, which may seem excessively long and unnecessary to my readers. While each individual entry written in Bessie’s tiny diary is brief, many of the observations I make about her writing stem from the accumulation of small details recurring in patterns over time. While historians of another era may have judged such
repetitive details to be of little historical consequence, I assert that sentiments repeatedly expressed take on a weighted meaning that individual instances alone cannot convey. Therefore, where necessary, I have supported my analysis with multiple selections of diary entries that illustrate and amplify particular themes over time.

This analytical approach has the effect of disassembling Bessie’s narrative, unraveling the fabric of her creation. My analysis ranges backwards and forwards in time, breaking apart some of her associated ideas while juxtaposing other ideas that previously had not been connected. Through such deconstruction it becomes possible to reveal patterns of meaning buried beneath the surface of the text. Such a process poses risk, since unraveling, deconstructing and reconstructing each carry the inherent possibility of misinterpretation, misappropriation, and even destruction of the author’s intended meaning.

For this reason, I have approached the analysis of my subject with some restraint, respecting both the original writer and the original text. I hope I have judiciously woven the necessary scholarship into my text without resorting to an over-indulgence in academic doublespeak. While I have drawn on numerous streams of academic theory to aid my analysis, I have at the same time sought to express these ideas clearly with a minimum of mystification. My goal is to make both Bessie’s text and my ideas about her text accessible to a broader audience of readers.

In addition to supporting my theoretical conclusions, my inclusion of numerous excerpts from Bessie’s diary serves an additional purpose. In writing such a detailed interpretation of this diary, I run the risk of silencing Bessie, by speaking of her and for her. My interpretations are just that: complex educated guesses about the meanings
inherent in Bessie’s writing, rather than pronouncements of absolute truth. While serving as evidence to support my conclusions, the substantial diary excerpts also ensure that Bessie’s own voice can be heard within my narrative of her story. I hope that this method of presentation allows my readers to evaluate my arguments against Bessie’s own words. I present the fullest possible array of evidence, from which readers may formulate their own meanings and conclusions.

I intend with this thesis to contribute to the fulfillment of one of the promises of social history research: to restore voices silenced in the past by systems of thought that considered the everyday lives of unremarkable individuals to be of little consequence to the larger narratives of history. This thesis is, in fact, my act of resistance against traditions of historical analysis that have failed to transmit to my generation a fuller understanding of our foremothers’ lives.

Each chapter title derives from Bessie’s manuscript, and each chapter is headed with relevant epigraphs written by Bessie. Appendix ‘A’: A Wamboldt Family Album provides a photographic record of the prominent people and places discussed in the diary. Appendix ‘B’ provides a scanned reproduction of Bessie’s entire manuscript. While the analysis of specific aspects of this diary requires deconstruction of the text, the full sense of my arguments can only be evaluated within the context of the complete text. The physical layout of the text, in the convoluted, line-a-day diary format, and Bessie’s tidy handwriting, are important characteristics of the manuscript that cannot be adequately appreciated through the provision of a transcription of the text. The physical construction of the handwriting on the diary pages communicates the rhythm and flow of Bessie’s narrative, its exuberances as well as its silences, in a way impossible to represent in
traditional transcription. For these reasons, I have provided this scanned reproduction rather than an annotated transcript. The scans enable and enhance my readers’ ability to assess my arguments and Bessie’s text, within the full context of the diary as a material artifact.

I have illustrated points throughout this thesis using my transcriptions from Bessie’s manuscript. Reflecting Bessie’s skill as a stenographer, the transcription of her text required almost no corrections. In a very small number of cases, I have added punctuation marks or corrected simple spelling errors, to clarify the sense of the text. I have inserted “[sic]” into the text in only a few instances, to signal odd spellings. Otherwise I have preserved Bessie’s alternative spellings, without remark, to preserve the flow of Bessie’s writing. I have retained all of the stenographic short-form words, such as “thot” (thought), bot (bought), and so on. Bessie also commonly uses the stenographic symbol ñ, to represent the word “with,” so I have transcribed this exactly as written.

I have chosen not to translate the short interjections of shorthand found throughout the text. In most cases, only a few words within a sentence have been written in this manner, making the sense of what has been recorded in shorthand clear from the adjacent text. It occurs to me that, as an experienced stenographer, Bessie could have recorded her entire diary in shorthand, yet she did not. She chose to hide only those most secret, most dangerous words, sprinkled throughout the text. I believe that the most important meaning of these shorthand notes lies in understanding the danger they represented for Bessie. Having examined these notations in their full context within the

---

18 For the record, here are all the instances of shorthand recorded in the Wamboldt diary: July 1, 1932; July 27, 1932; July 27, 1933; August 19, 1933; December 23, 1933; July 28, 1934; March 22, 1935; April 20, 1935; September 5, 1935; November 4, 1935; December 23, 1935; December 31, 1935; March 31, 1936.
diary, I do not believe the words themselves hold any great revelation for further understanding the text. Therefore I have chosen to respect Bessie’s choice to seal these words from our immediate understanding. Some secrets can be left in the past.

The complete diary text is provided to enable readers to consider Bessie’s writing and my interpretations within the full context of the manuscript. Others may detect completely different meanings from those I assign to the text. In doing so, additional ideas may be generated and new conversations will begin. In this way, this thesis seeks to extend our collective, continuing engagement with the Canadian past in challenging directions.
Chapter One:

“My Most Worthy of Remembrance”:
Diaries and the Discipline of History
My dear little new Diary. As I opened your leaves & fondled you again tonight I decided that from henceforth you must hold my secrets....

[March 21, 1932]

Secrets are at the heart of popular conceptions of diary writing. It is undeniable that some diary writers have intended that their texts should remain secret. Common sense tells us that when we look at a modern, lock-clad, commercially manufactured diary, unless we are the author, we are not supposed to read what has been written inside. In addition to the lock, many diarists explicitly mystify their writing through codes and euphemisms. Authors may also inscribe their diaries directly with dire warnings of the punishment that will befall those who violate the secrecy of their journals. Yet the urge to open such a volume is practically irresistible. On a winter afternoon in 1982, I succumbed to this temptation. On that day, jostling in a crowd at a flea market stall, I opened the diary of Bessie Melvin Wamboldt.

The lock on her green, cloth bound diary was still intact, but the band that bound the back cover to the lock had been neatly sliced. I wondered what such a small volume, barely larger than the palm of my hand, might contain. I fanned the gilt-edged pages, inhaling a whiff of fountain pen ink. I marveled at the close, careful script that nearly filled the volume. I noted 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935 and 1936 jotted throughout the book.

Each page contained multiple short entry spaces for different years. This was a "line-a-day" diary, in which each small page was intended to hold five separate notations, each notation consisting of a sentence or two, describing the same day, of the

---

1 See Figure 1-1, Foreword.
2 See Figure 1-3, Foreword.
same month, for each of the five years covered by the diary. The writer would thus see, at a glance on a single page, the recorded events of her life for the same date in each of five different years. “A Condensed, Comparative Record for Five Years Recording Events Most Worthy of Remembrance,” the manufacturer’s title page announced. I wondered how such a lofty goal could be accomplished within such a constricted space. I paid the flea market vendor five dollars, and then hurried away with ‘my’ treasure.

This then-anonymous diary made for compelling reading, especially when I discovered that between those covers lay a scandalous secret. Bessie Wamboldt, (whose name I did not yet know), had “jealously saved all the sweet dreams of girlhood and longing of young womanhood for the One Man,” and she had found him: the minister of her church, who also worked as a chiropractor, but who, unfortunately for Bessie, was already married to another woman. Woven among the threads of everyday life in this diary I found an account of an all-consuming, clandestine love affair.

There is no question that Bessie recognized what she wrote as both secret and dangerous. She coded her beloved’s name (using the symbol “Φ” or “Phi,”) and she recorded the most intimate of her comments in shorthand. She refers to her diary as her “safe and sure confidante,” and expressed the hope that others who might read this ‘book’ would find it “a puzzle.” A text of romance, and a text of mystery. Fascinated, I responded to what I perceived to be the author’s implicit challenge. Becoming the reader I believed this writer had anticipated, I began what turned out to be a very long search to unpuzzle the pieces of Bessie Wamboldt’s diary.

3 See Figure 1-2, Foreword.
4 Wamboldt diary, November 12, 1932.
5 Wamboldt diary, March 9, 1933.
Bessie’s remarkable use of this brief diary format challenged my understanding of women’s creative potential to negotiate their place in twentieth century society. Romantic and excessive in expression, Bessie used her diary to explore themes of love, family and work. Throughout this text she records the hopes, dreams and longings of a young, single, working woman living in Halifax, Nova Scotia during the years of the Great Depression. Many readers would dismiss this text entirely, given the fragmentary and repetitive characteristics of the line-a-day format.

However, beneath the veneer of dailiness, and beyond the immediate scandal of its content, this diary hints at fundamental questions regarding women’s understanding of themselves and their roles in their society. By creatively plotting her own life through the device of this diary, Bessie Wamboldt shows her responses to powerful historical forces shaping the circumstances of her life. It is this intersection between the larger world and individual lived experience that this thesis seeks to explore.

Fundamental to this exploration are questions concerning the construction of female identity. Within the context of her historical time and place, who did Bessie Wamboldt believe herself to be? In what ways did Bessie conform to or resist her society’s gender expectations? What social and cultural ideas did she embrace or reject in the construction of her self identity? In her examination of women’s accounts of growing up in interwar London, historian Sally Alexander notes that “in the 1920’s and 1930’s the sexual division of labour and women’s sense of themselves — indeed what it meant to be a woman — were changing in significant ways.”

An exploration of Bessie Wamboldt’s individual, subjective record of her life during the 1930’s will provide an opportunity to

consider, from a first person perspective, this evolution in women’s sense of themselves that historians such as Alexander have identified. Through this thesis examining the diary and life of Bessie Melvin Wamboldt, I seek to understand what it meant, in multiple and perhaps contradictory ways, to be a never-married, working-class, young adult woman in Depression era Halifax.

**Relevant Research Traditions**

Introducing a recently published collection of women’s diaries written in Canada since 1830, Kathryn Carter states that “reading the details from lives of individual women can do much to broaden and challenge our understanding of Canadian history.”7 This evaluation of the lived experience of ordinary women as vital to our understanding of Canadian history suggests a very different historiographical practice than that engaged by earlier generations of historians.

Reflecting the success of feminist historian efforts to incorporate the experiences of individual women into the corpus of Canadian history, Carter’s approach also follows in the footsteps of earlier twentieth century social historians, such as the French Annales School and the British Marxist historians, who (controversially for their time) believed that an understanding of the lives of ordinary people was crucial to the investigation of history.8 French Annales historians of the 1930’s, such as Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel, rejected the historical study of politics in favour of the exploration of the psychology (“mentalités”) and material conditions of everyday life. British Marxist

---

8 For further exploration, see works by Thompson and Braudel, as well as the overview of the Annales School written by Peter Burke, in my bibliography.
historians of the 1960's further popularized the history of everyday life, through their investigations of working class perspectives, an approach E.P. Thompson called “history from below.” As recently as 1990, Canadian historian Veronica Strong-Boag condemned mainstream historians’ neglect of the “richness of daily life,” a practice she saw contributing to waning interest in Canadian history. As recently as 1990, Canadian historian Veronica Strong-Boag condemned mainstream historians’ neglect of the “richness of daily life,” a practice she saw contributing to waning interest in Canadian history.9 Recent diary scholars such as Kathryn Carter10 have clearly acted upon Strong-Boag’s call that “different choices about what is historically significant are now needed if we are to have a balanced and accurate portrait of how Canadians actually lived.”11

Of course, personal diaries have been used as historical evidence by scholars within many historiographical traditions. However, historians in the past have often limited their interest in diary evidence to a slim selection of texts that reflected narrow definitions of historically important events and individuals. The ordinary jottings of unknown people, especially those texts reflecting the daily, lived experience of women, were often dismissed as irrelevant by earlier generations of historians. Kathryn Carter summarizes that

[i]n decades past, women’s diaries chosen for archival preservation were those thought to be of historical value, as determined by an androcentric model of historiography: women’s records were saved for what they revealed about the lives of important men or about historical moments made significant by men’s


10 Other Canadian scholars who have contributed to this area include Helen Buss, Marlene Kadar and Margaret Conrad. Noted international scholars include Harriet Blodgett, Suzanne Bunkers, and Margo Culley. See bibliography.

involvement. Women's lives (especially their domestic activities) have not always
been considered historically important.\(^{12}\)

Personal journals, especially brief, line-a-day diaries and their like, written mostly
by unknown women, recording historically uneventful lives, have only in recent decades
been considered to merit intensive scholarly attention. The burgeoning volume of
academic research examining these previously dismissed documents has been enabled in
part by the evolution of historiographical traditions relating to social history in general,
and associated disciplines such as women’s history in particular, throughout the last
century.

In 1984, Margaret Conrad fostered this evolution when she suggested that “the
investigation of women’s culture is central to the writing of women’s history.”\(^{13}\) Conrad
encouraged the close examination of women’s culture in the context of specific places
and times, suggesting that “we need to make sense of our past and feel in touch with the
local traditions which have all-too-often been neglected in our pursuit of the ‘larger’
forces explaining women’s experience.”\(^{14}\)

Conrad encouraged the exploration of nontraditional, private records, such as
diaries, letters, and minutes of meetings to access the hidden realities of women’s lives.
She insisted that such documents are

extremely valuable tools for learning how the larger historical forces intersect
with women’s daily realities. … [T]hey enable us to construct life stories that

---

13 Margaret Conrad, “Sundays Always Make Me Think of Home: Time & Place in Canadian
Women’s History,” in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women’s Work in British
reveal much about the women who are conspicuously absent from our public records.\textsuperscript{15}

Conrad, Strong-Boag and Carter all call for methodological approaches to women’s history rooted firmly within traditions of social history research. In the introduction to a recent issue of the \textit{Journal of Social History} devoted to the current status and future prospects of social history, Peter Stearns confirms several distinct and unifying principles that continue to underlie the work of all social and cultural historians, despite the chaotic profusion of topics, methodologies and philosophical frameworks that threaten fragmentation within the discipline of history. These unifying principles include “the interest in breadth of human experience, the capacity to relate special topics to larger patterns of cultural or economic change, the commitment to ordinary more than to extraordinary people, and the imaginative use and discovery of relevant resources.”\textsuperscript{16}

Paula Fass, commenting in another article within the same journal issue, values cultural history methods that “allow us to explore the past in newer ways – to try out new methods, read new sources (especially literature, which had been somehow tabooed as unrepresentative by some social historians), and to ask new, more subtle questions.”\textsuperscript{17} She warns, however, that micro-historical analysis, a methodological approach commonly embraced by social and cultural historians, can only be made historically meaningful within the provision of broader, contextual historical evidence. She also

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{15} Conrad, “Sundays,” 70.
\end{flushright}
stresses the need to demonstrate explicit connections between particular social and
cultural behaviors and broader historical theory.\footnote{18}

It is within the context of these key principles of social history research, and
specifically in response to the call of historians of women’s experience for researchers to
place women’s lived experience within the context of specific places and times, that this
thesis has been undertaken. The primary, micro-historical vehicle for this exploration will
be the analysis of the personal diary of Bessie Melvin Wamboldt, written from 1932 to
1936, who was at that time a working class resident of north-end Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Can the daily diary of one unknown woman inform our understanding of the
wider experience of women living in Halifax during the 1930’s? A great deal of current
interdisciplinary scholarship on diary criticism suggests an affirmative answer. In her
1997 review of this scholarship, Kathryn Carter suggests that

[a] diary can map out a woman’s relationship to the culture in which she lived,
and provide opportunities for the careful reader to see how she engaged with that
culture. The great promise of diaries is that they allow new kinds of investigations
into the texture of women’s lives and the fabric of women’s culture.\footnote{19}

A thoughtful, interdisciplinary investigation of the diary of Bessie Wamboldt, compared
and contrasted against the wider context of the women’s community in Halifax during the
interwar period, may reveal new understanding of the ways in which the women of
Halifax shaped the meaning of their lives in the 1930’s.

Clearly, it has not always been the case that the intimate details of women’s lives
could be held up to historical scrutiny. Which subjects are worthy of historical

\footnote{18} Fass, “Cultural History,” 45.
\footnote{19} Kathryn Carter, \textit{Diaries in English by Women in Canada, 1753-1995: An Annotated
Bibliography} (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1997), 8.
investigation? Are certain issues, incidents, and sources deserving of a privileged place within the study of history? Should scholars be held accountable for their choice of topics and methodologies? On what standards can we base our judgment of what constitutes “good” history?

These questions lie at the heart of the evolution of Canadian historiographical traditions over the last half century. In her 1994 presidential address to the Canadian Historical Association, Veronica Strong-Boag observed that “until at least the 1970’s, the limited number of subjects and individuals considered worthy of attention by professional historians is striking.” Borrowing from disputes in the Canadian Writer’s Union about censorship, she suggested that “much Canadian history [prior to the 1970’s] was in fact an “argument by the white middle class, for the white middle class, about the white middle class.”

These “older, male-defined traditions of history, with [their] focus on war and diplomacy, elitist institutions, and male heroes and ‘nation builders’” have given way in the last thirty years to a diverse array of subjects, practices and theoretical foundations, but not without complaint or controversy. On the one hand, new theoretical frameworks exploring the Canadian historical experience have been condemned for fragmenting the unity of the discipline of history. Other historians have celebrated these same methodologies for ensuring diversity within the academy. According to Strong-Boag, this “sea-change of considerable magnitude”, promises that “for the first time we see the possibility of constructing narratives that have some real claim to representing the

---

Canadian peoples.” The emergence of women and gender as a category of historical analysis is one branch of this expanding body of work, still called “the new history” by the elder-statesmen of Canadian history.

Historical biography constituted the earliest expressions of women’s history in Canada and elsewhere. Accounts of the “Great Women,” who struggled to achieve the “Great Event” (the enfranchisement of women), sought, by example, to expand the boundaries of possible achievement for women. Identified by Natalie Zemon Davis (in the European context) as the history of “women worthies,” this international trend in women’s history reflected the mainstream production of “great men” historical biography that flourished in Canada during the 1950’s and 1960’s.

A paramount feature of these early female biographies was the celebration of the feminine characteristics of these women. Although successful in traditional, male dominated fields such as politics and journalism, accounts of these women’s lives also emphasized the subjects’ essential femininity, considered crucial to their celebration as role models. These women were, in the words of Margaret Andrews, “super-beings, simultaneously complete as women and successful in men’s ways.” In this manner, during the earliest days of the writing of women’s history, only a select minority of exceptionally talented women was considered worthy of historical investigation.

27 A good example of this historiographical trend in the Canadian context is Mary Quayle Innis, ed. The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and their Times. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, for the Canadian Federation of University Women, 1966).
28 Andrews, 69.
Although this celebratory, great-woman history continued to be written well into the 1970's, a gradual shift in emphasis became apparent, as historians began to assign value and meaning to a wider range of silent voices previously omitted from the Canadian historical narrative. The rebirth of the feminist movement in the 1970's influenced the theoretical foundations of this historiography. Groups of women, rather than important individuals, became the focus of interest, as historians sought to enable the collective experience of ordinary women's lives to emerge from the shadows of history.\footnote{For representative early works in this field, see for example Sheila Rowbotham, \textit{Hidden From History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It} (London: Pluto Press, 1973), and Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz and Susan Stuard, eds. \textit{Becoming Visible: Women in European History} (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1977).} The emancipatory potential of history became clear to feminist historians. It was hoped that an understanding of the mechanisms of oppression experienced by yesterday's women would assist today's society to eliminate such oppression in future. The choice of "worthy" subjects of historical investigation multiplied, as scholars attempted to capture the fullness of women's experience that had previously been overlooked by traditional, male centered scholarship.

In a recently published collection of gender history essays, Kathryn McPherson and her co-editors characterized this early feminist historian emphasis on the concept of women's experience as

\begin{itemize}
  \item a critical tool for feminists seeking to validate women's own stories and female specific life course events in the face of patriarchal traditions that had defined what was 'normal' and what was 'important' in decidedly masculine terms.
  \item Equally important, feminist historians saw in the concept of experience a way to theorize women's social identity. Building on E.P. Thompson's use of the
\end{itemize}
term to signify the formation of class identity, feminist historians asserted that women understood their social location not only through ideological prescriptions ... but also through the material and physical [conditions.]

Joan Scott also summarized the objective of this “her-story” historical approach to have been “to give value to an experience that had been ignored ... and to insist on female agency in the making of history.” She further suggested that the central aspect of this approach is the exclusive focus on ... the causal role played by women in their history, and on the qualities of women’s experience that sharply distinguish it from men’s experience. Evidence consists of women’s expressions, ideas and actions. Explanation and interpretation are framed within the terms of the female sphere: by the examinations of personal experience, familial and domestic structures, collective (female) reinterpretations of social definitions of women’s role, and networks of female friendship that provided emotional as well as physical sustenance.

Prior to these developments, the traditional pursuit of ‘objective’ historical truth caused historians to treat the subjective content of diaries and letters with great caution. The emergence of an historiography that valued women’s personal experience brought with it new interpretive frameworks within which to evaluate the evidence presented in private life writing. As early as 1975, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg advocated this approach, when she declared that

32 Scott, 20.
an analysis of women’s private letters and diaries which were never intended to be published permits the historian to explore a very private world of emotional realities central both to women’s lives and to the middle class family in nineteenth-century America.\(^{33}\)

In addition to proving that women did indeed have a history, such research legitimized the historical significance of personal and subjective evidence such as diaries, letters, and other forms of women’s private life writing.\(^{34}\)

This experiential approach to women’s history was not without disadvantages. A primary drawback, for Joan Scott, lay in its tendency to isolate women as historical subjects. By concentrating solely on women and their experience, scholars of ‘her-story’ tended to relegate ‘woman’ to the very separate sphere from which feminists sought her release.\(^{35}\) Joy Parr has also commented on the inadequacy of this historiographical approach:

In time it became apparent that questions framed to be about women alone could entail their answers in their asking.... These responses always to some degree isolated woman from the social relationships which created her, and presumed that woman existed in certain ways. ‘Tell me about women’ always to some

---


\(^{34}\)Notable scholars who have studied, edited and published significant collections of diary-texts written by ‘ordinary’ women have included: Margo Culley (1985), Penelope Franklin (1986), Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw and Donna Smyth (1988), Harriet Blodgett (1991), Suzanne L. Bunkers (2001), and Kathryn Carter (2002). Scholars of note who have produced studies of single-author diary texts have included Judith Nolte Lensink (1989), Susan Mann (2000), and Jennifer Sinor (2002). See bibliography.

\(^{35}\)Scott, 21.
degree meant ‘Tell me about someone who will be recognizable to me as a woman.’

By the late 1980’s, some historians of women’s experience realized that a broader theoretical stance would be required to avoid the biological essentialism inherent in these isolated approaches to women’s history. To do this, historians had to step beyond the narratives of women’s experience, to question the meanings that shaped our conceptions of experience. Joy Parr explains that

experiences were claims, not irrefutable foundations .... The forging of an experience was itself an outcome of social processes that made and hierarchically organized meanings.... Experiences are formed through webs of connected meaning.

It became clear that the key to understanding women’s history lay in examining the social and material contexts in which individuals shaped the meaning of their own lives. Women’s history was transformed by this understanding, to address broader questions of identity, the social construction of which encompassed the experience of both males and females. Having restored women to the narrative of the past, historians now faced the prospect that there could be no universal, essential ‘Woman,’ no collective, unified identity for the ‘fairer sex’. The recognition of the diversity of women’s experience, forged not by biology, but through the intersection of myriad social

---

36 Joy Parr, “Gender History and Historical Practice” Canadian Historical Review 76, no. 3 (September 1995): 362.

37 Parr, 364. This commonly-used metaphor of “webs of meaning” or “webs of significance,” was popularized by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who paraphrased sociologist Max Weber when he wrote in 1973 that “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun; I take culture to be those webs.” [Interpretation of Cultures, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5] This concept, that people use socially constructed signs and symbols to shape their behaviors and to derive meaning from their experience, underpins much of the scholarship that informs this thesis.
relationships and material circumstances, forced another scholarly turn, from “women’s history” to “gender history.”

This recognition that “identities were made in relationships” lies at the heart of poststructuralist approaches to gender history.\textsuperscript{38} By the late 1980’s, both Joan Scott and Denise Riley had developed elegant theoretical frameworks necessary to illuminate the meanings behind the evidence of women’s experience. Both of these theorists rejected the concept of objective historical truth, and instead embraced the idea that all human experience is subjectively interpreted through the lens of social relations, specific to historical places and times. Both saw the historian’s work in terms of untangling (“deconstructing”) the layers of “discourse,” the webs of constructed meaning emanating from social relations which enable individual identities.

Riley encouraged an “active skepticism about the integrity of the sacred category ‘women’,” enabling feminist historians to “stand and sway upon the shifting sands” of ever oscillating feminine identities.\textsuperscript{39} She also recognized that “gender” is only one facet of multiple, changing formations of identity that may be experienced by persons, both individually and collectively over time. Scott suggested that “historians need to examine the ways in which gendered identities are substantively constructed and relate their findings to a range of activities, social organizations, and historically specific cultural representations.”\textsuperscript{40} She rejected the traditional historian’s “search for single origins” in favour of the concept of “processes so interconnected that they cannot be disentangled.”\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{38} Parr, 362.
\textsuperscript{39} Denise Riley, “Am I That Name?” Feminism and the Category of “Women” in History (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 113-114.
\textsuperscript{40} Scott, 43-44.
\textsuperscript{41} Scott, 42.
These short excerpts in no way represent the fullness of theoretical argument presented by either of these historians. Both have been criticized for abandoning “the facts” of history, and Scott’s conception of gender has been termed a “postmodern category of paralysis” by one sharp witted critic.⁴² Joy Parr has characterized the criticism of recent work in gender history as both ferocious and hostile.⁴³ Continuing debate regarding the value and dangers of these theoretical viewpoints does not, however, invalidate their usefulness within certain research contexts.

This new, gender conscious social history tolerates a diverse array of methodologies, and encourages interdisciplinary approaches to feminist historical investigations. The editors of *Gendered Pasts* make clear that many researchers comfortably cohabit the categories of ‘women’s’ and ‘gender’ history, while those trained in other subfields of history have undertaken gendered analyses and in so doing tell us much about understudied groups of women.⁴⁴

The gender history perspective furnishes an ideal intellectual standpoint from which to embark on an analysis of the diary writing of Bessie Wamboldt. It supports the investigation of the social construction of gender, the methodological importance of language and literary analysis, and the conceptualization of power, all of which will enlighten an investigation of Bessie’s life and writing.

The historiography of women in Canada has evolved perceptibly over the last thirty years, from objective, empiricist accounts of “the truth” to subjective analyses of

---

⁴³ Parr, 356.
⁴⁴ McPherson, Morgan and Forrestell, 2.
social relations encompassing a multiplicity of viewpoints. The simplistic narratives of women’s achievement, common before the 1970’s, have given way to what Gail Cuthbert Brandt has called a “crazy quilt” of subjects, interpretations and methodologies. In her review of Canadian women’s historiography in the 1980’s, Brandt suggests that “what has been lost in the simplicity and convenience of generalization, however, has been more than compensated for by the variety and richness of detail embodied in the evolving work.”

According to Brandt, this richness of scholarly work is due in large measure to the recognition of the interconnections of multiple variables affecting women’s experience and self identity: gender, class, race, religion, politics, employment, health, sexuality and education, among others. Regional identities have also surfaced, along with reconceptions of such fundamental characteristics as women’s experience of time and space. Historians have turned to theories and methodologies from other humanities and social sciences, from anthropology to philosophy, in the search for new ways to understand women’s experience. Brandt identifies these efforts collectively as a “postmodern patchwork,” calling our attention to the potential breadth and complexity of historical investigation of women’s lives.

Central to the development of these new methods has been the necessity to rethink our definition and understanding of historical sources. As predicted by S. Jay Kleinberg in the 1988 introduction to *Retrieving Women’s History: Changing Perceptions of the Role of Women in Politics and Society*, these new methods have required two shifts in historical thinking: First, scholars have needed to reinterpret

---

traditional historical sources, to detect evidence of women's experience that has previously been overlooked as irrelevant. Second, scholars have been required to consider new, previously unimagined sources for the investigation of women's history. This thesis, examining the diary and life of Bessie Wamboldt, responds directly to this methodological challenge, by seeking new ways to understand one woman's private diary writing within the larger context of Canadian women's history.

In the most recent years of this historiographical evolution, scholars have become increasingly concerned that the discipline of history as a whole may be falling apart under the weight of these interdisciplinary investigations. The apparent abandonment of empirical methods, the use of new sources, such as material culture, oral history, diaries, letters, and other ephemera, to investigate the intimate lives of the most ordinary, 'unknown' individuals, all suggest, for some historians, the dissolution of traditional definitions of historical importance.

However, the sacrifice of traditional boundaries of historical analysis has enabled scholars to access a complex spectrum of experience through which individuals in the past constructed meaning in their lives. Supported by these postmodernist approaches to the study of history, diary researchers are able to explore the many ways in which meaning and identity are constructed by individuals and groups in particular historical circumstances. This ability to accommodate a multiplicity of viewpoints, to use the realities of thought and feeling as well as the empiricist's facts and figures, has extended our ability to interpret the past in interesting ways. Instead of projecting our interpretations upon the past, it is now possible to allow the past to speak to us. Diaries

and other forms of life writing, forged in the fire of lived experience, have become unique and ideal resources to enable this approach to historical analysis.

‘Identity’ in a Postmodern Research Context

Many diary scholars comment on this vital characteristic. Kathryn Carter notes that diary writing “has the potential to trace threads of meaning in the fragmentation that characterizes human life. ... If all the seemingly unconnected details of life are written down ... then maybe the sense of it all will emerge.”47 Similarly, Margo Cully has suggested that diary writing springs from “the urge to give shape and meaning to life with words, and to endow this meaning-making with a permanence that transcends time.”48

Judith Sauerbrey, in her study of the diaries of six twentieth-century women, suggests that these texts can provide an avenue to access the imagined selves of other women, their “sense of identity ... their most authentic voices and the revelation of their real faces.”49 Rather than continuing to treat personal diaries as mere “transparent windows onto scenes of social history,”50 historians can now engage in cross-disciplinary investigations that can “lead current readers to reflect on how the self is constructed at specific historical moments in particular geographic spaces.”51

To speak of “self” or “identity” in the early twenty-first century is a research position fraught with discomfort. Knowing that feminist theorists reject the historical tendency to reduce all women’s experiences to a biologically-determined, universal

50 Kathryn Carter. Diaries in English, 9.
51 Carter, Small Details, 7.
Woman-ness, how can I propose to examine the construction of any woman’s “identity”? As Sally Robinson wonders, how can we “theorize ‘identity’ (of women and feminism) without falling into exclusionary practices and falsely universal – or “global” generalizations?\(^{52}\)

To overcome these generalizations, Robinson suggests an endorsement of Denise Riley’s strategy, that we should “think of ‘identities’ as temporary and strategic, for ‘identities can only be held for a time, both individually and collectively...’”\(^{53}\)

This postmodern rejection of a unified, singular, and unchanging “self” has also been described by Stuart Hall, who points to the context of cultural systems as a key to understanding identity:

[The conception of self] previously experienced as having a unified and stable identity, is becoming fragmented; composed, not of a single, but of several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved identities.... This produces the postmodern subject, conceptualized as having no fixed, essential or permanent identity. Identity becomes a ‘moveable feast’: formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us. It is historically, not biologically defined.\(^{54}\)

Morwenna Griffiths suggests that “the simple minded assumption that personal identity could just be read off from the fact of being a woman, or a black person, or a black woman or a white working-class man” is also an inadequate research position.\(^{55}\)


\(^{53}\) Robinson, 5.


She points, like Hall, to the need to frame the construction of the self within historical circumstances:

A self is made and makes itself in the changing circumstances in which she lives and in a direction strongly affected by her own understanding of herself.... So an account of the construction of a self needs to show how social circumstances, material circumstances (including embodiment), change and growth all come together to make a self.\textsuperscript{56}

Griffiths establishes that both material and social conditions, especially “relationships ... of love, resistance, acceptance and rejection” contribute to the construction of individual and collective self identities. She suggests that “the experience of belonging or not belonging is essential to an individual’s self identity.”\textsuperscript{57}

This concept of the construction of self identity within the context of relationships depends upon the recognition and valuation of women’s lived experience. Sally Robinson supports Griffiths’ argument when she suggests that

“Female experience” never exists in isolation from discursive and social constraints, but, rather, unfolds precisely through women’s engagement in discourse and social systems.... Experience, like gender, is a process, not a product.... [S]elf representation is contingent upon the social context in which all representations are constructed....\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{56} Griffiths, 82.
\textsuperscript{57} Griffiths, 85-90.
\textsuperscript{58} Robinson, 13-14.
Like the Marxist proposition that “men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please,” Griffiths characterizes the construction of identity as a process affected by multiple variables, only some of which lie within the control of the individual:

Self identity is to be understood as a kind of web, the construction of which is partly under guidance from the self, though not in its control. Thus it is marked by competing constraints and influences which overlap and fuse.... Each individual creates her own identity, although she is constrained by circumstance in doing so.

Griffiths uses the term “community” to describe the various social groupings from which such external influences issue, and she uses this term flexibly to suggest both intimate social networks as well as larger political or geographical units:

[The construction of the self] is highly communalistic and political. It states that the individual can only exist through the various communities of which she is a member and, indeed, is continually in a process of construction by those communities. It emphasizes that the concept ‘community’ must be understood to include both those it is possible to know personally and also the wider society and its political categories.... The proposal is that self (the self, the individual) is constructed by overlapping, various communities, each of which is itself changing. Such plurality is the norm, not the exception.

---

60 Griffiths, 93.
61 Griffiths, 93.
Clearly both external and internal forces coalesce within the individual to produce the experience of “self” at any given time. John Spurlock and Cynthia Magistro define self to mean “the constellation of experiences and expectations that an individual recognizes as integral to her identity, that give meaning to her life, and that shape her relationships to her society and her culture.”

It is from these theoretical standpoints that I will explore the cultural contexts that informed Bessie Wamboldt’s construction of her identity through her diary writing. I understand that concepts such as “self” and “identity” are not fixed and static, but rather are changeable, multiple, fragmentary, and contradictory. I also embrace the notion that the construction of such identity can be conceived as the process of individual and collective negotiation of social and material circumstances, enabled through relations of power. Such negotiation is clearly a dynamic process through which elements of identity are projected, reproduced and/or constructed anew through relationships between individuals and/or larger groups. These elements issue from both internal expectations and external experiences, the combination of which produces the individual’s understanding of identity. This process takes place within the context of “communities,” defined by characteristics of common interest, and acceptance or rejection within such communities directly affects the development of individual self identity.

Diaries and the Discipline of History

Kathryn Carter reminds us that “diaries are in dialogue with history,” stressing the dynamic interplay between historical context and the life written text. Veronica Strong-Boag values the diary as an ideal documentary source “in which the historical subjects themselves describe their own experience.” She further stresses the irreplaceable contribution to be made by diary sources, noting that “diaries of ordinary women ... reveal a complex female culture that left virtually no trace in conventional historical documents.” Carter notes that diaries offer “an ideal vehicle for uncovering the material conditions of women’s daily lives” since these texts are richly infused with evidence of the specific material, social and institutional conditions under which they were created. Within the context of these research traditions, this thesis approaches Bessie Wamboldt’s diary as a sterling opportunity for current readers to investigate aspects of the lived experience of Halifax women during the 1930’s.

To say that diaries are an ideal vehicle for uncovering the lived experience of women’s lives is not to suggest that the gleaning of that information is a simple process. Contextual details are assumed by the author, rather than spelled out, some information is deliberately withheld, and narrative structures common to other forms of writing are nonexistent. Betty Jane Wylie suggests that diarists construct “icebergs of communication, with much more under the surface than is apparent above.” The

63 Carter, Small Details, 11.
64 Strong-Boag, “Writing about Women,” 181.
66 Carter, Small Details, 21.
scarcity of contextual detail forces the reader to weave together clues and fill in the background.

A text constructed seemingly of such fragments can nonetheless exhibit a unity of theme and style when interpreted as a whole by an engaged reader, who draws on her own experiences and understanding as part of the reading process. The brevity of entries in such a diary is not a negative literary attribute. Dure Jo Gillikin suggests that the short diary form forces the writer to selectively distill her daily experience into its purest essence. Comparing the short diary form to impressionist painting, she suggests that just as pointillist painters use small dots to shape boats, trees, and people into a landscape, so the diarist selects bits of plot from each day and by accretion the sum and substance of her life.... The descriptive details, reduced to a word or a phrase, assume the value of precious gems, for they must imply totality.68

Making sense of such a “pointillist” diary text requires patience, openness, and a willingness to engage in creative strategies not necessarily common to traditional historical research.

Furthermore, diary texts challenge a scholar’s interpretive abilities, through the presentation of subjective, rather than objective accounts of individual experience. In her analysis of oral reminiscences of women growing up in London during the Depression years, Sally Alexander notes that women’s subjectivity presents considerable interpretive difficulty, since it opens up not only behavior, thought, opinion, and family stories to historical enquiry, but also unconscious mental processes. That is, we listen to fantasies of.

desire and loss, the compelling inner directives of the structure of sexual difference.  

Alexander embraces this challenge, recognizing that “fantasy draws on the immediate and historical for aspects of content, form and context.” Such evidence, carefully considered, can enable a fuller understanding of both individual and collective historical experience.

The theoretical viewpoints of the scholars I have mentioned above support the notion that private, life written documents are invaluable resources to further our understanding of the historical lived experience of ordinary individuals. Collectively, these theorists open the door to historical explorations such as I have proposed in this thesis.

Thanks to the work of social historians, all members of human society have become potential subjects for the historian’s gaze. We must respect and honour that which our foremothers deemed “most worthy of remembrance.” In gaining access to the secret lives of individuals, we bear responsibility to honestly represent the complexity of lived experience without projecting our own preconceptions on the evidence in advance of its revelation. We need to focus our attention where our discomfort is greatest, as this uneasiness can be trusted to signal unaddressed gaps in the historical record. As Joy Parr, the 1995 president of the Canadian Historical Association reminds us, “as scholars, we are not entitled to be comfortable.”

---

69 Alexander, 206.
70 Joy Parr, “Gender History and Historical Practice” Canadian Historical Review 76, no. 3 (September 1995): 360.
Chapter Two:

“These Sweet Days”:
Freedom and Responsibility in Bessie Wamboldt’s World
These sweet days seem so full of activity that time for the serene, deep thoughts seems difficult to obtain. Daily work, S.S. [Sunday school] work, the sermons which I love doing, looking after my own simple things, this seems to absorb all the time. Perhaps it is just as well to be busy for I yearn so for Φ often & often. [May 28, 1933]

Bessie Wamboldt took full advantage of her small diary’s potential to capture the “precious” hours\(^1\) and “sweet” moments\(^2\) of her life, to document both her “busyness,”\(^3\) and her periods of “welcome” rest\(^4\). Within the journal’s strictly ordered and delimited spaces, she records how her time was spent: on work and leisure; at the office, church, and downtown; at home, with family, friends, acquaintances and strangers. While Bessie’s writing measures and marks the passing of days, additional conceptions of time underlie the story she tells in her diary. Fuller, more complex meanings emerge from Bessie’s record of daily activity and relationships when her writing is considered in light of life course time, that is, the socially constructed notions about stages of personal development, from youth, through adulthood, to old age. Encompassing the entire diary narrative, historical time also dictates multiple, external contexts that frame Bessie’s experience. This chapter examines some of the ‘times’ of Bessie Wamboldt’s life, revealing the rich historical and social contexts that contributed to her lived experience and sense of self throughout the first half of the 1930’s.

\(^1\) Wamboldt Diary, July 1, 1932.
\(^2\) Wamboldt Diary, March 30, 1932; December 30, 1932.
\(^3\) Wamboldt Diary, April 17, 1932; February 21, 1934.
\(^4\) Wamboldt Diary, September 15, 1932.
Feminist theorists of the last twenty years would have us consider the ways in which women have experienced time in a manner different from men. Margaret Conrad has made practical application of theories of ‘women’s time and space’ in her examinations of Nova Scotian women’s diaries. Regarding time, she observed that

[The women in our diaries clearly experienced time … differently than many of us do today. … [T]ime was reckoned through the prism of the family and even the time and place of work were assigned according to … gender role expectations.\(^5\)

In her study of women’s use of leisure time in Halifax, 1880-1930, Laura Brock summarizes the work of several theorists in this area when she affirms that

[For women time was measured differently than that of men. While men’s time was measured according to the clock or political events, women’s time was measured more on the basis of family events or major turning points in the life cycle.\(^6\)

These views of women’s time derive partially from historian Tamara Hareven’s definitions of “family time,” “individual time,” “industrial time,” and “historical time.” Individual and family time reflect “the timing of such life course events as marriage, the birth of a child, and the transition of individuals into different family roles,” from the respective viewpoints of the individual and the family unit. As defined by Hareven, industrial time is characterized by the clock, by hours of waged employment outside the


home and family environment. Although both men and women experience time within these multiple contexts, researchers such as Brock and Conrad affirm that, during historical periods when women’s work was principally associated with the unwaged, domestic realm, these notions of “family time” versus “industrial time” can be seen to correspond to gender divisions of labour. That is, women who worked in the so-called private sphere experienced time very differently from men who worked for wages outside the home.

Hareven suggests that the intersection of historical time and industrial time with an individual’s life course shapes the characteristics of her lived historical experience, constituting “the essence of the historical process.” It is this intersection in Bessie Wamboldt’s experience that this chapter seeks to examine. Within the contexts of historical time, industrial time, family time and Bessie’s life course time, this chapter examines her social relationships and the historical structures of daily life within which she defined herself.

Like the diarists studied by Conrad, Bessie’s experience of time was “reckoned through the prism” of her many social relationships, all of which are reflected in the ways in which she chose or felt required to spend her time. Bessie organizes her time in response to a network of external responsibilities and social expectations, balancing these obligations against the personal freedom she claims despite the restrictive circumstances of her life. Social and economic circumstances challenged Bessie (and many other

---

8 Hareven, 355.
women of her generation) to accommodate the discordant rhythms of industrial, family and life course time, a challenge unimagined by earlier generations of women.

**Industrial Time: Working for a Living**

Bessie Wamboldt begins her diary at the age of twenty-nine, in 1932, during the pervasive economic slump of the Depression years. Although some "boom" times were experienced in other parts of Canada during the interwar years, the state of the Nova Scotian economy throughout the 1919 to 1939 period can be generally characterized as bust, bust and more bust. Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford and David Sutherland suggest that "economic conditions in Halifax in the interwar years were bleak, and Haligonians did not share the prosperity of the 1920’s enjoyed in western and central Canada."¹⁰

Calling this period "an economic crisis of unprecedented severity," John Reid notes that "for much of the rest of the country the Great Depression was a phenomenon only in the 1930’s. In the Maritimes, it began in the summer of 1920 and lasted for a full generation."¹¹ Fingard and her colleagues suggest several reasons, in addition to international economic conditions, for the precipitous, twenty-year collapse of the region’s economic stability, including the reduced peacetime navy, the loss of more than half of the city’s secondary manufacturing jobs between 1920 and 1930, and the evaporation of international markets for coal, fish and lumber, that not only supported the

---

¹⁰ Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, and David Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years.* (Halifax: Formac, 1999), 140.

Nova Scotian rural economy, but also buoyed the shipping trade vital to the economic well-being of urban Halifax.\textsuperscript{12}

Bessie Wamboldt approached adulthood amidst this atmosphere of economic uncertainty. The national average wage in 1929 was $1200, $230 less than the $1430 indicated to be necessary, by the federal Department of Labour, to support a “minimum standard of health and decency.”\textsuperscript{13} In Halifax, according to the 1931 census, men averaged an even lower annual wage of $1090.\textsuperscript{14}

In this climate, women entered the paid workforce in greater numbers than ever before, comprising, in 1931, 17 percent of the total workforce in Canada.\textsuperscript{15} Working women often contributed to a family economy, in which several wages could be pooled to maximize the living conditions for the entire family.\textsuperscript{16} Only a small proportion of wage earning women were married, since social expectation (and often employer policy) dictated that married women should occupy themselves full time with the important task of raising children and managing a home, despite whatever economic hardships might result from this. Veronica Strong-Boag notes that the inability of women to continue working after marriage often led to the embrace of creative, home-based ways to add to the family income, “such as sewing, childcare, and boarders.”\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} Fingard, Guildford and Sutherland, 140-41.
\textsuperscript{13} John Herd Thompson, and Allen Seager, Canada 1922 - 1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 138.
\textsuperscript{15} Seventh Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. I, 277.
\textsuperscript{17} Veronica Strong-Boag, “Janey Canuck”: Women in Canada 1919-1939 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1994), 8.
The largest proportion of working women was comprised of young, single women, contributing, like Bessie, to their parents’ collective household incomes, until such time as they would marry and begin caring for a household and family of their own. John Herd Thompson indicates that “the average working woman’s career in the labour market lasted only eight years,” since women expected that “paid work was a transitory stage in [their] life cycle, which would end in marriage.”[^18] Strong-Boag points out that in the years between school and marriage, working-class girls could make vital contributions to their parents’ budgets through their labour as domestic servants, factory workers, sales clerks, and clerical employees.[^19]

In addition to these sectors of employment, the interwar years saw the growth of women’s professions, such as teaching, social work and nursing, offering the potential of better wages as well as opportunities for community service and personal satisfaction. Increased access to high school and post-secondary education enabled women from both the middle classes and the respectable working classes to aspire to a reasonable level of professional achievement, even if working careers would be sacrificed later for marriage.

Bessie was one such fortunate young woman, having obtained an education as a registered nurse. She graduated, as so many Maritime girls, from Cambridge Hospital, Massachusetts.[^20]

[^18]: Thompson and Seager, 151.
Throughout the diary she is employed, five and one half days a week,\textsuperscript{21} as a dental assistant in the office of Dr. Francis Johnson. Her workplace was located in the General Trust Building, 464 Barrington St., in the heart of downtown Halifax. Bessie appears to have usually worked alone, as the only assistant in Dr. Johnson’s office, only once mentioning another worker, whom she refers to as “Miss Rose.”\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} The half-day took place on Saturday morning.
\textsuperscript{22} Wamboldt diary, December 21, 1933. This may be Sadie Rose, who is listed in the 1932 Halifax City Directory as dental assistant to Dr. Chudleigh, another dentist whose office is located in the same building as Dr. Johnson.
Bessie expresses alternating sentiments of dissatisfaction and thankfulness to have this employment:

Back to work — What a boon and a blessing it is to have a job. And how fortunate I am when so many are out of work. [December 26, 1933];
... I am so thankful to have a job, even a little one but sometimes the routine seems to be too much physically and I long, just for a change from routine. ... [January 15, 1934];
Sometimes the office seems unbearable. I need to feel I am creating something worthy but seems to be a dead lock for me there. ... [June 20, 1934];

Bessie provides few descriptive details of her activities at work. Throughout the period of her employment with Dr. Johnson (1930 – 1936) the Halifax City Directory variously lists her job title as dental assistant, clerk, secretary, and stenographer. All of these are likely accurate to a degree. Horace Miller’s Dental Office Guide, published in 1934, confirms that it was common practice for dental office workers to be “given various titles such as nurse, assistant, secretary, technician and hygienist.”

This array of job titles reflects the diversity of potential duties assigned to the dental assistant during this period. Although Albert Webster’s 1932 Manual for Dental Assistants assures the novice assistant that “no one person can do all that is outlined,” it is equally clear that many dentists of the period operated small offices with only one assistant, who would in fact be required to master most of the duties prescribed in these early vocational texts.

Some idea of what Bessie’s work might have looked like can be gleaned from dental assistant training manuals published during the 1930’s. These textbooks describe

---


37
both the practical details of the work and the cultural assumptions and expectations embedded within her employment situation. One author outlines both duties required and personal qualities possessed by the ideal assistant:

The young lady employed in a busy dental office as an assistant is a necessary important asset. She controls minor office details, attends to office routine, must be a capable secretary, assist at the chair and work in the laboratory. … [A] mentally alert girl with initiative can relieve the dentist from distractions arising from telephone calls, mail, salesmen, ordering supplies, keeping supplies up or duties which would take him away from the active productive work at hand. … Meticulous neatness, cleanliness and refinement are necessary for a successful nurse, diplomatic relations with patients, a sympathetic attitude towards those in pain and above all a methodical method of doing things assures a smoothly operating office.26

This passage draws attention to several characteristics of dental office worker identity during the 1930’s. First, the image of the dental assistant, like the nurse, teacher, secretary and stenographer, was by this period firmly linked to a female gender identity. Training texts enforced this gender identity of the worker, using terms such as “girl,” “lady,” “woman,” “she,” and “her” to declare that this was unquestionably women’s work. Several textbooks explain that, historically, dentists specifically required the presence of women workers in their offices to impart an aura of safety, respectability and dignity, intended to attract clientele, especially of the female variety.27 Second, by

---

26 Miller, 180.
27 See both Samuel Joseph Bregstein, The Business Conduct of an Ethical Practice: An Exposition of the Application of Business Principles to the Practice of Dentistry Without Transgressing the Rules of Ethics 2nd ed. (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Dental Items of Interest Publishing, 1932), 61; and Webster, vii-
referring repeatedly to “young women,” “girls” and “young ladies,” these textbooks also reflect an assumption that the workers who performed dental assistance duties would be young, in keeping with educated female employment trends in other sectors at this time.

Many of the responsibilities shouldered by dental nurses derive from these identifying characteristics of youth and femininity. The duties described by training texts of the period exhibit a remarkable amalgam of traditional, family oriented female roles with modern, professional, work based identities. As there is no reason to believe that Bessie’s work experience differed markedly from other dental nurses, it can be assumed that she fulfilled these diverse roles in the workplace. Simultaneous with the performance of the professional work of nurse and secretary, these women were expected to transplant traditional domestic roles into the workplace. These roles included the “charming hostess,” “tidy housekeeper” and “comforting mother,” as Webster’s training text explains:

As housekeeper, the assistant should see that the reception room has the right atmosphere. … Some assistants lose out because they are careless, untidy housekeepers. … As hostess, the assistant should greet the patients promptly, making them feel at ease and comfortable if possible. She should be professional, yet not too much so, having charm and refinement, thinking of the comfort of her guests. The mental state of dental patients is not always what it should be and it is the assistant’s duty to prepare them mentally as well as physically for the operation. … [T]ry to feel kindly to all patients, especially with children; win their love and respect and never deceive them. … [S]trive to dismiss a patient in

---

viii, for comments on the historical employment of women in the dental office.
such a way that the patient will feel the nurse is a real friend and interested in his comfort.  

Office "housekeeping" is one aspect of Bessie's work that she regularly mentions in her diary. Whenever the doctor is away, Bessie resorts to cleaning the office, imposing a traditional domestic activity on this otherwise male dominated workspace:

Dr. Johnson away for his 2 weeks vacation. Left this a.m. Spent the morning cleaning up the office. ... [August 4, 1932];

Dr. Johnson away from the office all day so I cleaned up. ... [September 6, 1932];

Dr. Johnson gone on vacation and I have the office all to myself. Have busied myself about cleaning round the office. ... [September 10, 1934];

Bessie's highlighting of these cleaning activities, while she is silent on so many other details of what she may be doing at work, reinforces the impression given by the dental assistant textbooks, which all place considerable emphasis upon the importance of cleaning as a critical responsibility that female assistants are most suited to perform.

Perhaps there was little else for a dental assistant to do when the dentist himself was absent. Even if this was the case, it is interesting that diaries of other young, working, Nova Scotian women from this period sometimes record similar domestic crossover activity in the workplace. In their survey of Nova Scotian women's diaries, 1771-1938, the editors of No Place like Home note a "retreat into domestic routine" inscribed in the 1930's diary of one single working woman in Nova Scotia.  

Margaret Conrad observes, among the diary writers she has examined, that "women in the paid labour

28 Webster, 37, 38, 41.
force ... often carried domestic traditions such as housecleaning, the celebration of
anniversaries and personal friendships into the workplace."^30 Conrad further notes that
our early office and factory workers are curiously silent on matters relating to
their paid labour. Instead, their diaries describe the social activities related to their
work day and details of shopping, visiting, washing and sewing which dominated
evenings and weekends.^31

The question as to why these diarists (including Bessie) wrote more commonly
about ‘domestic’ activities in the workplace rather than about other daily tasks cannot
adequately be answered in the absence of the original authors. This observed
characteristic of the life writing of female workers may suggest that these authors
imagined certain topics to be more appropriate for diary writing than other topics.
Perhaps work activities not firmly linked to gender identity were not seen to belong
within the territory addressed by the personal diary.

Within the context of nursing, cleaning represented more than the importation of
domestic activity into the world of work. By the 1930’s, the maintenance of cleanliness
was a well-established responsibility of trained nurses working in any healthcare
environment. ‘Professional’ nurses, as originally conceived by Florence Nightingale
when she founded her school of nursing in London in 1860, were expected to be able to
“battle against dirt, disease and sin.”^32 In her discussion of nineteenth century single

---

women and their employment in the field of “reformed” nursing, Martha Vicinus suggests that cleanliness not only would help the sick body to repair itself, but it would also inculcate new standards, moral and physical, in the patient. … The emphasis upon cleanliness and discipline was part of a larger struggle reformers faced in making space in the hospital for the new nurses. By giving cleanliness a vital role in the patient’s return to health, Nightingale carved out an area of expertise for her new nurses.33

While Nightingale’s generation of nurses promoted cleanliness as an instrument of moral improvement, the registered nurses of Bessie’s generation were also motivated by scientific notions relating to the reduction of disease transmission. Although scientifically justified, cleanliness routines were still strongly gender identified as “the housework of the wards,” remaining a primary responsibility for nurses in the 1930’s. Fully subordinate to the will and direction of their employers, nurses such as Bessie may have enjoyed the absence of their supervisors as opportunities to exercise professional autonomy, engaging in the unquestioningly feminine nursing task of cleaning and ordering the work environment.

One training text author of the period noted that “many dentists prefer to call their assistant “nurse,””35 suggesting that nursing qualifications were only one of several backgrounds that might qualify workers for this employment, at this early stage in the development of the dental assistant profession. The same author explains (from an

33 Vicinus, Independent Women, 92.
35 Miller, 180.
American perspective) that persons who filled assistant positions might be graduates of a registered nursing program, although there were other equally common, post-high school training routes, including specialized courses at schools of dentistry and the still common, on-the-job instruction from the dentist/employer. In Canada, dental assistance courses had been available from the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario as early as the 1920’s, although no such formalized courses appear to have been provided in Halifax by the Dalhousie University School of Dentistry until the 1950’s.

Although little formal continuing education was available in Halifax for dental assistants during the 1930’s, Bessie does make several notes that indicate a commitment to improvement of her professional skills. She mentions attending her first “D.A.A.” meeting, at which was presented “very interesting lecture on Louis Pasteur by Dr. Faulkner.” This “D.A.A.” may refer to a “dental assistants’ association”, given that Dr. Alden Faulkner is a dentist (according to the 1932 Halifax City Directory), and that Bessie refers to a “dental assistant’s meeting” in a later diary entry. No evidence has been found for such an organization in available records, so these meetings may have been sponsored informally by the local dentist community. It is most likely that this meeting was organized by the “Halifax Dental Society,” as Dr. Faulkner shared his Gottingen Street dental practice with Dr. George Dewis, who is listed as the president of the Halifax Dental Society in the 1932 Halifax City Directory. No further documentation on the activities of this group has been located. It is possible that this group eventually

---

36 Miller, 180.
37 Webster, 2.
39 Wamboldt diary, January 3, 1933.
40 Wamboldt diary, November 7, 1933.
became known as the Halifax County Dental Society, whose website anecdotally suggests that they have been in existence for more than 75 years.\footnote{The website for the Halifax County Dental Society indicates that some current members believe their organization to have been in operation for more than 75 years. Their mandate is still to promote “fellowship, communication and education” among members of the local dental community. See \textit{Halifax County Dental Society} <http://www.pcdentist.com/hfxcounty.htm> (May 3, 2005), paragraph 1.}

Several months after mentioning this D.A.A. meeting, Bessie notes with disappointment that she went “down to a Dental Assistants’ meeting tonight to which none of the others showed up.”\footnote{Wamboldt diary, November 7, 1933.} Her attendance of these continuing education opportunities and her disapproval of her absent peers are behaviours in keeping with the advice of Pearl Bartindale, who wrote in the “Ethics” chapter of Webster’s \textit{Manual for Dental Assistants} that the assistant should “associate herself with dental assistant societies and contribute time and energy in order that these societies may represent the ideals of this profession.”\footnote{Webster, 31.}

Bessie proudly announces giving her first “Morse Wave treatment” (a mechanical therapy that delivered mild electrical currents to various parts of the body), indicating her interest in learning new health technologies.\footnote{Wamboldt diary, April 23, 1932. The “Morse Wave” treatment was one of many controversial alternative health technologies commonly used in chiropractic and other alternative medical treatment offices during the 1930’s. See illustration from Morse Wave operator’s manual, Figure 4-2, page 148.} Her shorthand and typing skills are constantly honed through her transcriptions of church sermons, copies of which are sometimes provided to other church members.\footnote{Example sermon transcription entries, Wamboldt diary: May 21, 1932; September 28, 1932; March 24, 1933; November 26, 1933; January 30, 1934; May 24, 1934.} On at least one occasion she records preparing one of her minister’s sermons for publication in the\textit{ Halifax Daily Star} newspaper.\footnote{Wamboldt diary, November 26, 1933. The \textit{Halifax Daily Star} was one of two evening newspapers published in Halifax during the 1930s.} She is aided in her development of these skills through the purchase of a typewriter (on which she placed a higher priority than the purchase of new spring
clothes\textsuperscript{47} and gifts of “sermon paper and shorthand tablets”\textsuperscript{48} from her church minister. She mentions “practising invoices,”\textsuperscript{49} and worries that she lacks sufficient spare time for “the reading & practising that I really want to do.”\textsuperscript{50}

The training texts of both Webster and Miller give the impression that dentists often valued the demeanor and appearance of a potential assistant above any formal scientific training a candidate might have received. Joseph Bregstein, whose training manual aims to educate dentists in the successful management of the business aspects of dentistry, reminds his readers that “…[i]n choosing an associate, the dentist must be careful to select one whose appearance, temperament, and character will harmonize with the surroundings at his office.” According to Bregstein, this “primary requisite” exceeds any other qualifications a candidate might bring to the dental assistant position.\textsuperscript{51} Unlike the texts of Miller and Webster, which instruct assistants in a wide variety of technical subjects, Bregstein vehemently opposes the training of female assistants to “take radiographs, pack amalgam dies for inlays, carve wax patterns and cast inlays … [or to] clean teeth!”\textsuperscript{52} In a field that appears to have been rapidly evolving, only domestically derived, gender identified office duties seem to have been universally agreed to constitute the primary work of the dental assistant.

The training texts all emphasize the requirement that dental assistants appear “appropriately and immaculately attired.”\textsuperscript{53} This attire invariably included a “white gown, white shoes and stockings and a white cap covering the hair” The only article of

\textsuperscript{47} Wamboldt diary, April 7, 1932.  
\textsuperscript{48} Wamboldt diary, June 14, 1934.  
\textsuperscript{49} Wamboldt diary, August 1, 1932.  
\textsuperscript{50} Wamboldt diary, April 11, 1932.  
\textsuperscript{51} Bregstein, 56.  
\textsuperscript{52} Bregstein, 57.  
\textsuperscript{53} Webster, 38.
traditional nursing attire that Bessie mentions is her purchase of "white shoes," but it can be imagined that, given her registered nurse status, she would have sought to dress in uniform, as expected in the workplace.

![Image](image.jpg)

Figure 2-3: Dental Assistant, suitably attired, circa 1932, Bregstein, 53.

The only patients ever mentioned by Bessie in her diary are a crowd of British sailors, who certainly would have appreciated her "charm and refinement" as much as her professional efficiency:

Busiest day I've ever had at Dr. Johnson's. Men off the British ship Challenger. ... [July 12, 1934]

54 Wamboldt diary, June 8, 1935.
55 Webster, 38.
Although it cannot be confirmed that Bessie fulfilled the Webster textbook’s idealized dental assistant image of a tall, slender young woman with small, strong hands, who exhibits “mental alertness, quick perception and prompt anticipation of the dentist’s needs,” it can be imagined that, given the emphasis in the training literature, Bessie would have been well aware of expectations that she “harmonize” attractively with the office environment.

In his examination of early twentieth century medical laboratory workers in Nova Scotia, Peter Twohig found that a good proportion of the workers who came to the medical lab field were trained nurses, since “[n]urse superintendents and hospital administrators everywhere generally wanted nurses who could fill a number of tasks, chief among them work in both the laboratory and x-ray services.” Twohig notes that work in the laboratory, together with other services such as x-ray work or dietetics, were not only respectable opportunities, but could serve as important alternatives to other kinds of work. … Laboratory work offered women an escape from dealing with the infirm or the dying. They could find satisfying and remunerative work in health care without dealing with sick patients on a day to day basis.

Dental nursing would have represented similar “welcome alternative” employment that provided “educated women with a chance to escape from the demands of caring for the sick or dying….” Dental assistant training texts did place greater emphasis on selecting staff who exhibited appropriate demeanor and dress over those

---

56 Webster, 156.
57 Peter L. Twohig, “Organizing the Bench: Medical Laboratory Workers in the Maritimes, 1900 – 1950” (PhD. Diss., Dalhousie University, 1999), 164.
58 Twohig, 179, 180.
59 Twohig, 186.
who had received specific technical training. Technical skills, after all, could be taught on the job. Nonetheless, it has to be recognized that the technical abilities of well trained nurses would have been well suited to the dental office environment. Given the range of duties a hospital trained nurse would already be able to perform prior to any dental office training, it can be surmised that the possession of registered nursing qualifications would constitute a competitive advantage in the employment market of the 1930's, particularly if such qualifications were accompanied by a “pleasing personality” and a “sympathetic nature.”

The combination of nursing, secretarial science and office management skills in the single career of dental nursing gave Bessie Wamboldt a valuable combination of employment experience. For women of the 1930’s, clerical work represented highly skilled, respectable and well paying employment. Such skills would enhance the employability of women who had also earned professional nursing qualifications. Female graduate nurses, stenographers/typists and other office clerks ranked as three of the six highest paid professions for women in Halifax, according to the 1931 census, exceeded only by the salaries of telegraph operators and school teachers. Bessie’s development of her skills in nursing, typing and stenography can be considered a clever strategy to maximize her value in the employment marketplace.

The evidence of the 1931 census suggests that Bessie should have received a more comfortable salary than many other wage-working women in Halifax. Nonetheless, it is clear from Bessie’s writing that she was dissatisfied with the particular circumstances of her employment with Dr. Johnson:

---

60 Miller, 6.
... I have given my best in service to Dr. Johnson yet he does not want to give me a living wage. ... Must find more lucrative work. [January 27, 1933];

... Though doing my best at the office it is very discouraging sometimes working where there is no desire for improvement in office equipment & management. ... [April 29, 1933];

This seemed such a gala day. I felt free from the oppressive spirit of Dr. Johnson’s perpetual pessimism. ... [May 20, 1933];

Bessie writes that she applies (unsuccessfully) for two clerical positions, indicating a willingness to leave the nursing profession in favour of clerical work, presumably for improved wages or working conditions:

Heard that the job I was after has been filled by a young man. It makes me feel very discouraged about the future ... .[August 2, 1932];

Edna showed me an Ad in the [Halifax Daily] Star for an office girl so answered it tonight but without much hope of a change. ... [May 12, 1934];

Whether through conscious choice, necessity or good luck, this early career experience and training laid a valuable foundation for Bessie Wamboldt’s future security. From 1941 until her retirement in the 1960’s, Bessie worked as a stenographer with the Public Health Pathology Laboratory in Halifax. Peter Twohig notes that the stenographer in the New Brunswick Bureau of Laboratories at Saint John during the late 1920’s and 1930’s was the second highest paid employee in the laboratory, since such work “was
essential to the operation of the laboratory.\textsuperscript{62} It appears that young Bessie Wamboldt’s incessant “practising” eventually earned her the reward of secure, respectable and sufficiently remunerative employment throughout the later adult years of her life.

**Family Time: Daughter, Sister, Friend\textsuperscript{63}**

As a single woman, economic reality and social expectation dictated that Bessie Wamboldt would continue to live with her parents, despite her age and employment status. She was not alone. Throughout the period covered by the diary, Bessie’s brother Fred and her sisters Nina (“Nine”) and Margaret (“Mug”) also shared their parents’ home. Fred worked as a clerk with the National Drug and Chemical Company; Margaret had recently graduated from the prestigious Halifax Conservatory of Music and was working as a piano teacher for the Conservatory as well as (later) for Sir John Thompson School. Nina stayed at home, helping with the household, but not working outside their home. Fred and Nine were both older than Bessie; Margaret was eight years her junior. Another older sister, Esther, had earlier married a United Church minister, Herbert Hatt, and lived in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia at the time the diary is written. “Ess and Herbie” visited the Wamboldt home every few weeks, staying overnight after traveling either by the train\textsuperscript{64} or occasionally by car, despite the distance to be traveled on difficult roads from Bridgewater to Halifax.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{62} Twohig, 177-78.  
\textsuperscript{63} See Appendix ‘A,’ *A Wamboldt Family Album*, for photographs of relatives and friends mentioned in this chapter.  
\textsuperscript{64} Wamboldt Diary, May 19, 1933.  
\textsuperscript{65} Wamboldt Diary, April 17, 1933.
Bessie's father, Henry Havelock Wamboldt was still working, although he was 67 years old when the diary chronicle begins. She expresses regret that it is still necessary for him to work, and wishes she could contribute more to the household:

... Dad getting too old to work any more. If only I could get a more remunerative job. [May 6, 1933]

The *Halifax City Directory* continues to list him as working, as a labourer/yardman for a lumber company, until a year before his death in 1949. This experience is consistent with Suzanne Morton's observations of elderly men living in the Halifax neighbourhood of Richmond Heights (geographically adjacent to Bessie's home) during the 1920's. Morton found that few elderly men in Richmond Heights ever embraced formal retirement, according to the *Halifax City Directory* for that time:

Although large numbers of men continued to work, the fear of job loss was not unfounded. Many older male employees found themselves working at different, less lucrative jobs as watchmen, janitors and sweepers — less physically demanding work that they were judged still able to perform. Henry Wamboldt may have experienced just such a downswing in his employment. Annual editions of *Halifax City Directory* indicate a change from "employee" with Silvers Agency Ltd., ("Manufacturers Agents," a waterfront import agency, up to 1930) to "labourer" with the Building Supplies and Milling Company (1934 – 1948). He is listed without occupation from 1931 through 1933, suggesting a period of unemployment. Morton notes that poverty among the elderly was a significant community concern during this period, and that "the loss of household independence in

---

some situations was averted through the generosity of adult children.\textsuperscript{68} This is clearly one of the factors that influenced Bessie and three of her adult siblings to reside in their parent’s home. Neither parents nor children would have fared very well in the absence of each other’s contributions to their collective quality of life.

The family home, a tidy, two story, hipped-roof construction, was typical of houses built in Halifax’s north-end following the devastating munitions ship explosion of December 6, 1917. The original family home, built on the same site, was destroyed in the explosion. Although never mentioned in her diary, it can be speculated that the trauma of the family’s survival of the Halifax explosion and the loss of their home and possessions would have affected Bessie’s later attachment to her family and home.

It is known that both Bessie’s mother and her sister Nina were injured when their home collapsed. When an order came to evacuate the devastated neighbourhood, the \textit{Halifax Herald} reported that, despite a broken collarbone, Mrs. Wamboldt and Nina (and presumably the other members of the family) “walked to the suburb of Rockingham, a distance of some 10 miles. From here they were driven in a wagon to family in Hammonds Plains, where they stayed to await medical assistance.”\textsuperscript{69} The family was removed to temporary lodging in Dartmouth, across the harbour from Halifax, until they returned to Halifax in 1918.

The structure Bessie calls home in her diary was constructed in 1918 by the Halifax Relief Commission and mortgaged back to the family for $800.\textsuperscript{70} The amenities of the house included four bedrooms, an indoor bathroom, telephone and electrical

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} Morton, 61.
\item \textsuperscript{69} “Extricated by Daughter From Wreckage,” \textit{Halifax Herald}, 11 December 1917, 2. See Appendix ‘A’ for a reproduction of this article.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, M.G. 36, Series R, R 212, 6 Bilby Street, W.H. Wamboldt: Damage Report, Drawings, Correspondence.
\end{itemize}

52
service, hot water heating, a parlour fireplace, front and back storm porches, a small but stylish covered verandah, and a small fenced backyard.

Figure 2-4: Wamboldt Home, Front Elevation, Cross-Section and Rear Elevation. Bessie’s bedroom window was on the second story, left side of the Front Elevation.  

Figure 2-5: Wamboldt Home, floor plans. Bessie Wamboldt’s room appears to have been the small one on the left of the front of the second floor. “The big room” that she sometimes shared with Margaret and Nina is likely the one on the front right of the second floor.  

71 Reproduced with permission, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, M.G. 36, Series R, R 212, 6 Bilby Street, W.H. Wamboldt: Damage Report, Drawings, Correspondence.
On several occasions Bessie expresses appreciation for the comfort and security this family asset provides:

... Thank God for home. [April 5, 1932];
... I am thankful, very, very thankful for my dear home here. [January 24, 1933];

Oh, the feeling of peace & happiness to be here in the home that our loving parents have laboured & sacrificed for. ... [June 4, 1933];

The rebuilding of Halifax’s north-end after the 1917 explosion offered an unparalleled opportunity for much needed urban reform. The redevelopment of the city’s residential district north of the downtown core embraced ideas promoted by British experiments in working-class “garden city” suburbs. This progressive urban reform movement emphasized “small, self-contained houses, gardens, and public open spaces,” designed to “produce a healthier and happier labour force and, with it, perhaps an ideal society.”^72 Fingard, Guildford and Sutherland note that the redevelopment plan for the most devastated area, known as Richmond Heights, “reflected the belief of many progressive reformers that providing workers with ‘ideal surroundings’ would not only improve public health, but also transform and uplift their personal lives.”^73

The reconstructed houses of Richmond Heights, possessing such modern amenities as electricity, indoor plumbing and heated water, surrounded by public green spaces, were intended to be rented or mortgaged at reasonable rates to the “respectable” working class, that is, the most prosperous among the working-classes of the city.^74 In fact, the architecture and design of the reconstructed Richmond Heights was itself a key

---

^72 Morton, 17-18.
^73 Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, 139.
^74 Morton, 16.
component of the respectability claimed by working-class families who inhabited the
planned community. Bessie's family certainly would have been recognized as belonging
to this social group. She has good reason to be thankful for her modern family home,
given the general conditions of working-class housing in the city during this period.
Fingard, Guildford and Sutherland quote from Samuel Prince's 1932 Halifax housing
study, which suggested alarmingly that Halifax was

infested with a high percentage, per house population, of tumble-down shacks
where whole families eat, sleep, bathe and live in a single room, where cellars
reek with filth and vermin... unfit for human habitation, and typical of the worst
slum conditions to be heard of anywhere. 75

Although written in the exaggerated rhetoric of a self-righteous ruling class, bent
on improving the seething under-classes, some truth must lie at the heart of this
description of substandard housing conditions.

Bessie's home was situated three blocks from the new, planned community of
Richmond Heights. A high proportion of nineteenth-century buildings remained standing
in the Wamboldts' immediate neighbourhood, contrasting sharply against the tidy, newly
constructed Relief Commission properties. The Wamboldt family home would have
represented an extension of suburban respectability in the midst of this older, run-down
and crowded neighbourhood. Owning rather than renting their home (even through the
mechanism of a Relief Commission mortgage) would have provided the Wamboldts an
additional measure of respectability within their immediate community.

Throughout the writing of the diary she seems to have a precious 'room of her
own,' not shared with her sisters:

75 Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, 143.
How pleasant after the day’s work & events to come home to a little room that is doubly mine by the deep sorrows, the sublimest joys, all the emotions of life that have been experienced within its sanctuary. [November 18, 1932];

... So good to be back in my own room little tho [sic] it is with my own things round me. ... [April 21, 1933];

... Had a quiet afternoon, all to myself & enjoyed it wrapping up Xmas gifts. The privacy of my room is so dear to me & so essential at certain times. ... [December 17, 1933];

Only when her married sister Ess and husband Herbie come to visit are shared sleeping arrangements required:

... Home to find Ess & Herbie who came up tonight, in bed. Mug, Nine & I in big room. ... [November 16, 1932]

It can be imagined that “the big room” is normally shared by the younger Mug and Nine. Bessie’s parents and her brother Fred would each have had their own rooms, and Bessie, as the oldest daughter remaining at home, possessed the smallest room, which she was obliged to give up to her eldest sister when she came to visit. It is likely, given the number of bedrooms in the house, that she had shared a room with Esther before her sister moved away to be married.

Bessie’s valuing of the privacy represented by her room suggests that she placed a certain social distance between herself and her family. Certain aspects of Bessie’s life are not shared, even with her sister Mug, with whom she seems to have the closest relationship. Safe within the walls of her own room, Bessie guards her greatest secret: she

---

76 See Figure 2.5.
has fallen in love with Fred Wallace, the minister of her church, who also operates a
chiropractic office in the building where Bessie works, and who, unfortunately for
Bessie, is already married to another woman.

Released from the “continual caution” which she must exercise each day, it is
within the “sanctuary” of her room that Bessie writes her secret diary, writes and reads
love letters, hides away the secret gifts received from her sweetheart, and daydreams
about her complex situation:

    I kneel by my bed to write contented this night because I have seen my
    Fred this day and all is well between him & me.... [May 1, 1933]

She watches through her window for any sign that her beloved is near:

    ... Later he came past & so I ran out & saw him for a few minutes on
    Macara St. ... [December 30, 1933];
    Φ passed by my window tonight & I saw him in the distance. Read his
darling letter & put it away with the gift it contained. [January 6, 1934];
    ... Phi gave me a wonderful letter, perfect in its expression of devotion
which I later read & placed with my sacred treasures. ... [February 3,
1934];
    ... Stood in the darkness of my room gazing at Φ’s car on M. [Macara] St.
[February 24, 1934];
    ... Saw him from my bedroom window. [April 27, 1934];

77 Wamboldt diary, July 19, 1933.
78 Wamboldt diary, April 5, 1932.
Got my little wooden box cupboard finished and set up in my room. Will always keep it as a token of Dad's work. How tidy my room will be now c my boxes & papers shut away behind its doors. [May 31, 1934];

Saw Phi at dusk from my bedroom window. Up until 12 o'clock trying to write. [August 4, 1934]

Bessie’s “papers” include more than just her diary and letters. Bessie Melvin Wamboldt longed to be a writer. Although often dismissing her poems and short story attempts as “scribblings,” Bessie reveals in her diary a deeper emotional investment in these creative expressions:

The poem I sent to the *Canadian Home Journal*, with such hopes, returned. It makes one feel such a failure in life. ... [August 13, 1932];

... Was surprised that Herbie thot my story "Land of Heart's Desire," good. [November 28, 1933];

... Mailed my brain & heart children c trepidation. ... [June 9, 1934];

She admits that one of her “greatest enjoyments” is reading. Her tastes favour historical settings, enjoying both high adventure novels such as *Treasure Island*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and *A Prince of the Captivity*, as well as character literature that emphasizes personal struggle, moral choice and relationships, such as *Silas Marner*, *Tom Jones*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Pilgrims Progress*. She mentions reading the biographical fiction about the Pre-Raphaelite painters and writers, *Poor Splendid Wings*:

---

79 Wamboldt diary, November 3, 1932; November 14, 1932.
80 Wamboldt diary, November 3, 1933.
81 Wamboldt diary, February 22, 1934.
82 Wamboldt diary, September 18, 1935.
83 Wamboldt diary, June 27, 1933.
84 Wamboldt diary, March 5, 1933.
85 Wamboldt diary, December 23, 1935.
86 Wamboldt diary, May 24, 1933.
The Rossettis and their Circle, 87 further confirming her taste for the romantic spirit of olden days. She also reads character works with contemporary settings, such as Magnificent Obsession 88 and If Winter Comes. 89 She reads the local newspapers 90 (the Halifax Herald/Mail and the Halifax Chronicle/Daily Star), enjoys writing magazines such as Author and Journalist, 91 and records with excitement her receipt of two instructional books on journalism which she expects will be “cram full of helpful hints for me.” 92 Many of her reading materials are received as gifts or borrowed from friends.

She quotes from the poetry of Canadian author Marjorie Pickthall, 93 whose work typifies the “quaint and cumbersome language” of late Victorian romanticism, so characteristic of the sentimental prose and poetry produced for popular consumption during the inter-war years. 94 She imitates the effusive sentimentality of such popular poetry in her diary descriptions of nature:

As we drove thru the country road together and saw the perfect beauty of the western sky that flushed the placid lakes its glow we talked together of the things nearest our hearts. [May 30, 1932];

... we just quietly sat there drinking deep of the quiet beauty of the coming night. [December 29, 1932];

87 Wamboldt diary, May 22, 1934.
88 Wamboldt diary, September 20, 1933.
89 Wamboldt diary, June 1, 1934.
90 Wamboldt diary, February 2, 1934; March 24, 1934; May 12, 1934; June 16, 1934; February 1, 1936.
91 Wamboldt diary, May 15, 1934; May 22, 1934.
92 Wamboldt diary, May 7, 1934.
93 “Put my Easter Rose leaves away in a box tonight & I feel in the sentiment of Marjorie Pickthall’s words ‘Gone are our days red roses, Lovely & lost, & few. But the first star uncloses a bud asleep in the blue.’ ” Wamboldt diary, May 5, 1933.
Sky closely studded with brilliant sparkles of glittering stars and, arching from the southern to the northern horizon, the white path of the Milky Way. Brings one very near to the Creator of Nature’s Beauty. [August 15, 1933];

... we went down to Herring Cove, out on the rocks by the seashore. Saw the beautiful graceful seagulls float by their wings motionless. Saw the white spray against the clean washed brown of the great rocks. ...

[September 15, 1934]

The tiny, almost perfect handwriting with which she records her diary observations attests to the considerable care she takes in the physical act of writing. This same care (and perhaps pride) shows up in her anger at having “blotted and spoiled some pages” in her “beautiful little book.” She does not, however, acknowledge her journal writing as a creative endeavor, and she perhaps would have found the idea of scholarly interest in her diary inconceivable.

Although Bessie maintains a private portion of her life, distanced from both family and community, she does not withdraw completely from family life. She fulfills numerous household responsibilities, although not in all aspects of housekeeping. She performs some seasonal house cleaning and decorating work, perhaps in an effort to relieve her mother of difficult physical tasks:

All the walls and paint of my little bedroom washed and clean & fresh curtains up. … [April 5, 1932];

... Put up new front room curtains. … [June 8, 1933];

... Cleaned my room tonight. [October 3, 1932];

95 Wamboldt diary, May 6, 1932.
... Dad and I cleaned house. ... [April 2, 1934];

... Came home right after Church and got ready for whitewasher tomorrow. [May 20, 1934];

Holiday. ... House-cleaned front room this a.m. [May 24, 1934];

Her house work often seems limited to taking care of her “own simple things.” She doesn’t mention participating in meal preparation, grocery buying or any other kitchen related chores. Sewing tasks and laundry constitute the major portion of her work at home. Although she complains about the “everlasting washing and mending,” most of this work is performed to maintain her own wardrobe, rather than the family’s clothing. She shows considerable competence in making her own clothing as well as refitting hand-me-downs for her own purposes:

... Spent the evening in sorting & sewing odds & ends. [August 19, 1932];

... Spent tonite at home washing & sewing. Laundered my Spanish Tile dress. ... [March 28, 1933];

... Spent this evening ripping up two fawn spring coats in order to properly remodel one. [January 9, 1934];

... Attended to providing some fresh laundry for myself. [July 7, 1934];

Up until 12:30 sewing on my new blue dress. Always get a satisfaction out of feeling that I have created something c mind and hand. [July 31, 1934];

Bessie records in her diary an active social life outside her home. She attends movies and concerts, most often with her younger sister Margaret, although occasionally with her sister Nina, her mother and other friends. Both she and Margaret are members

96 Wamboldt diary, May 28, 1933.
97 Wamboldt diary, June 16, 1932.
of a small circle of close female friends, all of whom are members of the same local church congregation. Her friends include Mabel and Esther Brown, sisters, who both live, unmarried, with their parents, in a manner similar to Bessie and her siblings. Mabel works as a schoolteacher, and Esther works as a nurse. Another pair of sisters in Bessie’s circle, Doris and Edith Leonard, also reside, unmarried, with their parents. The Leonard sisters often perform duets in church, and were closer in age to Margaret than Bessie. Family photographs suggest that Margaret’s closest friendships may have been with Doris Leonard and another church member involved in music, Lou Wallace.

According to the *Halifax City Directory*, Doris Leonard was a student in 1932-33. Her only employment listing during these years occurs in 1937, when the directory indicates she was a cashier for the Premier Vacuum Cleaner Company. Edith Leonard was listed as employed only in 1934, as a clerk with the Simpson’s Department Store. Mabel Brown also worked as a clerk at Simpson’s, in 1927, possibly before she received training to become a teacher.

Mabel Brown is clearly Bessie’s closest friend, and Bessie often goes for supper at her home, sometimes staying overnight:

This holiday being spent with Mabel. We stayed in bed all a.m. kept house all p.m. and went to Frances to mind the children while she and Wallace went to a show. Home around midnight. [June 3, 1932];

Up to Mrs. Brown’s for supper. Then to Choir practise and home with Mab. ... [June 2, 1932];

---

98 A congregation of the American protestant denomination known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
... Up again to Mabel’s for supper after which Mabel, Esther and I went to the Capitol. [June 4, 1932];

... Up with Mabel all p.m. She here after church and we rested & talked in the twilight. [July 10, 1932];

... Then to Mabel’s to supper & afterward read until 2 am when I crawled into their spare bed. [January 2, 1933];

Less frequently, Bessie entertains Mabel at the Wamboldt home, but Bessie expresses distress over not often being free to reciprocate Mabel’s hospitality:

Sometimes Mabel seems so aloof. Do I hurt her? I cannot entertain & be friendly at home here the way she would like I know & she has been so hospitable to me. [August 2, 1933]

In addition to having supper, common activities during visits might include reading [quietly or to each other], listening to the radio, sewing and handcrafts.

Mabel & I stayed in and read all evening. [April 10, 1932];

... Up to Mabel’s tonight. Heard “Harbor Lights”\(^\text{100}\) for the first time. Up there all night. [July 9, 1933];

... Mabel came down & she brought her fancy work & I finished the buttonholes on my smock. [December 1, 1933];

... Mabel down this evening & working at her daisy sweater. Instead of doing much reading we talked. ... [February 23, 1933];

\(^{100}\) Harbor Lights was a 30 minute radio program produced by the National Broadcasting Corporation in New York City. Peter Dixon, in his 1931 book Radio Writing (N.Y.: Century Co.), described the show as “one of the most popular of the “adventure” broadcasts. The author makes excellent use of sound effects .... The script also illustrates the radio practice of “a play within a play.” Each week the broadcast opens and closes on the ferry-boat scene.” A sample script can be viewed at http://www.geocities.com/emrufl2/otr/harborlights.html, last accessed August 18, 2005. Dixon quote reproduced from this webpage.
... Mabel and I read “Tom Jones” for the rest of the afternoon. [March 5, 1933];

Edith, Doris & Mabel here this evening. Mabel starting crocheted bed spread. … [December 27, 1935]

All of Bessie’s friends are members of the Christian Endeavour youth group at their church, and many of the activities they share are church related events. Bessie, Mabel, Doris and Edith all participate in the church choir, for which Margaret plays the organ. Esther teaches Sunday school along with Bessie and Margaret. They take turns leading prayer services in their Christian Endeavour Youth group. Bessie, Margaret and their friend Lou Wallace often take part in youth group play productions. The girls often walk together, accompanying each other to and from church meetings, or just walking for the enjoyment of walking and talking:

... To Choir practise tonight. Mabel home with me afterwards until 11:30 when I walked to Windsor Street with her. [May 17, 1932];

... Over to Prayer Meeting tonite and no choir practise, too few there. Walked home with Esther and Mabel. [June 29, 1932];

Sunday. Spent the p.m. with Mabel and after Church she was waiting for me & we took a walk. Then home, had some supper & to bed. [June 24, 1933];

... For walk with Mabel after Church. [July 23, 1933];

... Mabel down visiting and I walked home with her. [October 20, 1933];

... Mabel down to-night. Walked up with her at 11 p.m. [January 12, 1934];
Prayer Meeting night so I went over. Very few there at first but others came in later so we had a nice meeting. ... Walked home with the Young girls, Pearl & Frances [January 17, 1934];

... Walked home with the girls. Glad of opportunity for fellowship. [March 16, 1934];

Occasionally someone in the church community hosts a crokinole party for the young people in the congregation. Bessie mentions these parties but seldom attends:

... Up to Mabel’s to the Crokinole Party tonight. [April 10, 1933];

... Mug to “Croak” at O. Wallace’s. [January 15, 1934];

The action board game of crokinole is believed to have originated in North America in the later half of the 19th century.101 Played on a 26" circular, bull’s-eye styled wooden surface, crokinole requires players to shoot small wooden discs or rings from the outside edge toward the centre of the playing surface. Like shuffleboard or curling, the player whose discs land closest to the centre of the playing board wins the maximum points. In a party or club setting, multiple game boards could be played by groups of 4 players each, much like the arrangement of multiple game tables for card playing parties.

Advertised by the Eaton’s department store in 1894 as “a new and intensely interesting game for everybody, with no objectionable features whatever,”102 this game was apparently popular among religious Canadians, who “in times past have found crokinole a morally acceptable pastime.”103 Crokinole historian Wayne Kelly reports that

101 Wayne Kelly, The Crokinole Book (Toronto: Stoddard, 1988), 22. There is debate regarding whether Canada or the United States can lay claim to the development of this game. See also Wayne Kelly’s “Crokinole” website (http://www.crokinole.com/faq.asp, accessed January 24, 2005) for a brief history of this game.
102 Kelly, 72.
103 Kelly, 71.
Scores of Crokinole knowledgeable people from coast to coast have made reference to the fact that their background as a Methodist, Baptist, Mennonite, Presbyterian or what-have-you, provided strict regulations concerning the activities of congregation members. Crokinole, without exception, seems to have developed and maintained a separateness from the perceived evils that most denominations envisioned, with even the clergy participating.  

Figure 2-6:
Crokinole Board, circa 1934, from the collection of Wayne Kelly, reproduced with permission.

Bessie’s dissatisfaction with the state of her relationship with Fred surfaces in her remarks on crokinole parties. Although hosted by church members, to provide respectable, supervised leisure for members of the church, Bessie usually stays home from these parties, in deference to her sweetheart’s wishes:

Dear Phi, I am afraid that I grieved him tonight by mention of going to the Crokinole Party. I really don’t want to go anyplace without him so it was no sacrifice to stay home. [October 16, 1933];

104 Kelly, 73.
How I wished that I might have gone to Mrs. Ramey’s to the "Croak" party tonight but such things hold no interest for Phi even if he could go & I don’t feel like going without him. Besides I really need the time to type so perhaps it was better that I didn’t go. Would love it if Phi & I could have a social evening occasionally. [January 29, 1934]

It must be wondered if, in writing this last remark, Bessie sensed that the youthful circle in which she continued to socialize was becoming increasingly incompatible with the adult world she tried to inhabit with Fred. In imagining a social evening with him in this entry, she may have been remembering an earlier occasion, when she and Fred dined publicly, as if their clandestine circumstances had been resolved:

A most wonderful treat today. Altho it was with trepidation that I accepted Φ’s invitation to lunch at the Nova Scotian, yet on my way to meet him there I threw aside those feelings and experienced such joy & pleasure to be with him for a few hours in such an atmosphere of beauty and bigness. [September 23, 1933]

To have lunched with Fred, not at a lunch counter in a downtown shop, but at the elegant and recently built Nova Scotian Hotel, provided Bessie with another opportunity to cross boundaries of both class and life course. Often written about in the newspapers as host to Halifax’s elite, the Nova Scotian Hotel represented the height of respectable leisure enjoyed by adults of the privileged classes. Bessie could not help but celebrate such an achievement in her diary.
Bessie has two married close friends: Minnie, married to Fred Ibsen, the director of their church choir, and Connie Smith, whose marriage takes place in the first year of the diary, and who lives in Boston but with whom Bessie maintains a close correspondence. Although she sees Minnie less often than her friend Mabel, her contact with both Minnie and Fred Ibsen is more family-like. In addition to having her regularly for dinner, they always celebrate Bessie’s birthday with both food and presents at their home, suggesting a close affection between them:

My Birthday - Such a lovely one & several nice surprises. Supper at Minnie & Fred’s. Pretty cake Minnie had made all for me. It seemed like a little girls first party. [July 28, 1932];

Out to Minnie’s to supper. A lovely gift of silk hose from her & Fred. … [July 30, 1933];

---

... Out with Minnie tonight to hear the third of the Community Concerts. [radio broadcast] ... [February 14, 1934];

Accepted Minnie’s offer to have supper at her place and go from there over to the Hall. Had very tasty supper. ... [March 6, 1934];

Minnie gave me such a pretty cup & saucer as a Birthday gift — a beautifully worded card. ... [July 29, 1934];

Lovely birthday again. Gifts from all the home folks, Minnie & Fred, ...

Out to Fred’s & Minnie’s to supper. ... [July 28, 1935];

Throughout most of the diary, Bessie and her friends live within easy walking distance of their church and each other. There is no evidence that Bessie and her friends spent time loitering ‘in the streets’ of downtown, an activity identified by Kathy Peiss\textsuperscript{106} as a common component of working-class women’s leisure in early twentieth century New York. Only movies, shopping and work seem to take them away from their immediate neighbourhood. The diary provides no evidence that Bessie and her friends spent time at dance halls, or other public leisure venues where both men and alcohol would have been available. Neither drinking nor smoking is mentioned in the diary. Overall, as a social group, these friends appear to have restricted themselves to respectable leisure activities.

Occasionally, opportunities arise for social outings beyond the immediate circles of family and neighbourhood friends. Margaret’s friendship with Doug Piercey, whose family numbered among the social elite of Halifax\textsuperscript{107}, enabled one such foray. Bessie


\textsuperscript{107} Doug Piercey, son of William Douglas Piercey, president of Piercey Supply Co., a major building supply firm in Halifax.
records, with special delight, her invitation along with Margaret to a Bridge party held at the Piercey home, “Sunnyvale,” a large estate in the city suburb of Armdale:

Was invited, along with Margaret to a party at the Piercy [sic] home tonight. Had a very enjoyable time trying to play Bridge. But most of all enjoyed their beautiful grounds. Of some how or other, I believe, didn’t welcome my going. [May 26, 1933]

Bessie’s coy remark about her sweetheart’s possible jealousy suggests that she recognized that, like the Crokinole parties she had given up, a Bridge party provided ample opportunity for young women to meet eligible young men. Judging from the evidence of social news reported in the Halifax newspapers of the time, Bridge playing and the hosting of Bridge parties represented an important social ritual enacted by the social elites of Halifax. As a complex card game with historical roots as an upper-class entertainment, Bridge parties served different social purposes, depending upon the circumstances of who was in attendance, who was hosting, and where the event was being held.

Bridge parties might be held in a public setting such as a hotel or club, but most often were held in private homes. Bridge could be played by women only, or could be played by members of both sexes. Bridge parties provided a social opportunity for couples to mingle with other couples, and also created opportunities for young, unmarried women to meet socially with both other women and men, all the while chaperoned by

108 The *Halifax Herald / Mail* and the *Halifax Chronicle / Daily Star.*
109 According to the United States Bridge Federation website, the modern form of Contract Bridge (the game played in Halifax during the 1930’s) traces its invention directly to Harold S. Vanderbilt, a fourth generation Vanderbilt heir, who claimed to have finalized and tested the rules to the modern game while sailing on board the steamship *Finland* from Los Angeles to Havana via the Panama Canal in the autumn of 1925. According to Vanderbilt, the game “spread like wildfire” among the well-to-do when he returned to New York. See: United States Bridge Federation, *History of Bridge,* 2004 <http://www.usbf.org/history.html> (August 2, 2004), paragraphs 18-23.
married elders who controlled who met whom through their choice of invitees. Friendly competition and companionship were hallmarks of this activity, creating a respectable social environment for young men and women to interact.

Discussing the leisure pursuits of an earlier generation of Halifax women, Laura Brock suggests that “working class women were neither invited nor expected to host the social events of the upper classes. The extent of their involvement in these activities was limited to reading the social columns in the Halifax newspapers.”

Bessie’s and Margaret’s experience with the Piercey family suggests that such class boundaries may have become more permeable by the 1930’s than Brock suggests in her study. Margaret’s training as a music teacher and her work for the Halifax Conservatory of Music would have drawn her sufficiently into the rituals of the ruling class of Halifax to make her eligible for association with a son of a well-to-do Halifax family. Performance at any Conservatory event hallmarked respectability in the Halifax society pages, and Margaret’s photograph appeared several times in this part of the local newspaper, throughout the 1930’s, in connection to her Conservatory work. The Bridge party she and Bessie attended might also easily have been reported in the Halifax society news.

**Life Course Time: Becoming a Woman in 1930’s Halifax**

We can see from these outlines of Bessie Wamboldt’s daily life that she fulfilled numerous roles in relation to the people in her life. These identities do not exist separate from each other; rather, their boundaries overlap, blur and shift as Bessie moves through the various activities of her life. For example, she sees herself primarily as a professional

110 Brock, 133-4.

111 See *Appendix ‘A’* for examples of Margaret’s elegant studio photographs that were published in the Halifax newspapers.
wage-worker in Dr. Johnson’s office, yet each day also negotiates the requirement to act as housekeeper, hostess and comforting ‘mother’ to their patients. Her successful fulfillment of these roles in the office is an unspoken expectation of her employment, an expectation fueled by a belief in the ‘innate’ femininity of women rather than by any specific vocational training.

At home, her fulfillment of her ‘daughter’ role is shaped by her wage-worker identity. Her ongoing expressions of concern over the economic well-being of her family point to her primary role of contributing wage earner within the family. Although a grown woman, her housekeeper and hostess duties are few, with her mother still firmly in charge of “the exacting work of meal getting & running a house.” Her housekeeping responsibilities generally centre on taking care of herself rather than other members of the family. Although she entertains friends at home, she expresses fear that she does not perform adequately in this role. Commenting on her housework, she reveals that she “seems like such an awful failure to myself and [I] am as far as material standards go.”

Much of Bessie’s understanding of her situation stems from her positioning within the female life course as it was understood in her community during the 1930’s. Infusing all aspects of the popular culture of her community, these life course expectations provide a context within which Bessie’s attitudes and behaviours can better be understood.

The women’s pages of the Halifax newspapers of the 1930’s reveal a linear progression that each woman’s life was expected to follow. Although twenty-first century feminist thought might reject biological determinism, it is clear that, by addressing women as an audience of special interest, the editors of the Halifax newspapers confirm

112 Wamboldt diary, September 9, 1932.
their belief that at the root of all female identity lay an essential ‘woman-ness,’ a category of experience believed to be both biologically determined and universally applicable to all female gendered individuals. Beyond this fundamental assumption however, the newspapers constructed a complex variety of possible roles for women.

Predominantly, women were represented as wives, mothers, daughters and sweethearts, all of which constituted subjective positions relative to men, who were likewise identified as husbands, sons, fathers and suitors. These binary opposites (feminine/masculine, sweetheart/suitor, wife/husband, daughter/father) were presented as essential, universal relationships, as if one identity was defined by and linked unfailingly to its gender opposite.

Within the cultural framework of the 1930’s women’s pages, it is most common to see women represented as constituents of these male/female social relationships. That which was feminine was confirmed to be so by contrast against that which was masculine. The ever-present titles of “Miss” (i.e. “someone’s daughter”) and “Mrs.” (i.e. “someone’s wife”) continuously reinforced the importance of marriage as a defining feature of women’s identities, implying masculine counterparts of husband or father, even if no overt reference was made to them.

The feminine life course that flowed from these binary relationships was portrayed in three distinct phases: daughterly girlhood, youthful singlehood, and married motherhood. Childhood, youth and maturity were shown to be three distinct phases of a woman’s life, determined more by biological and sociological factors than by a strict

113 In the context of this discussion of roles presented by the popular media, I have chosen the term “sweetheart” to indicate women defined as love-objects of corresponding male “suitors.” I have chosen these terms since the more recent terms “girlfriend/boyfriend,” carry current meanings strongly suggestive of adolescent love relationships, which may confuse my discussion of life-course as conceived in the 1930’s.
accounting of age in calendar years. In progressing through this life course, it was expected that the relative freedom of youth would eventually be relinquished, to ensure the fulfillment of female sexual destiny as a wife and mother. Although socially constructed, these relationships felt biologically determined through their association with life course events.

The stage of “youth” in a woman’s life would be finished, not when her adolescent years were passed, as modern connotations might suggest, but when she married, replacing the innocence of childhood with respectable sexual maturity. For young women of this time period, this youth stage commonly stretched through a number of years, between school leaving and marriage, during which time they were encouraged to work, as Bessie did, to contribute to the family economy. The 1931 Canadian census indicates that 37.95% of urban dwelling Nova Scotian women aged 25 to 29 years were single, and an additional 34.17% of those aged 30 to 34 years were also single. This means that, of the 5187 Halifax women aged 25 to 34 reported in the 1931 census, approximately 1877 of them (more than one third) had extended their youthful singlehood well past the 1931 Canadian female average marriage age of 24.9 years.

Historian Sally Alexander comments on this youth stage in her examination of women’s experience growing up in London during the interwar years. Referring to working-class girls who left school at a younger age than Bessie, to work in support of their families, she describes adolescence as

\[114 \text{Seventh Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. III, 124.}
\]
\[115 \text{Seventh Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. II, 272.}
\]
\[116 \text{F.H. Leacy, ed. Historical Statistics of Canada, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1983), B75-81. Like all women of this age group in Canada, this Halifax population may have suffered a relative lack of suitors due to the large number of young men killed in World War I.}
\]
the transition between child and woman, when identity itself was in flux and when the wage, new clothes and the tangle of emotions associated with those years seemed to promise the transformation of the self and relations with others.\textsuperscript{117}

Unmarried at the age of twenty-nine when she begins her diary chronicle, Bessie still inhabits this "youth" life course stage that Alexander identifies as carrying "the weight of possibility."\textsuperscript{118} It is Bessie's positioning at this stage in her life course that fuels the narrative tension throughout her diary.

Although frustrating by times, this suspension in the limbo-state of late youth could be an enjoyable period in the lives of young women of Bessie's generation, as each exercised their limited freedom while seeking opportunities to secure the sanction of marriage that would confirm their maturity as adults. Bessie recognizes distinct advantages in being a young, single, working woman. This situation affords her a significant degree of personal freedom, despite the weight of obligations she must bear as a wage earning daughter and sibling. She equates employment with independence, some of which she has already obtained, but more of which is still desired:

How I pray for the opportunity to earn a sufficient livelihood to give me independence. Therein lies happiness. I do need it so." [January 17, 1934]

Dorothy Dix, a syndicated American advice columnist published daily in the \textit{Halifax Herald / Mail}, cited this ability to be independent as a primary characteristic of a "modern" girl:

\footnotesize


\textsuperscript{118} Alexander, 207.
...the modern girl is the girl who is free, independent. Who can stand on her own feet. Who can make her own living. Who is educated and intelligent. Who can marry or leave it alone and be happy either way. Who holds down a good job and does not have to marry for a meal ticket. That is the girl who has the right to claim to be modern.\textsuperscript{119}

The \textit{Halifax Chronicle / Daily Star}'s rival syndicated advice columnist, Virginia Vane, also equated employment with freedom for single women, particularly as a viable alternative to marrying someone undesirable:

Try to prove to your guardian that your only salvation does not lie in the direction of an early marriage.... You've got to show him that you can be independent, without the aid of a husband who has been urged on you.... Get to work and find yourself a job or to train yourself for a job. Start right now to prepare yourself for real independence.... Make it your business to find some road to freedom and then you'll be able to prove to those around you that you are not so desperately in need of help as they imagine.\textsuperscript{120}

For many young women like Bessie, the independence that flowed from being a wage earner was not strictly derived from the salary received, since so much of that salary was often obediently turned over to parents to support family expenses. In her examination of working-class women's leisure culture in early twentieth century New York, Kathy Peiss observes that an alternate kind of independence was achieved by these single women who supported their parents and siblings through waged work:

\textsuperscript{119} Dorothy Dix, "Summit of Ambitions as Viewed by Today's Youth is to be Most 'Modern,' " \textit{Halifax Mail}, 22 January, 1932, 11.
\textsuperscript{120} Virginia Vane, "Be Independent as this is Key to the Situation," \textit{Halifax Daily Star}, 18 April, 1932, 8.
[A working girl’s] economic contribution enabled her to claim the privilege of going to dance halls, staying out late with men, and purchasing extravagant suits and hats... Indeed, a bargain was struck in many families, with daughters bartering their obedience in turning over wages for the freedom to come and go as they pleased.\(^\text{121}\)

Bessie’s frequent absences from home to engage in a wide variety of social activities suggest that she had earned this type of freedom from her family at home. Her limited housework commitments also point to this freedom. Supporting the family financially through waged work, her other primary obligation at home appears to have been to take sufficient care of herself that no further household burden would be placed on her mother. In this same light, her frequent dining at the homes of her friends also would have been understood to be a positive contribution to the household’s welfare.

Bessie’s freedom to be away from home is so extensive that she remarks in her diary on the times when she actually stays at home:

... Stayed in tonight for the first time this week. [March 31, 1932];

My first evening at home this week. ... [January 27, 1933]

Bessie’s diary documents the many ways in which she exercised the freedom enabled by her status as a wage earning, live-at-home daughter. Despite her many commitments, the often noted “busyness” of her life, Bessie also claims the right to relax and do “nothing in particular.”\(^\text{122}\)

\(^{121}\) Peiss, 70.

\(^{122}\) July 12, 1932.
Not to Prayer meeting. Felt so tired that I had a hot bath and went to bed. Such a welcome rest to spend one evening just doing nothing. [September 15, 1932];

Armistice Day. Worked all a.m. Had a long nap in the p.m. … [November 11, 1932];

Worked at putting my wardrobe in order washing, ironing, sewing until 3 p.m. Loafed up till now, bedtime… . [May 24, 1924 (i.e. 1933)];

… Margaret & I slept away a couple of hours before supper after which I felt refreshed & like accomplishing something. … [February 24, 1934];

… felt so weary tonight that as Margaret was going to Prayer Meeting and could play I stayed at home. Did some sewing and went to bed early. [May 10, 1934];

During this period of “youthful singlehood,” young women were expected to prepare themselves for the future roles they would assume as housekeepers, mothers and wives, through the performance of imitative versions of the adult roles they would later inhabit. ‘Housekeeper’ was the easiest role that Bessie embraced. Her performance of household chores such as her own sewing, mending and laundry, as well as the domestic duties she performs at the office, prepare her for the future responsibilities of running her own home. Possessing time, manual talent and some economic means enables her to contribute to the family household through both the production and purchase of material goods for the house:
Have new curtains to make sometime. Four, as our rooms have two windows each. Then some other necessary improvements such as a new lamp shade & some rearranging. [April 6, 1932];

... Dad & I out to purchase linoleum. [May 19, 1933];

Mug and I out this evening hunting for carpet rugs. Arrived home very tired, deciding to take the one I saw at Gordon & Keith’s today. ... [May 25, 1934]

‘Mothering’ was perhaps the most challenging role that Bessie practiced as she journeyed toward adulthood. To understand why single women of Bessie’s generation would have recognized mothering as a necessary role to be engaged by them, it must be realized that popular media of the 1930’s promoted both marriage and mothering as primary goals for female life course development. Veronica Strong-Boag explains that Film, radio, newspapers and magazines assured girls that ... [m]arriage was the ultimate prize.... Girls were hard put to escape the traditional message, now reinforced by modern commentators, that normalcy meant mothering.\textsuperscript{123}

While marriage would eventually precipitate the mothering role of women, it was important that young single women demonstrate their nurturing abilities as part of the preparation for adulthood.

Bessie’s choice of a nursing career itself represented an embrace of a nontraditional “mother” role, and her nurturing responsibilities at the dental office would enable her to continue the development of some skills in this role. On rare occasions she tends the children of other church women, but she hones her skills as “mother” most prominently through her Sunday school teaching, although not without significant

\textsuperscript{123} Strong-Boag, \textit{Janey-Camuck}, 4.
difficulties. She professes affection for her charges, although she finds both classroom control and lesson preparation burdensome:

Children’s day Programme at Sunday S. [School] excellent. I shouldn’t feel so relieved not to teach. Perhaps a little change would bring me back with more enthusiasm for the work. [June 12, 1932];

Class very difficult to control today. … [June 26, 1932];

Back again into Church routine for the winter. Am glad of my S.S. class. I love the contact with children. How something in my heart responds to them. [September 11, 1932];

… My class of 14 divided today as the oldest were promoted. Rather hated to part with some who had entwined themselves round my heart. [October 23, 1932];

Am so glad to have just the younger group to teach in Sunday School. How they blossomed today under the attention I was able to give. They are dear little kiddies to work with. [November 6, 1932] [Emphasis mine];

… Had Esther Brown with me in Sunday School for the second time and what a help with the kiddies. Hope she likes it well enough to stay. [March 19, 1933];

Sunday passed as usual. My last Sunday, I hope, to have to take the Junior School. … [September 3, 1933];

Promotion Day in S.S. Farewell Beginners Class - Hail Intermediates. … [October 1, 1933];
Has become a great effort to attend [church] and to teach a class any longer. . . . [November 5, 1933];
Annie away sick. Is to have an appendix operation. S.S. not so well conducted as usual because of last minute arrangements. . . . [February 18, 1934];
Back to my S.S. Class & enjoyed teaching them. Much of my fear of teaching has been due to my own lack of preparation I am afraid. . . . [September 9, 1934];

This insecurity over her preparation is curious, given that she comments in her diary on the many evenings devoted to the preparation of her Sunday school lessons:

. . . Busy all evening with S.S. lesson & other things. [August 6, 1932]

. . . Studied my S.S. lesson to-night instead of the usual Saturday evening spent that way. [May 12, 1934];
Those days alone in the office gave me an excellent opportunity to have my lesson prepared for Sunday so no last minute rush this week-end. If only I could arrange it so always. . . . [June 15, 1934];

. . . Had studied my S.S. lesson earlier in the week so was relieved of that. [July 7, 1934];
Spent the evening at my usual tasks and S.S. lessons. [September 29, 1934];

By documenting her careful preparations, she confirms to herself her ability to perform this mothering role, even if her heart is less than fully open to her Sunday school charges.
Since a young woman had little hope of (respectably) becoming either a mother or a housekeeper until she first became a wife, dating and socializing with members of the opposite sex constituted the most important preparatory rituals engaged in by young, single women. Throughout her diary, Bessie follows the dating experiences of her sister Margaret with great interest:

I wonder is Laurie\textsuperscript{124} attracted by Mug. If she could feel a mutual attraction seems to me it would be excellent but then life has a strange way of juggling our plans & hopes. [May 8, 1932];

...Had a short social chat c Mug's Jimmie\textsuperscript{125} tonight .... [May 14, 1932];

...Laurie back home & in Church. He & Doug Piercie [sic] over home after Church tonight. [July 1, 1932 [i.e. 1933] ];

...Mug home when I arrived. She finally heard from Jim. [July 12, 1933];

...Mug & I talked about Jimmy long after we retired. [July 16, 1933];

Down to the Old Ladies Home this p.m. to play for their service instead of Margaret who went out with Doug.... [June 10, 1934]

Being eight years younger than Bessie, in the very earliest stage of her ‘youthful singlehood,’ Margaret is better positioned to be dating among their peer group. Clearly, Bessie’s clandestine relationship with her secret sweetheart constituted something quite different from the dating rituals performed by women such as her sister Margaret.

\textsuperscript{124} Likely Laurie Cameron, fellow church member and friend.

\textsuperscript{125} Likely James “Jim” McConnell, Secretary of the Boys Division, YMCA, whom Margaret may have met while providing pianist services to the YMCA Choir. Several newspaper clippings relating to Jim McConnell have been preserved among Wamboldt family photos. See Appendix ‘A’ for a scanned photograph of Jim from these Wamboldt family clippings.
Bessie often contrasts her own relations with Phi against Margaret's youthful dating rituals, highlighting the stark differences between each sisters' romantic experience:

Hunted all over the place for a lamp for Laurie's Graduation present from Mug & me. He & Mug to a show in the evening but I stayed home & made hand lotion for my beloved. [May 7, 1932];
Mug & Marshall\textsuperscript{126} to see Otho. I over to Prayer Meeting & had a drive home. [June 8, 1932];
Met Doug Piercey for the first time tonight. He & Mug to Capitol [movie theatre]. Happy tonight but do long for my beloved. ... [May 6, 1933];
... Mug & Doug to Fred Ibsen's party. Tomorrow I shall see Phi. [October 20, 1933];
... Mug out to Doug's Graduation this p.m. and to the Commencement Dance tonight. Phi like the dear he is brought me my second copy of the Author & Journalist. Started sermons tonight ... . [May 15, 1934];

These entries emphasize by contrast the stages of female life course inhabited by each of the sisters. Margaret, still the carefree youth, goes to parties and movies with her numerous beaus. Bessie, involved in what she conceives to be a more permanent, adult, monogamous relationship, waits patiently for her opportunities to see Phi in the course of their daily activities, filling the waiting hours with writing or producing domestic love gifts like "hand lotion for her beloved."

It is impossible to identify the emotional tenor of these comments, whether Bessie is boastful, wistful, jealous, or generously happy for her sister's dating success. It seems

\footnote{126 Marshall Wallace, fellow church member and friend. See Appendix 'A.'}
clear that Bessie recognizes a distinction between their experiences of relationships with men. One entry in particular emphasizes Bessie’s “initiated” status versus Margaret’s very different situation:

*Only the initiated* would ever be able to follow my thoughts in this. Besides there is only one other I would wish to share it with. This has been such a happy Saturday. Phi took me downtown this a.m. & later we met for a spin out the Bedford Road & back. Then we separated, he to buy his coat & I mine and then we met again. Very cold night. Phoned Phi & said Goodnight. *Doug here to see Mug.* My coat came at 9 p.m. [January 20, 1934; My emphasis.]

Given the cultural importance of marriage as a signifier of adulthood in Bessie’s community, aging young women such as Bessie might find themselves in a state of arrested development, if the opportunity to marry did not arise. Marriage was the only respectable route to advance into full adulthood. When writing her diary, Bessie is approaching an age at which, without marriage, her ‘youthful singlehood’ will rapidly transform into ‘old maid spinsterhood,’ a fate that socially signified a woman’s failure to fulfill her biological destiny. Popular culture educated all women that spinsterhood, while also an adult state, bore a stigma of social failure. Such women would become, as one newspaper advice columnist put it, “a dead weight on the family.”

No young woman, however much she enjoyed the freedom of youthful singlehood, could imagine spinsterhood to be a worthy goal in life in a society that openly ridiculed and despised such a state.

---

Suspended at the brink of adulthood, Bessie struggles in her diary with conflicting notions of youth and maturity. Despite her sweetheart’s maturity (he is 38 years old when she begins her diary narrative) she refers to him as her “boy.” Denying that her youth is passing, she steadfastly continues to associate herself with the Christian Endeavour youth group at church. Just as strongly, she resists attending the activities of the church Women’s group. Several of her entries reflect an awareness of her awkward positioning within the possibilities of 1930’s female life course:

How I love O. I don’t believe that he realizes how I jealously saved all the sweet dreams of girlhood and longing of young womanhood for the One Man. [November 12, 1932];

The old dreamy slowly moving hours of Sunday are past for me it seems, and though I have passed girlhood’s verdant lane and entered womanhood’s broad estates yet how I still love the occasional hour for dreaming. [March 11, 1934];

Writing these entries at the age of twenty-nine and thirty-one respectively, Bessie consciously acknowledges her awareness of these distinctly different life course stages. She also clearly signals her belief that she has, in fact, negotiated this transition, although the circumstances by which she claims this transition are obscured. Given her continued embrace of the church youth culture, her claim of womanhood seems ambivalent at best.

There can be no question that Bessie’s relationship with Fred constitutes her primary motivation to write her diary. The writing of this narrative gives concrete shape and substance to something that otherwise must remain invisible in Bessie’s daily life.

128 “My boy met me and took me for a little drive .... .” Wamboldt diary, January 24, 1933.
129 Wamboldt diary, April 12, 1933; May 3, 1933.
Bessie’s investment in this relationship is not casual. Her emotional experience is a consuming passion, deeply connected to her spirituality as well as to her emotional and psychological understanding of her world:

... This love is not a light, pleasant emotion but deep & strong an inbred passion of endurance & fire. [October 7, 1933];

Despite the need to employ what Bessie calls “subterfuge and clandestine methods that must be employed under these circumstances,”¹³⁰ she uses the freedom her family situation affords to spend a great deal of time with her sweetheart:

To Φ’s office ... then to Dartmouth and drove around Waverley. Home at 11 p.m. and right to bed. [May 23, 1932];

... I ran out late this evening to meet my sweetheart for a short visit. [November 4, 1932];

Wonderful hour spent with Φ on our little road. ... [December 29, 1932];

... After dinner home Φ met me at 3:30 and took me for a lovely drive with him out the Bedford Road. ... [January 2, 1933];

... Had our evening drive together. [March 9, 1933];

Saw Φ morning, noon & evening. Then a quiet drive out the Bedford Road. ... [April 6, 1933];

Saw Phi as usual today. ... [July 20, 1933];

Saw Phi in the “early morning”, three times at noon for he met & drove me home at dinner hour, & the evening hour saw us together again. ... [February 2, 1934];

¹³⁰ Wamboldt diary, February 1, 1934.
Part of Bessie’s strategy for finding time to spend with Fred involves associating her visits to him with more legitimate activities. Her extensive involvement with their church enabled Bessie to cross paths with her beloved three or four times a week with no need to hide or excuse her contact with him. Her activities in this regard included attending regular church services and prayer meetings, performing with the choir, teaching Sunday school, and participating in youth group activities such as youth-led worship services, bible study and community play performances. Since Bessie’s sister Margaret was the church organist, Bessie occasionally replaces her in this role as well.

The Wamboldt sisters’ involvement in the church was so extensive during these years that it merited special mention by a retiring church board member in 1973, who praised both of them for their contributions, which enabled the rebuilding of the church and congregation in the years following the devastation of the 1917 explosion. ¹³¹ All these activities assured contact with Fred both morning and evening on Sundays, as well as several other evenings every week:

Began the New Year right. Saw my Sweetheart both at the Midnight Watch Service at Charles St. Church… . [January 1, 1932];

… To Prayer Meeting tonite and saw Φ. for a few moments which were very sweet. … [March 30, 1932];

… Φ called around 8:30 presumably about some C.E. [Christian Endeavour] details. [July 12, 1932];

¹³¹ Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, M.G. 4, Disciples of Christ — North Street Christian Church, Micro #613, item #7, Minutes of the Annual and Special Congregational Meetings of the North Street Christian Church, January 24, 1973.
... Saw Φ very briefly after his wonderful sermon tonight. ... [December 17, 1933];

Prayer Meeting night so I went over. ... Phi met me & drove me over to the meeting. ... [January 17, 1934];

Work also provided ample opportunity for Bessie to spend at least brief moments with Fred, because his Chiropractic office was located in the same building as Dr. Johnson’s dental practice. She comments on this convenience several times:

   Heard that the job I was after has been filled ... but glad that I am not to be separated from downtown thru my own efforts. [August 2, 1932];

   ... my job has One Big Consolation making up for all others. The same building houses me & my love. [April 29, 1933];

   The days seem so wonderful starting & ending them with Φ. How I pray that I may have continued work near him. ... [June 5, 1933];

Fred often drives her to and from the office in his car, and she visits with him during many of her lunch hours.

   Saw my dear one early this a.m. & had a delightful ride to work with him.

   Then in to see him in the p.m. ... [March 26, 1932];

   Saw Φ as usual at noon. ... [April 22, 1932];

   ... Saw Φ for a few delicious moments at noon and tonight after work when he drove me home. [June 2, 1932];

   ... Saw Φ morning noon & sweetest of all walked home ĉ him tonight. ... [November 28, 1932];

   Saw my Φ this a.m. as we drove downtown together. ... [April 15, 1933];
In to see Phi for a few moments at noon then he brought me home. … [June 17, 1933];

So wonderful to see Phi these days. He brought me up from work at noon time & how glad I was for it enabled me to get back earlier and spend my extra time with him. … [January 19, 1934];

… In to see Phi at noon [.] the first for some time. [June 7, 1934];

In to Phi’s office today at noon. [September 11, 1934]

It is possible that Bessie, with her nurse’s training, may have worked sometimes as an assistant to Fred as well as to Dr. Johnson. This would explain their ability to go for long evening drives together in suburban areas of Halifax, to treat patients in their homes. Fred frequently travels by himself to Dartmouth, Bedford and Waverley in the evenings for some unidentified purpose, and Bessie sometimes accompanies him on these trips:

Over c Fred on the trip to Dartmouth tonight. … [March 22, 1932];

… Left Φ early & he had to go to Dartmouth. [June 6, 1932];

Hot day. Over to Dartmouth tonight. Φ works so hard. … [June 13, 1932];

… Met Φ after supper and went to Dartmouth with him. [September 1, 1932];

Met Φ and went around Waverley to Dartmouth with him. … [September 16, 1932]

Only once does Bessie mention a drive being specifically to visit a patient, although it is not clear that she played any role in this other than as a passenger:

Phi out the Bedford Road to see a patient and I went along & we had a beautifully peaceful satisfying little drive together. [July 15, 1935]
Addressing the topic of office management, a chiropractic textbook from 1928 assumed without question that a chiropractor's office would include an office assistant who would manage the flow of patients through the office.¹³² For the same delicate reasons that dentists first sought the presence of a female assistant, chiropractors with onsite female assistants would have had better luck attracting female clients. Even more than dentistry, chiropractic treatment exposed women to the possibility of inappropriate sexual advances, since recommended methods of examination at this time required the replacement of clothing above the waist with a rear-opening hospital gown.¹³³ It can be assumed that Fred would have required the presence of an assistant both in his daily practice, and for house calls he may have made, yet Bessie fails to mention such a worker in his office.

There is suggestion in the diary that Fred trained Bessie to perform some chiropractic and related treatments, another clue that she may have assisted in his chiropractic work. It is Fred who teaches Bessie to give “Morse Wave treatments,”¹³⁴ and she writes of giving unspecified “treatments”¹³⁵ to Fred as well as receiving treatments from him. Providing professional assistance to Fred would have enabled yet another legitimate opportunity for Bessie to spend time with him.

Even when Bessie cannot spend time with Fred, she devotes hours of her own time to transcribing and typing sermons preached by Fred and other visiting ministers at

---

¹³³ Loban, 380.
¹³⁴ Wamboldt diary, April 23, 1932.
¹³⁵ Wamboldt diary, July 2, 1932; July 14, 1932.
her church. As well as reinforcing her employment skills, this activity enables her to remain “connected in thought”\(^{136}\) with Fred, even when she is working at home alone:

\[
\ldots \text{Stayed home and tried to transcribe part of } \Phi \text{‘s last Sunday a.m. sermon. [June 1, 1932];}
\]

\[
\text{Have been in three nights so far this week working hard to catch up with sermons. [November 2, 1932];}
\]

\[
\text{Think I got } \Phi \text{ sermons well today if I transcribe them properly. } \ldots \text{[November 27, 1932];}
\]

\[
\text{Busy on } \Phi \text{ sermon “Nearer My God to Thee.” It is a beautiful one. Took me considerable time to transcribe and copy. Not quite finished yet. [July 21, 1933];}
\]

\[
\text{Had the whole evening to myself so did Mr Elgy’s sermon for } \Phi. \text{ Kept me occupied for a couple of hours. } \ldots \text{[June 19, 1934];}
\]

Like her diary writing, Bessie’s documentation of Phi’s sermons captured and gave material substance to Phi’s ephemeral spoken words. In a manner similar to my own experience while transcribing her diary text, Bessie seems to derive a sense of almost tangible intimacy from her transcription of Fred’s weekly words of wisdom, reliving her experience of hearing them spoken for the first time. Bessie refers to her transcriptions as “our collection” of sermons\(^{137}\), suggesting a sense of ownership and shared achievement in Fred’s ministerial work. Bessie’s sense of contribution to Fred’s work is reflected in her comments on complements paid to a radio broadcast of one of his sermons:

\[\text{136 Wamboldt diary, September 17, 1932.}\]
\[\text{137 Wamboldt diary, January 14, 1934.}\]
Very encouraging remarks from Dr. Fader about last night’s broadcast & how he was impressed by the sermon. It is wonderful to feel a small part of some thing that is being builded, with God’s help, by human labour and love. One can work with added zest. [March 20, 1933]

Transcribing and discussing Fred’s sermons gives Bessie a legitimate avenue to “share in Phi’s work and his beloved sermons.”

Bessie gives no indication of a larger purpose for the creation of this collection of Fred’s sermons, but several practical reasons can be considered. Instructional texts on preaching from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century debate the pros and cons of preaching from notes, from a fully written text, or in an off-the-cuff, or “extempore” fashion. The classic nineteenth-century text on sermon preparation written by John Broadus (still popular in the 1930’s) noted that written sermons could be used again in the future, saving time and labour. The text further noted that “the successful preacher has now many opportunities to publish, and it is apt to become a sort of reproach to him, diminishing his influence, if he is not sometimes heard from through the press.”

Bessie describes her preparation of one of Fred’s sermons for publication in the local newspaper, in keeping with this goal suggested by Broadus. Throughout the 1930’s, both of the local Halifax newspapers regularly published short sermons contributed by local ministers and priests. Bessie’s many references to her discussions with Fred of his sermon ideas, and her transcription of the sermons at the time they were

---

138 Wamboldt diary, January 19, 1934
139 See debates in two of the most popular of these texts from this time: John H. Broadus A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Smith, English, 1871), 406-439 and James Black The Mystery of Preaching (London: James Clarke, 1924), 172-180.
140 Broadus, 410.
141 Broadus, 410.
142 “Shortened the a.m. [sermon] ... Power & Ideals for tomorrow’s ‘Star.’” Wamboldt diary, November 26, 1933.
first delivered suggest that Fred preached without a finished text in front of him. If this is true, Bessie’s secretarial work would have been vital to capturing and preserving the “final product” of Fred’s sermon writing efforts.

Throughout her narrative, Bessie writes herself so comfortably into the role of Fred’s loving companion and helpmate that a reader must sometimes wonder if she has forgotten that he is, in fact, married to someone else. Bessie seems to have been well aware that the work performed by a Protestant minister’s wife could have a crucial impact upon the success or failure of the minister’s congregational mission. The author of a 1937 guide for Protestant ministers “heartily recommends that the minister be married,” since the job was “too big for any one person.” Devoting an entire chapter to an outline of the duties expected of a minister’s wife, the author highlights many of the responsibilities Bessie claims for herself: an active investment in the work of the congregation, including leadership in the Sunday school, youth group, and/or women’s group activities; an ability to help the minister in sermon preparation, through reading books, suggesting examples and topics, and discussing his ideas; and a commitment to ensure that the minister maintains psychological freshness, by taking “time off,” away from the parish, to enjoy social refreshments such as a drive in the country or a trip to the theatre. 143

Congregation records indicate that Fred’s wife was active in the leadership of the church’s women’s group. 144 Beyond this, though, we have only Bessie’s portrait of herself fulfilling the many other aspects of this supportive spouse role.

To understand Bessie Wamboldt’s perspective on this situation, it is important to consider the culturally constructed ideas regarding marriage that would have influenced

143 Albert W. Palmer, The Minister’s Job (Chicago: Willett, Clark, 1937), 66-78.
her thinking. Like many women of her generation, it has to be assumed that Bessie “not only expected to marry, but took it for granted that marriage would provide satisfaction, security and purpose.” While enjoying waged work, she recognized its precarious nature, and she understood society’s message that marriage offered the “most secure means of livelihood.” In a community where being a working female was practically synonymous with being young and single, Bessie acknowledges in her more troubled moments that the logical progression of a woman’s life from youth to maturity can only be secured by passing into the bonds of matrimony:

How I long for a little home with Φ. [Jan 24, 1933];

... [T]here is that aching demand for something deeper. For a home, a fireside where, at least, the storm & stress of life could be lost in fellowship. [July 13, 1933];

This terrible feeling of instability in life ... oh, how my heart yearns for all & how I yearn for home life. [Feb 14, 1933];

The concept of “home life” implies an inter-related complex of benefits: physical and emotional security, companionship, comfort, and the fulfillment of life’s purpose. Bessie’s yearning for matrimonial security is typical, living as she did in an atmosphere described by Veronica Strong-Boag as suffused with “romantic consumerism,” that “centered on families headed by male breadwinners.” The attainment of romance became inextricably linked to consumerism, since, “as advertisers made very clear in

145 Strong-Boag, New Day Recalled, 81.
146 Strong-Boag, Janey Canuck, 16.
147 Strong-Boag, Janey Canuck, 14.
copy that blanketed the Dominion, purchases were essential to successful womanhood."\(^{148}\)

However, given Bessie’s awareness of the social and economic realities of living as a single, working woman, and given her outward acknowledgment that marriage was an appropriate life course progression, it is hard to imagine what motivated Bessie’s romantic engagement with a man whom she could not marry. If Bessie had little hope of achieving this transformative goal, what other inducements could justify this relationship?

While matrimony might have been the ultimate prize, advertising, films, radio, newspapers and magazines also promoted the notion that the pursuit of the fun and excitement of romantic love was a necessary prerequisite to achieving that end. Eva Illouz describes the early twentieth century as a time when “romantic love moved to the center stage of culture… .”\(^{149}\) Cultural critics of the day acknowledged that romantic love was based in fantasy and unrealistic expectations.\(^{150}\) Nonetheless, the “magic system of advertising”\(^{151}\) generally won out in the hearts of young women. Immersed in the mass consumer culture of the time, Bessie could not avoid plotting her life within these publicly promoted narratives of romantic adventure and the rituals of social consumption that would ensure romantic success.


\(^{150}\) Illouz, 49-54.

In her discussion of new definitions of matrimony in the early twentieth century, Eva Illouz remarks on the shift in social attitudes that underpins Bessie’s belief in waged employment as a means to independence. She notes that

Becoming less dependent financially, women were expecting from marriage emotional fulfillment rather than economic security. Thus the expansion of the labour market contributed to the dislocation of the traditional institution of marriage as an economic unit and made it possible for working women to follow the emotional rather than economic definitions of marriage.152

Bessie’s relationship with Fred falls within this new definition of an “emotional marriage,” and she was clearly aware that her achievement of minimal economic independence enabled her to sustain this modern relationship. Thus, she was able to imagine that she had found “real companionship,”153 despite the awkward circumstances that made the resolution of this relationship ultimately untenable. Living in “the perfectness of love’s atmosphere,”154 Bessie’s commitment to this relationship was bolstered by pervasive, popular ideas about romance and marriage that placed greater value on emotional fulfillment and personal happiness than economic stability and social security.

Bessie Wamboldt’s coming of age during the period of the Great Depression challenged her to fulfill many responsibilities, but also afforded her a degree of freedom not known to many women of previous generations. This intersection of historical time with Bessie’s life course created opportunities for her to contribute positively to the welfare of her entire family, even as she struggled to define herself as an adult within a

---

152 Illouz, 49.
153 Wamboldt diary, May 18, 1932.
154 Wamboldt diary, September 10, 1932.
society that would only recognize her to progress out of youth through either the sanction of marriage or the stigma of admitted old maidness.

Biologically determined social relations and economic relations provided a broad framework within which women such as Bessie could understand their experiences and sense of self. These intersecting imaginings about the possible shape a woman’s life might take in 1930’s Halifax do not, however, tell the whole story. Further understanding of Bessie Wamboldt’s diary text requires a closer examination of the complex forces at work within the culture of romantic consumption that infused and inspired her narrative and life during the early 1930’s.
Chapter Three:

“Such Temptingly Pretty Things”:
Consumption and the Pursuit of Romantic Fulfillment
How difficult it is for my feminine soul to renounce vanity. All the shop windows have such temptingly pretty things but times are dull and money scarce so my old spring clothes will have to do again especially as I got that typewriter. Wonder if Φ would like me better if I could afford to doll up the way Etha¹ can. [April 7, 1932]²

Challenging and contradictory social and economic circumstances very much shaped the parameters of Bessie Wamboldt’s world throughout the 1930’s. The choices she records in her diary reflect a modern young woman’s struggle to balance the coercive pressures of a culture of material abundance against the limited material and social resources at her disposal. Bessie’s reproduction of motifs of consumption and romance in her diary highlights some of the effects of mass culture on working-class women’s lives in Depression era Halifax.

The young women of Bessie Wamboldt’s generation faced a society in which mass production, mass consumption and the advance of science combined to create a powerful, prescriptive ideology of ‘new womanhood.’ Notions of femininity and respectability were linked to consumerism, in an atmosphere that lauded youth and beauty over any other female attributes or accomplishments. The pursuit of leisure and romantic adventure promised relief from the dullness of worn out, old-fashioned values. Mass media such as daily newspapers, movies and popular fiction presented a wide array

¹ Φ’s wife.
² This entry is the only example in the entire diary in which Bessie chose to write into the space normally reserved for the next day’s account. In all other cases she was careful not to exceed her allotted four-line space, only taking additional space if the previous year’s entry had been left blank. This suggests that Bessie attached special importance to what she needed to say on April 7, 1932, as she was willing to sacrifice anything she might need to say the next day in order to accommodate this lengthy earlier thought.
of competing conceptions of what it meant to be a modern girl. Influenced by a culture of romantic consumption that suffused the popular media in her life, Bessie Wamboldt used her diary to document her pursuit of romantic adventure and the construction of her dual personae of “glamorous sweetheart” and “emotional spouse.”

Throughout the 1930s, the popular culture of newspaper women’s pages reflected a worldview that, although locally compiled, was predominantly influenced by international notions of ‘the modern.’ Articles and advertisements promoted youth, vitality, excitement, comfort and leisure through mass consumption. Urbanization, industrialization, and professionalization, the hallmarks of twentieth century progress, had settled in to dominate the imagined landscape of modern life. The daily newspapers, financed by and filled with national and international corporate advertising, promoted a capitalist culture that promised transformative freedom from hardship, through consumption.

Manufacturers and retailers had promoted this “culture of abundance” since the late nineteenth century, through “increasingly sophisticated marketing techniques, promoting repertoires of identities and lifestyles to which the consumer was encouraged to aspire.”^3 That such promotional wizardry was successful even during the crushing economic circumstances of the Great Depression suggests that identity marketing held a powerful sway over consumer behaviour. Beyond the provision of wish fulfilling fantasy, Depression era product marketing merely required an appeal to thriftiness, good value, or wise investment, together with offers of credit purchase plans, to extend the culture of consumption successfully throughout the leanest years of the 1930’s.

---

The evolution of newspaper content for women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resulted directly from the development of large scale, urban retailing, through the invention of department stores, whose mass media advertising campaigns specifically targeted a female audience through mass circulation periodical publications. An understanding of the relationship between the department store, the advertising industry and female consumers is crucial to the interpretation of meanings that infused both Bessie Wamboldt’s diary and the consumption saturated popular media of the 1930’s.

Large scale retailing of mass produced goods via the department store developed in North America (and to some extent in Europe) during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Most research on this economic and cultural phenomenon has concentrated on American retailers and manufacturers, whose success became an international influence in the twentieth century. There is widespread agreement among historians that the development of the department store contributed significantly to the construction of cultural modernity. Barbara Felski summarizes that

shopping came to be seen for the first time as a leisure activity; the department store offered an elaborate spectacle, providing enticing and elaborate displays of merchandise for the visual pleasure of shoppers and passers-by. It was to play a leading role in the aestheticization of the commodity and the marketing of lifestyles that simultaneously demarcated and blurred class distinctions, encouraging everyone to aspire to a middle-class way of life. The department store sold not just commodities but the very act of consumption, transforming the

---

mundane act of shopping into a sensuous and enjoyable experience for the bourgeois public.\(^5\)

Intended initially to appeal to middle-class women, who were expected to possess both the time to shop and the means to purchase, the culture of material abundance promoted by the department stores had spread, by the early twentieth century, to be aspired to by people from all classes and economic circumstances. Department stores contributed to the dissolution of the Victorian demarcations between the public and private spheres of life in a number of ways. William Leach suggests that these stores contributed to this evolution through the provision of respectable employment outside the home for middle-class women.\(^6\) At the same time, the store represented a “distinctly feminine” public space into which women shoppers were welcomed.\(^7\)

These stores were synthesizing a new kind of experience for women, combining the excitement of public spectacle with the intimacy of the private home. Leach notes that “department stores were among the first modern institutions to disseminate the new technologies of color, glass and light,” creating “theatrical, surreal settings,” in which “commodities themselves acquired new meaning.” Parades, street fairs, and the celebration of traditional and store-invented holidays were all strategies used to promote the “spectacle of American abundance.”\(^8\)

These strategies of carnivalesque public display were counterbalanced by the development of intimate, in-store services, such as the provision of ladies’ beauty parlors,

\(^5\) Felski, 66.
\(^7\) Felski, 68.
\(^8\) Leach, 322-324.
restaurants, lunch counters, nurseries, playgrounds and rooftop gardens.\textsuperscript{9} These contradictions of public and private meanings inherent in the department stores presented what Barbara Felski has called “a paradigm of a new kind of urban, public space,” based on “the experience of sensuality and the commercialization of desire.” Felski explains that

in one sense [the department store] provided a model of an egalitarian modern space that, in principle if not in practice, welcomed everyone through its doors. At the same time, however, this public domain presented itself as an extension of the private sphere, providing the visitor with the experience of intimacy, and pleasure, intended to reflect, in magnified form, the comforts of the bourgeois home.\textsuperscript{10}

Within the walls of the department store, women entered into a self-sufficient, self-contained universe, where their needs could be met, and their burdens could be lifted, as the reality of daily living vanished from sight for a time. Halifax department stores of the 1930’s followed in this tradition of providing a blended, public-yet-personal environment for shopping and dreaming. The “shop windows” Bessie refers to in her April 7, 1932 diary entry belonged to stores that would have emulated the marketing strategies of the nineteenth century department stores described by Felski. Working each day in the heart of downtown Halifax, Bessie could not avoid admiring the luxurious goods displayed in the windows of the T. Eaton Company department store,\textsuperscript{11} Wood Brothers Department Store, Birks Jewelers, and other enticing shops, although her limited income meant she shopped more often at the “Five and Ten Cent Store.”\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{9} Leach, 329, 326.
\textsuperscript{10} Felski, 68.
\textsuperscript{11} Located directly across Barrington St. from Bessie’s workplace. See Figure 2.2, Chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{12} Wamboldt Diary, February 15, 1934.
Within a four block radius of her workplace in the heart of downtown Halifax, Bessie could browse the displays of no fewer than 17 dress shops, 14 jewellery stores, 27 men’s wear shops, 5 home furniture stores, 15 shoe shops, 11 millinery boutiques and 3 major department stores.\textsuperscript{13} Her walk home from work, when not interrupted by a ride in her sweetheart’s car, also would have taken her past the “uptown” shops of the Gottingen Street merchants nearer her home. The uptown shops included 12 dress shops, 4 jewellers, 8 men’s wear shops, 2 home furnishing stores, 1 variety store, 9 shoe stores and 2 millinery shops. Anyone strolling to and from work on these routes would fall under the spell of apparent material abundance. Bessie’s diary records many visits to these local shops:

\begin{itemize}
  \item ... Helped Mug select amethyst ring at Birks. ... [July 19, 1932];
  \item ... Did some Xmas shopping & was busy all nite. [December 3, 1932];
  \item ... Went to some of the stores after work tonight. ... [January 19, 1934];
  \item ... Mug & Nine to fashion show at Eatons [department store]. [March 19, 1934];
  \item ... Went down to Kelly’s [luggage and leather goods store] at lunch hour and picked out a little Morocco key case .... [May 12, 1934];
  \item ... Went out to Simpsons [Department Store] then back to Gottingen St. where I bot white shoes $2.49. [June 8, 1935];
  \item ... Phi took me to Robertson’s Store [variety store, Gottingen St.] before we parted for the day. [June 22, 1935];
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{13} According to the 1932 Might’s Directory for Halifax.
She also frequents the public-yet-private spaces of in-store lunch counters, often at Fred’s expense:

... Marge & John to lunch at the Green. [Green Lantern Lunch Counter]
... [August 12, 1932];

Lunch at Kinleys [Drug Store] .... [August 4, 1933];
... after my lunch at Kinley’s [Drug Store] (provided by dear Φ) .... [October 7, 1933];
... had my usual Club Sandwich & coffee in the Fifteen cent Store & met Phi. .... [March 10, 1934];
Φ’s treat of luncheon at my favorite lunch counter. .... [April 14, 1934];

While in-store and front window merchandise displays successfully tempted shoppers, the most powerful vehicle used to invoke women’s participation in the culture of consumption was mass media advertising, an art and science developed specifically to manipulate the desires of the public. Local newspaper advertisements of the 1930’s reflect this trend, in the immense volume of national and international brand-based advertising, carried especially in the sections of the paper dedicated to women readers. In Halifax, as elsewhere in North America, the women’s pages of the local newspapers became a virtual downtown, where shoppers from all walks of life in the community might browse through brand named goods from the comfort of their kitchens or living rooms.

Mass media advertising of the 1930’s suggested to consumers such as Bessie that material consumption would lead them to the establishment of successful heterosexual romance relationships. Eva Illouz has found that
During the first quarter of the twentieth century, the theme of romance became increasingly associated with consumption. At the same time, ... the romance/consumption link became an integral part of the middle-class lifestyle.\textsuperscript{14} Illouz suggests that this romance/consumption link transformed western popular culture into a "romantic utopia," in which the ideals of "love for everyone" and "consumption for all" were seamlessly intertwined.\textsuperscript{15}

The mechanism which linked consumption with romantic success in mass market advertising remained consistent throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Advertisers offered "the promise of magical self-transformation through the ritual of purchase."\textsuperscript{16} The success of advertising depended directly on its ability to affect the emotions of the consumer. John Spurlock and Cynthia Magistro summarize the relationship between capitalism, advertising and emotions:

A dynamic capitalism had created a world of abundance, and advertising and department stores sought to enhance the allure of goods with appeals to fundamental drives or emotions. The culture of consumptionism not only encouraged desire for commodities, it also stressed the emotional valence of commodities.\textsuperscript{17}

Advertising was designed to motivate buyers by associating a particular product with emotional attributes that could be expected to contribute positively to the consumer's well-being. As Eva Illouz describes it, by purchasing a commodity, a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Illouz, 38.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Illouz, 48.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
consumer could feel she had come to possess both the tangible object as well as an associated psychological “bundle of attributes.”

The advertising industry made no secret of the aims of such marketing strategies. Consider, for example, this advertisement in the October 1933 issue of the Canadian Home Journal, which encouraged readers to embrace the fantasy life that brand name advertising offered:

A HAPPIER YOU
When you read fiction, someone else is the chief figure in the story. You see her; Know what she looks like, how she thinks, but she is not you. But, when you read advertisements, — then you are the chief figure of the drama. You are the one smoothing this fluff of powder on your cheek, wearing these bright pyjamas, serving these peppery white sandwiches, traveling in this luxurious car.

You may not be able, at once, to act out all the little dramas that advertisements suggest, but because of them you know these desirable things exist, and that some time they can be yours.

Advertisements introduce you to a happier YOU. Your supple mind applies what you read to your own needs. You spend wisely — with self-assurance, getting your money’s full worth.

... Advertisements give you glowing truthful pictures of products that please.

“IT ALWAYS PAYS TO BUY THE ADVERTISED BRAND”

---

Eva Illouz uses the term “candid consumption” to identify the acquisition of the tangible product, versus “oblique consumption,” which refers to the acquisition of the intangible constellation of ego-enhancing qualities associated with that tangible product. Thus the purchase of a single commodity could represent multiple acts of consumption, as the purchaser sought to acquire both the objective and the emotionally-constructed attributes of a product.

For example, female consumers reading the Halifax Herald in 1932 might have discovered that the use of inexpensively priced Colgate Ribbon Dental Cream would not only clean their teeth, but would also enable them to “win friends.” Male friends in fact, as the intimate close-up photo of a smiling woman and an attentive man indicated.

Leisure time could be ‘purchased’ through the use of the right household cleaner, such as when Oxydol promised that “50% more suds means 47% less work.” The Halifax housewife might have discovered, through the illustration of a neatly dressed servant girl operating a McClary gas range, that cooking could be transformed from drudgery to luxury, as the fuel-efficient stove would cost less to operate, and the super-insulation would keep the kitchen cool, even in summer.

Using Calay, “the soap of beautiful women,” would not only clean and soften your skin, it would also bring back the spark of romance to a tired marriage, where even the children would notice that Daddy presents the romantic luxury of flowers to Mother, simply because “she’s so nice!”

20 Illouz, 37-8.
22 [advertisement, Oxidol household soap] Halifax Herald, 9 April, 1932, 12.
24 [advertisement, “Calay, the Soap of Beautiful Women”] Halifax Herald, 9 April, 1932, 12.
Consumer goods could be imagined to bestow an astonishing variety of intangible benefits: glamour, excitement, youth, vitality, grace, and beauty, to name a few. Advertisers sought to implicate modern consumer goods into the very fabric of social relationships, encouraging consumers to embrace a cult of personal happiness through the purchase of commodities. The success or failure of a product depended much less on its concrete qualities than on how it would impact the emotional life of the consumer.

Various locally-available popular media were available to impress upon Bessie Wamboldt the necessity to construct herself as an object of romantic desire. The local newspapers provided ample exposure to manifestations of the glamorous sweetheart persona. Depictions of American and international film stars filled pages of both the *Halifax Herald / Mail* and the *Halifax Chronicle / Daily Star*. In addition to sprinkling film star news throughout the women’s pages, both newspapers regularly devoted a full page to the reporting of Hollywood gossip and the promotion of the latest movies showing in town. The women’s pages emphasized female stars, representative of ideals of feminine beauty, which was understood to be prerequisite to attaining romantic happiness. To bridge the gulf of experience between the movie stars and the newspaper readers, these women were often represented as having risen from humble, obscure beginnings, giving hope to women readers that their lives might one day be transformed by the magic of Hollywood.

The full page article “Hollywood Show Girls Come Out of Hiding” provides a good example of how the newspapers used coverage of glamorous film stars to encourage the imaginations of ordinary working girls. Readers could not help but identify with the “good lookers, stranded behind lunch counters, manicure tables and typewriters.” Young
Haligonian girls, finding themselves similarly “settled obscurely in quiet offices as stenographers,” could only dream of following in the footsteps of would-be starlets, who could be seen “shedding their usherette uniforms, throwing away their waitress aprons, leaving their typewriters and tossing out manicuring paraphernalia,” in order “to display their beauty and dancing prowess” in a “girl-and-music film.”

Glamorous contests, such as one advertised by the Capitol movie theatre in July 1932, which offered a walk-on role in a motion picture as first prize, would also have whetted local desires “to be launched on a film career with an important part in a big motion picture production.”

As well as providing visual role models, female film stars in the newspapers offered advice on fashion, beauty and behavior, both through articles and product endorsement advertising. Advertisements for beauty products often equated the usage of

---

a product with the bestowal of star qualities on ordinary women. For example, stage and screen star Nance O’Neil attributed her youthful complexion to Lux toilet soap, and touted its use as “the secret of keeping Youthful Charm.” The manufacturers further suggested that “of the 613 important Hollywood actresses, including all stars, 605 agree with this beautiful star!” Some stars taught women to be “lady-like, sleekly-groomed,” and “quietly seductive” while others taught men how to “make a girl feel that she is the only girl in the world.” Throughout the women’s pages, even in locally-written fashion news copy, terms like “gown” and “coiffure” were used commonly instead of “dress” and “hairstyle,” linguistically connoting qualities of class and affluence attached to these tangible fashion assets.

Attending the cinema could enable women like Bessie to participate in the glamorous lives of Hollywood women, in an even more visceral manner than reading the newspapers. Kathy Peiss, in her examination of working-class women’s leisure in early twentieth century New York, identifies the cinema specifically as a “woman’s space,” since the majority of the movie-going public were women, throughout the history of this entertainment. She suggests that, “as the movies developed a middle-class audience, they transformed the cultural traditions of cheap theatre ... into a new ethos of romantic companionship and mass consumption.”

Bessie Wamboldt counted herself among the many Halifax women who enjoyed the fantasy-fulfilling magic of the cinema. She records attending nineteen films with

---

31 Peiss, 162.
family and friends throughout her diary. Nowhere could a better tutor of the culture of romantic consumption be found than in the intimate darkness of the movie theatre, where the illusion of entering a glamorous heroine’s life could be embodied for a few short hours.

Few women who read the Halifax women’s pages or who attended the local cinemas would ever experience the excitement of the Hollywood lifestyle, with its endless parade of handsome men, parties, and high living. Most readers would never have the opportunity to wear the often mentioned and pictured gowns, furs, and expensive hairstyles modeled for them by movie stars, and other glamorous individuals such as royalty, the international wealthy, and members of the local Halifax social elite. Neither would most of these women readers be able to spend money on expensive beauty products.

They could, however, translate the ideas suggested by the culture of romantic consumption, by choosing affordable consumer goods that might invoke some suggestion of glamour and romance, within the limit of their personal resources. Diminished imitations of luxurious commodities could transfer the associated, exciting attributes to any lucky girl.

Bessie Wamboldt’s construction of a glamorous sweetheart persona in her diary suggests that she fully understood how crucial consumer goods were to the successful construction of her self as an object of romantic desire. Compliments from her beau are recorded as acknowledgment of her success in her glamorous sweetheart role:

… Took my new dress down to show Φ. It would indeed have been a catastrophe had he not liked it. … [March 27, 1933];
Φ likes the white hat & black dress for didn’t he tell me so today. … [July 31, 1933];

She places considerable emphasis in her diary on her appearance, through discussion of clothing and accessories. Her consciousness of the importance of an attractive appearance is expressed many times throughout her diary. On one occasion she makes an extra effort:

Felt in a real festive mood tonight for Φ arrived back from Digby this a.m. Spent some time dressing this evening trying to look nice & I was rewarded for Φ [said] that I looked particularly so. [November 9, 1932]

She expends great effort to obtain and care for her clothing, exhibiting a consciousness of the importance of proper clothes, and she anxiously anticipates the image enhancing qualities inherent in these goods. Within the context of the culture of romantic consumption, Bessie’s regular sewing, mending and laundering tasks take on a more weighted meaning

… Worked some on my new dress. [May 20, 1932];

… Got shoe mending kit … & patched my pumps. [February 15, 1934];

Home & worked busily preparing Connie’s suit to a suitable outfit for myself. [March 17, 1934];

Up until 12:30 sewing on my new blue dress. … [July 31, 1934];

Stayed in and sewed tonight. Changed & fixed the sleeves and vest in my Spanish tile dress & like it very well indeed now that that job is completed. Have most of my dresses in good condition for the winter. [September 7, 1934];
Occasionally she carefully selects ready-made clothing to purchase, often associating these purchases with her visits with Fred:

After leaving Φ today I got my new jersey dress. Like it for its practicability. Now have clothes enough for the winter if I should be out of work for awhile. [October 15, 1932];

... After leaving Φ I wandered all over town in search of a bolero dress which I finally located. Home at 6:30. ... [March 25, 1933];

Saw Φ and had an hour ... with him. Then bought a new hat, wore my amethyst necklace. ... [April 1, 1933];

... Spent an hour ē him [Phi] this p.m., then out to Fred’s\cite{Fred} to buy my shoes. [April 15, 1933];

... Went to some of the stores after work tonight & then met Phi again. ... [January 18, 1934];

Phi gone to St. John.... Went out to Simpson’s [Department Store] then back to Gottingen St .... . [June 8, 1935];

Earlier in the diary (1933) Bessie mentions getting her hair cut at the barber shop,\cite{Barber} a none-too-glamorous experience by any measure, but in 1935 she proudly announces that she has had her hair “permanently curled on the ends at Miss Hill’s today.”\cite{Curled}
Her note that this is “the first venture” of this sort signals an evolving and increased investment (both economic and emotional) in her hair care regime. Bessie had clearly received the message carried in Miss Hill’s frequent newspaper advertisements. (Figure 3-2)

As a consumer, Bessie recognizes that the right clothing and accessories contribute to romantic attractiveness, an intangible yet fundamentally important benefit of material consumption:

... Wonder if Φ would like me better if I could afford to doll up the way Etha\textsuperscript{35} can.

[April 7, 1932];

... Wore my very best clothes for the usual Sat. p.m. visit. [May 20, 1933];

In the context of New York’s working-class culture of the 1920’s, Kathy Peiss discusses the symbolism of women’s “best clothes:”

Dress was a particularly potent way to display and play with notions of respectability, allure, independence and status, and to assert a distinctive identity and presence.... Proper clothing in working-class culture traditionally helped to define respectability.... Sunday clothes ... were visible displays of social standing

\textsuperscript{35} Φ's wife
and self respect in the rituals of church-going, promenading, and visiting.

Appropriate attire was a requirement of social participation.  

Bessie’s diary entries regarding clothing show that she recognized that economic resources could enable the acquisition of much-desired, intangible social assets. Despite her employer’s attempts to cut her “all-ready finely reduced salary,” and although she dreams of finding “more lucrative work,” she still manages her meager income sufficiently to enhance her chosen persona and the quality of her social relationships. She sought to induce both respectability and romantic attractiveness through the economical management of her wardrobe and other material assets.

As Lary May expresses it, in his examination of early motion pictures and the birth of mass culture, “working or middle-class women were supposed to think that the way to attract successful men was to surround themselves with an aura of luxury.” The local newspapers’ ongoing exhibition of Hollywood stars and society women conveyed to readers such as Bessie the unmistakable message that glamour and grace were essential characteristics of successful femininity. They also learned that it was the responsibility of all women who hoped for romantic (i.e. biological) success to seek to embody these characteristics, regardless of individual social or economic circumstances.

Bessie tries her best to invoke an aura of feminine luxury, reduced to the scale of her personal economic and social circumstances. Her delight in glamour shines when she receives “a beautiful, sparkling necklace” from Fred, and she enjoys his teasing.

36 Peiss, 63.
37 Wamboldt diary, October 29, 1932.
38 Wamboldt diary, January 27, 1933.
40 Wamboldt diary, October 19, 1933.
attention when she wears her sister’s “sparkly earrings” for a youth group play performance. Both glamour and romantic success seem assured when Fred gives Bessie a “beautiful, beautiful amethyst ring,” which is, she notes with dramatic emphasis, “just what I have always longed for.”

Bessie’s participation in community theatre performances put on by her church’s young people’s group also enabled her to capture a bit of Hollywood glamour in her daily life. Although expressing mixed emotions about her participation in these events, especially frustration with the time it takes from other things in her life, she nonetheless continues to participate throughout 1932, 1933 and 1934. The plays give Bessie a chance to dress up, perform, and travel around locally, as well as providing an excuse to interact with her secret sweetheart. Most importantly, the plays allow her to remain an active member of the church’s Young People’s Society, maintaining this important emblem of her youth status.

Over to rehearsal of the play. Everything going very well but the play lacking in the dramatic possibilities of the last one we put on. [April 12, 1932];

... Play practise. Oh these evenings seem so wasted. Why did I engage in this when I already have so much to do? Must be more wise another time.

... [January 24, 1933];

---

41 Wamboldt diary, February 23, 1934.
42 Wamboldt diary, January 18, 1933.
43 See Figures 3-3 and 3-4 showing the young people of Bessie’s church preparing a performance for their church summer camp, circa 1932.
… out to Bethany Church Hall tonight. … The stage seemed so small to play on after St. John’s hall and tho the Hall seats 300 there were only about half that number there. … [March 17, 1933];

Took our play to Musquodoboit to-night. Small house. Moonlight drive home very beautiful. Home at 2:40 a.m. Wish that drive could have been with Φ. [June 6, 1933];

All we players went to Springside tonight. Beautiful little hall. Nice people. Had three flat tires. Home at 4:20 a.m. Drive going up was very beautiful. [June 26, 1933];

… Went to my first practise tonight of “Youth Comes Tripping.” Am not very fond of portraying such parts but will do my best in the general scheme to make it successful. [February 20, 1934];

… up to Mabels for supper. Borrowed her blue & white polka dress for the play. … [March 3, 1934];

First night of “Youth Comes Tripping.” … Very disappointing performance. [March 8, 1934];

… I returned my borrowed wig to Miss Hill44. … [March 10, 1934]

---

44 Miss Hill included “wigs for hire” among the services offered at her salon, see Figure 3-2.
Figure 3-3: Dramatic performance preparations, Young People’s Society, Disciples of Christ Summer Camp, West Gore, Nova Scotia, circa 1932. Photo courtesy of Rev. Neil and Shirley Bergman, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Figure 3-4: Assembly of actors, Young People’s Society, Disciples of Christ Summer Camp, West Gore, Nova Scotia, 1932. Photo courtesy of Rev. Neil and Shirley Bergman, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.
Drawing inspiration from her local shops, newspapers, and the cinema, Bessie Wamboldt shaped her own persona through dress, behaviour and performance to emulate and modify the popular discourses of glamour and romantic desire to suit the opportunities available to her, scaled to the limited scope of her social relationships and economic resources.

Much of Bessie’s consumer power is focused on the acquisition of gifts for her beloved, a behavior that he reciprocates. Through gifting they are each able to ‘purchase’ each other’s happiness. Bessie gathers up these often unnamed “sacred treasures” as assurance of Fred’s emotional and spiritual commitment to their relationship, as tangible expressions of an otherwise invisible relationship:

... Spent a wonderful hour tonight fondling & caressing his letters & gifts. [July 27, 1933];

... Phi gave me a wonderful letter, perfect in its expression of devotion which I later read & placed with my sacred treasures. ... [February 3, 1934];

In his work on the cultural history of advertising, T. J. Jackson Lears reviews some of the scholarship on gift-giving culture, noting that “gift giving created a sense of abundance even amid poverty.” Many of the identified gifts exchanged between Fred and Bessie represented modest but fashionable luxuries that would have invoked just such a sense of abundance: Bessie gives Fred neckties, suede gloves, a Moroccan leather key case, a shirt, a knife, a book, and numerous unidentified gifts. She receives from him

45 Lears, Fables of Abundance, 6.
46 Instances of Fred’s and Bessie’s gift-giving, Wamboldt diary: 1932: March 24, May 22, July 16, July 27, October 26, December 24; 1933: January 6, February 14, March 9, April 7, May 2, 23, July 27, August 3, 8, September 6, October 19, December 23; 1934: February 14, March 31, April 21, May 3, 12, 22, June 15, July 28, September 5, October 25, December 22; 1935: May 4, June 18, December 23;
a wide variety of “beautiful,” and “lovely” gifts, including jewelry, perfume, candy, a vanity case, stockings, hankies, hair clips, magazines and books, and money to attend movies, concerts, or to buy lunch or candy. Both give flowers and other romantic items such as written verse and love letters. All of these gifts suggest obliquely consumable attributes such as intimacy, luxury and personal pleasure. The most treasured of these gifts are recorded in shorthand notation, preserving them securely from prying eyes.

Bessie’s estimation of these gifts as “sacred” suggests that they are more than tangible end products of consumption. She has elevated them to what Lears calls “the priceless sphere.” He notes that the collection of such precious keepsakes indicates “a desire to create other realms of meaning, based on alternative relationships to objects, alongside the throwaway culture promoted by modern advertising.” For Bessie, the unappealing reality of being a single, adult woman among the working poor evaporates in a cloud of romantic abundance when she spends her meager income on gifts for her beloved. His romantic gifts back to her complete the transformation, and the illusion of escape from singleness and the threat of working-class poverty is complete.

Much of Bessie Wamboldt’s romantic adventure is enabled by the ultimate consumer luxury, the automobile, a tangible possession laden with multiple intangible social attributes. Bessie’s family owned a car, shared by everyone but driven and maintained generally by her brother Fred. The actual ownership of the car is unclear, but the generous sharing of the automobile ensured a reflection of respectability on each member of the family. There is no evidence that Bessie knew how to drive a car at this time, and she normally expected walk or to travel via the public tram-car system to get to

---

47 Wamboldt diary, February 3, 1934.
48 Lears, Fables, 6.
and from work. The family car seems to have been most valued as a means of transportation to visit relatives outside the city.

In contrast to the circumstances of many, Fred Wallace owned not one, but a succession of four different cars throughout the years of the diary, reflecting a measure of wealth and privilege relative to Bessie modest means:

Φ got the New Chev & drove me home this evening. … [April 10, 1933];
Labour Day. Saw Phi for about an hour this p.m. He borrowed a little Chev roadster & we had a short drive. … [September 4, 1933];
… Later met Phi who had the dear little new Plymouth Roadster and we had a lovely drive out the St. Margaret’s Bay Road. New car lovely & he is highly pleased with it. [September 8, 1934];
… Fred [brother] met me at station. Phi there too ē a Ford coupe. [April 20, 1936];
Got the little new “Lincoln Pup” today. … [April 23, 1936];

Possessing sufficient economic resources to purchase these cars suggests a level of affluence that strongly demarcates Bessie’s economic circumstances from Fred’s. The sporty, two-door roadsters he chose certainly represented more than basic transportation, and no doubt they promised adventure and excitement to anyone lucky enough to access such a luxury. Bessie could not help but feel thrilled by Fred’s overt show of affluence as he continually traded-up to ever-more impressive automobiles.

Fred’s automobile enabled privacy, escape, excitement, and opportunities for intimacy, as they journeyed throughout the Halifax countryside:
... then met Fred and spent an enchanted hour with the car, ourselves and rain on the roof.... [April 1, 1932];

... What a wonderful drive. Thru Kearney to Old Road. Stopped at Sandy Lake. Then round thru Tufts Cove Road to Dartmouth. Hence home by boat. [June 23, 1933];

Phi & I for a long drive around through Lucasville & the old Cobequid Road. Spent most of the afternoon driving. ... [November 4, 1933];

Still very cold 10º below this a.m. Phi & I for long drive out the Waverly Road. ... [December 30, 1933];

Phi and I sat in the car parked around the corner, until 6:40 p.m. this evening. ... [January 12, 1934];

... Left [work] at 1:15 p.m. & after the purchase of a few pears wended my way up to Saint Paul’s Hill where Phi awaited me and we sped away for a short drive together out the Bedford Road and back. ... [February 24, 1934];

Phi & I out on the little road by Birch Cove. Perfect hour there enclosed by blowing elements. ... [December 29, 1934];

Phi & I spent our lunch time together at Herring Cove. Kippered snacks & whole wheat bread & coffee sure tasted good eaten together. ... Home about 4 o’clock. ... [June 22, 1935];

In her examination of early twentieth century American courtship practices, Beth Bailey suggests that, by the 1930’s, the automobile was a fundamental part of established
dating practices, through which private acts increasingly took place in public venues. Fred's automobile was a crucial commodity enabling his clandestine relationship with Bessie. As the ultimate consumer luxury, Fred’s automobiles ensured Bessie’s ability to imagine herself to be the glamorous sweetheart heroine at the center of a thoroughly modern romantic adventure.

Although the advertisements promoting the culture of romantic consumption generally “served up a positive image of marriage,” it was obvious that the ideas of romance and marriage were sometimes dramatically incompatible. Advertisers played on the tension inherent in these two visions of heterosexual relationship, as a strategy to further promote their products, often portraying the “naturally dull state” of marriage as “a potential threat to the ‘thrill of passion.’”

By associating the emotional excitement of romance with their products, advertisers offered a solution to the opposition posed between romance and marriage. Advertisers suggested that such mundane items as household cleaning products or breakfast cereal could sustain romance within marriage, advancing “a vision of love as a utopia wherein marriage should be eternally exciting and romantic, and could be if the couple participated in the realm of leisure.” Access to this realm of leisure was assured through appropriate consumption.

The struggle to accommodate romance within marriage was played out daily for the readers of the Halifax newspapers’ women’s pages. While advertisers consistently merged the two in apparent happy union, the advice columnists tried to realistically

---

50 Illouz, 39.
51 Illouz, 39.
52 Illouz, 41.
balance these two states as separate phases of maturing relationships. Advice columnists admitted that it was possible that the sparkle of romance might decay into matrimonial drudgery, but they tried to soothe spousal disappointment by shaping women’s attitudes and expectations. Page 5 of the March 23, 1932 issue of the *Halifax Herald* contrasted the slick assertions of advertisers against the more thoughtful musings of the advice columnists, in side-by-side columns. In a multi-photograph, two-column advertisement, Calay soap (“The Soap of Beautiful Women”) avows that “Romance lives forever for the woman who keeps natural loveliness!” The close-up, head-shot photographs portray an intimate conversation between a man and a woman. The man’s face is turned away from the camera, engrossed in the beauty of the Calay woman, who faces him and the reader. The Calay woman models perfectly waved hair and wears a tasteful, if modest, fur wrap, both emblems of the luxury, comfort, glamour, and social success that the right product purchase can transfer to the consumer.53 In a directly adjacent column, Dorothy Dix contradicts the promises of the advertisers:

The trouble with so many young people is that when they cease thrilling after marriage they decide that they have fallen out of love and they go seeking these thrills in forbidden places, and that is fatal. For no kisses thrill for long, and no human being can long exist in the rarefied atmosphere of passion. We have to come down to earth.54

Dix offers the model of companionate marriage as an alternative to the pursuit of eternal romance:

---

54 Dorothy Dix, “Thrill is Gone from their Lives, but Good, Common Sense Will Win it Back,” *Halifax Herald*, 23 March 1932, 5.
Perhaps there does come an end to the impossible storybook romance with which a marriage begins, but that does not make marriage a “grin-and-bear-it” proposition. If the husband and wife really loved each other it turns marriage into a friendship that makes each other’s faults dear to them, and that gives them a perfect companionship that is the most beautiful and consoling relationship on earth.\(^{55}\)

In the end though, Dix suggests a solution that plays right back into the field of romantic adventure, suggesting “a change, to get away from each other for a while.” While taking a break or vacation might provide psychological space for the couple, the leisure and pleasure connotations of such a “change” are also hard to deny.

Bessie’s diary reflects her personal attempts to resolve the dilemma posed by the incompatibility of romance and marriage. In a manner similar to the newspapers, Bessie tries to have it both ways. By choosing a romantic partner who cannot marry her, Bessie preserves the thrill of romance. At the same time, she uses her diary writing to model their relationship as a companionate marriage, the ‘perfect companionship’ referred to by Dorothy Dix and so many other commentators of the period:

Over c Fred on the trip to Dartmouth tonight. What a dear feeling of companionship we experience together. It seems as tho we are one. [March 22, 1932];

My little interval of visitation at midday one of the chief joys of life. Round Waverley again tonight. Real companionship loses none of its sweetness but rather increases as time goes on. [May 18, 1932];

Monday again. These days are bright with the joy and hope of even a few minutes companionship with my beloved. [October 31, 1932];

---

\(^{55}\) Dix, “Thrill is Gone,” 5.
Saturday, the afternoon on which we feel that a few hours of relaxation and delightful companionship may be ours. … [October 14, 1933];

Bessie Wamboldt’s diary portrays the narrative of her life story using a number of themes prevalent in the popular culture of her time: seeing herself as a ‘modern’ girl, she seeks to acquire the identity affirming attributes that flow from the culture of consumption. Understanding that romance is the route to full adult womanhood, she constructs for herself a glamorous sweetheart persona, through which she sustains her clandestine relationship with the charismatic leader of her community. She enjoys the thrills of this romantic adventure, but she also imagines that this romantic relationship somehow will lead to the successful fulfillment of her biological destiny.

Bessie Wamboldt’s ability to imagine herself to be an ideal, companionate ‘wife’ within this thoroughly modern, ‘emotional marriage’ reflects the effects of the pervasive culture of romantic consumption which backgrounds her daily experience. Her choice to embody the roles of glamorous sweetheart and companionate wife, despite traditional attitudes within her community that would have condemned her choices as morally and socially repugnant, attests to the magnitude of power that these commerce-driven cultural ideas exercised upon the popular imagination of the period.

Bessie constructed her unfolding life narrative within a cultural framework that promoted youth, beauty, excitement and the pursuit of revitalizing, romantic adventure as keys to successful womanhood. In a time before the globalization of media through television, international publishing, and the Internet, this diary illustrates the extent to which the ideas of mass consumer culture were nonetheless able to penetrate and dominate local community life and individual thinking in Depression era Halifax.
Chapter Four:

“The Poetry and Music of Life”:
Bessie Wamboldt’s Therapeutic Response to Modern Living
Have been very tired this week. The effort to go on doing what I must do seems to exact so much strength. How I long for the poetry & music of life. [September 14, 1932]

Bessie Wamboldt’s delight in the flash and glamour of the culture of romantic consumption contrasts sharply against intervening episodes of disinterest and emotional exhaustion. Like other early twentieth century diarists studied by John Spurlock and Cynthia Magistro, Bessie “struggled to find a fit between [her] experiences and the culture’s messages.”¹ As her diary text progresses, satisfaction alternates with discontent, delight with disappointment, as her culturally cultivated expectations collide with the complex reality of her life. To ease her disappointment with the quality of life enabled by her embrace of modern womanhood, she yearns for simple pleasures, the soothing “poetry and music of life.” Again reflecting a cultural phenomenon pervasive throughout 1930’s popular culture, Bessie Wamboldt’s diary shows how therapeutic ideals, such as antimodernism and liberal Protestantism functioned at the individual level to counterbalance the stressful emptiness perceived to characterize modern living.

Bessie’s diary is filled with expressions of deep yearning, often interspersed with feelings of physical illness and mental exhaustion:

The days keep so cold and something in me longs so intensely for the warmth and gladness of the summer sun. Perhaps this coldness & numbness of heart will then melt. [April 16, 1932];

---

Feeling very sick and miserable with headache and biliousness. How I longed for Φ’s physical presence this p.m. … [August 18, 1932];

Very little doing at the office today. How I long to be comfortably busy. If I should agitate to make a change would it be going, I wonder, from bad to worse? … [January 6, 1933];

... God has been so good & gracious in what he has given Φ and I. It is the longing & earnest desire of my heart that it may be continued. My constant prayer. [January 23, 1933];

This terrible feeling of instability in life. … oh, how my heart yearns for all & how I yearn for home life. [July 13, 1933];

How deeply & yearningly I feel the need tonight for the “look that will not let me go.” … [November 8, 1933];

Felt very strained and tired tonight for was out all day spending the afternoon at Mabel’s. How I long for my dear one’s arms about me tonight. [November 12, 1933];

... Saw Φ very briefly after his wonderful sermon tonight. How I long that we might be together more. [December 17, 1933];

The emptiness of unfulfilled longing haunts her text. Her repetitive use of the term “dull” implies so much more than the dreary Maritime weather:

Depressingly dull a.m. seemed to do some thing to my spirit in spite of all there has been to undergird faith & make it strong. … [April 2, 1932];

Gave Φ his letter today. How shattered my hopes. Everything seems dull & dead. … [April 3, 1932];
...[T]imes are dull and money scarce ... [April 7, 1932];

Very dull day for work. ... [July 12, 1932];

... It seems I must make an effort to get other work for things are quite dull at the office. [July 25, 1932];

...[S]pent the morning cleaning up the office. Dull rainy day. Glad I was kept busy with cleaning and typing. [August 4, 1932];

... I am afraid [Phi] found me rather dull for I felt tired. [November 10, 1932];

Her diary documents repetitive cycles of excitement, boredom, exhaustion, satisfaction and discontent, as she struggles to satisfy conflicting desires brought on by the conditions of daily living. Inspired by the widespread cultural pursuit of idealized romance, rooted in a consumer culture of imagined material abundance, Bessie struggles to reconcile her expectations of excitement and romantic fulfillment with the ongoing, oppressive sense of drab emptiness that her lifestyle choices seem unable to overcome.

Bessie was not alone in her feelings of deep dissatisfaction and longing to soothe the stresses of life. T. J. Jackson Lears traces the origin of this kind of yearning to a much earlier time, to the urban bourgeoisie of the late nineteenth century. Such longings can be understood as part of a complex emotional response to the pressures of modern living, the same forces of urbanization, industrialization and material progress that contributed to the development of mass market consumer culture. In his examination of early twentieth-century antimodernism and the transformation of American culture, Lears suggests that such feelings of deep yearning signified
Dissatisfaction with modern culture in all its dimensions; its ethic of self-control and autonomous achievement, its cult of science and technical rationality, its worship of material progress. The triumph of modern culture had promoted a spreading sense of moral impotence and spiritual sterility—a feeling that life had become not only over-civilized but also curiously unreal.²

Barbara Felski similarly describes this same phenomenon of intense longing, as “a distinctly modern sense of dislocation and ambiguity.”³ Both Felski and Lears see these sensations as a response to conditions of modernity. Felski defines modernity as a collection of interlocking institutional, cultural and philosophical strands [that includes] scientific and technological innovation, the industrialization of production, rapid urbanization, an ever-expanding capitalist market, the ephemeral and transitory qualities of urban culture shaped by the imperatives of fashion, consumerism and constant innovation.⁴

Cultural expressions of the rejection of modernity are often referred to collectively as “antimodernism.” Ian MacKay has characterized antimodernism, in part, as the quest to recapture “the simple life.” He notes that “hostility toward luxury, and a suspicion of riches, reverence for nature and the rustic, admiration for self-reliance and frugality, nostalgia for the past, skepticism about progress, and an aesthetic taste for the plain and the functional” are hallmarks of antimodernist thinking.⁵

---

⁴ Felski, 12-13.
Jackson Lears notes that “antimodern impulses ... were rooted in longings to recapture an elusive “real life” in a culture evaporating into unreality.⁶ He also suggests that antimodernism was more than simple escapism. Instead, he suggests that antimodern ideas often coexisted with enthusiasm for material progress.⁷ Both Bessie Wamboldt’s diary and the popular media sources from which she derived her cultural notions support Lears’ observation. These texts appear to embrace modernity while simultaneously offering avenues of escape from it. Overt antimodern ideas such as the celebration of the simple life and nostalgia for bygone times are easily identified. Other ideas can be more challenging to recognize, since a single notion could simultaneously express both accommodation and resistance of modernity.

For example, popular notions of glamour, romantic adventure, and youthful vitality (as discussed in Chapter 3) can be understood as attributes of modernity, constructed as they are from commodities produced through the advance of scientific technologies. At the same time, according to Lears, these attributes can also be seen to represent a distinctly antimodern impulse: the desire to escape the disappointing banality of modern living, to reinvigorate the empty shell of fast-paced modernity with a more authentic, intense and vigorous experience.⁸

Lears has made extensive commentary on the cultural meanings associated with the concepts of excitement and adventure in the popular imagination of the early twentieth century America. He observes a widespread enthusiasm for the pursuit

⁶ Lears, No Place of Grace, 32.
⁷ Lears, No Place of Grace, xiii.
⁸ Lears, No Place of Grace, 47-58.
of “robust and abundant life” in the popular culture of this period. Lears sees this enthusiasm as one expression of a cultural phenomenon he calls the therapeutic worldview, or the therapeutic ethos, a state of mind characterized by the search for authentic, intense experience, whether physical, emotional or spiritual. Therapeutic ideals emphasized continuous personal growth and the embrace of “revitalizing leisure,” which Lears refers to collectively as the “cult of vital experience.”

Therapeutic ideals were employed liberally by product advertisers to promote oblique consumption. The same bundles of attributes that comprise Eva Illouz’s concept of the romantic utopia, such as glamour, excitement, beauty, youth, and vitality, can also be understood as expressions of the therapeutic quest to embrace “real life” to the fullest possible extent. The thrills of romantic consumerism, so dominant in Bessie’s diary, derive directly from the therapeutic philosophy.

There can be no doubt that the thrill of romantic adventure fueled Bessie’s continuing commitment to her relationship with Fred. Although she finds it “so difficult to get out for even a short time without explaining all one’s absences,” she clearly delights in the excitement of her forbidden romance:

As Φ and I were taking a short drive round the Fairview Road whom should we pass but Marshall with a truckload on the way to Musquodoboit. We however passed unnoticed. [May 4, 1932];

10 Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization,” 15.
11 Lears, No Place of Grace, 117.
12 Wamboldt diary, November 15, 1932.
Out to the Farewell Party at Minnie’s and when Φ came in around 10 p.m. the rooms seemed to brighten & take on new life. His very presence thrills me thru and thru. [May 9, 1932];

Slipped down back of Aunt Bertha’s thru all the tangled underbrush to meet Φ. Our meeting so short it seemed like tearing heart strings, living ones, apart to separate so soon. [September 3, 1932];

... With great secrecy managed to meet Φ tonight. [October 1, 1932];

... Got the best thrill today when I selected a pair of gloves for Φ. Grey suede size 8. [March 9, 1933];

... Φ passed by my window & what a thrill as I gave him the signal. [March 18, 1933];

Out to Minnie’s to supper. Φ took me. Then to St. David’s Church to hear “The Elijah.” Home and from my window saw Φ flash his signal from a block away. [March 30, 1933]

Lears identifies antimodernism as a crucial component of the therapeutic ethos. The therapeutic philosophy promoted a variety of “cures” to satisfy the deep yearning for greater fulfillment induced in individuals by the failed promises of modernity. Lears connects the origin of the therapeutic worldview to the development of the science of psychology, as well as the rise of a host of alternative medical therapies designed to combat “a weightless culture of material comfort and spiritual blandness” which produced “weightless persons who longed for intense experience to give some definition ... to their vaporous lives.”

13 Lears, No Place of Grace, 32.
While earlier nineteenth century treatments for nervous exhaustion stressed self-introspection and avoidance of physical and emotional stimulation, practitioners of the new therapeutics followed an opposite prescription: the individual was encouraged to seek out and cultivate an abundance of psychic stimulation, to energize and revitalize the overwrought nerves. The therapeutic ethos emphasized "self-realization through emotional fulfillment, the devaluation of public life in favour of a leisure world of intense private experience, [and] the need to construct a pleasing 'self.' " Therapeutic ideals included the concepts of self-improvement, spontaneity, robust health, abundant life, the celebration of nature, and the cultivation of personal magnetism.

Many aspects of Bessie Wamboldt's portrayal of her lived experience in her diary reflect the influence of this therapeutic worldview. Her longing for emotional fulfillment and her desire for intense, private experience drive her efforts to sustain her difficult clandestine romance. Her constant "practising" of various skills shows her ongoing goal of self-improvement, and her efforts to make herself sufficiently attractive to maintain Phi's attentions point to her belief in the desirability of constructing a "pleasing self."

The pursuit of self-improvement, another expression of the therapeutic worldview, is reflected in much of the content of the newspaper women's pages of the 1930's. The women's pages were jammed with an array of professional advisors, addressing topics as wide ranging as health, shopping, beauty, household hints, food preparation, to spiritual guidance, child care, and of course, relationship advice. Jackson Lears identifies this advice genre as part of a "cult of professional expertise" which

---

14 Lears, No Place of Grace, 52-53.
16 Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization," 11-17.
17 Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization," 11-17.
manifested in popular culture in response to the widespread desire for self-improvement.

Through the advice columns of the women’s pages, readers such as Bessie were encouraged to value the role played by the external, therapeutic “expert” in the fashioning of women’s lives.

Bessie shows in her diary that she took serious consideration of the guidance offered by the Halifax newspapers’ professional “experts.” In the “Virginia Vane” column on February 2, 1934, Bessie encounters a columnist’s opinion that even “real love” is an insufficient excuse to pursue a relationship with a married man. Since Bessie believes, in keeping with the sentiments of romantic consumerism, that “real love” is in fact the most valid reason to sustain a relationship with a man, even in the face of tremendous obstacles, she finds herself unable to reconcile her beliefs with the advice of the expert:

Saw Phi in the “early morning”, three times at noon for he met & drove me home at dinner hour, & the evening hour saw us together again. Later I called him and also talked with him about a letter & answer I had read in “Virginia Vane.” How I long for him to refute the implications given there but his silence on the subject seems to be an assent to those statements. [February 2, 1934]

---

18 Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization,” 11-17.
19 Virginia Vane, “Suppose Love is Real in This Case.” Halifax Chronicle, February 2, 1934, 7.
20 See Figure 4-1 for complete text of advice column.
There can be no doubt that she values the opinion of the advice columnist; otherwise, she would not have pursued the topic by telephone with Fred, whom she has
already seen several times in person that day. Although she receives little reassurance from him, it can be imagined that she must have thought long on the columnist’s advice. More accustomed to seeing the world through the eyes of a romantic consumer, Bessie is disturbed by Virginia Vane’s message that love cannot conquer all. This diary entry illustrates that the cult of therapeutic expertise could reach as deeply as product advertising into the lives of ordinary women from the daily women’s pages, influencing their view of their world and the choices they considered in shaping their lives.

Therapeutic ideals resonate in Bessie’s choice to work as a nurse, one of the “helping professions,” that together with the growth of social work and other social science professions formed an important branch of applied therapeutic philosophy. Fred’s chiropractic work, while viewed as complete quackery by some, also constituted one of a host of alternative medical practices such as osteopathy, magnetic healing and hypnotism. The widespread popularity of these scientifically-suspect medical practices reflects the depth of public desire for therapeutic infusions of vitality and personal improvement. In another paradox of the accommodation and resistance of modernity, chiropractic methods restored vitality simultaneously through the application of technological gadgetry such as electro-therapeutics (e.g. Figure 4-1) and coloured light therapies, as well as through the quasi-religious “laying-on of hands,” the ultimate antimodern healing technology.

---
21 For a nice example of the popular debunking literature that railed against chiropractors and other alternative health practitioners, see Charles Warner, Quacks (Jackson, Mississippi: the author, 1930).
Most dominant throughout Bessie Wamboldt’s diary text is antimodern imagery of pastoral simplicity. For individuals such as Bessie, the pastoral promised to relieve the sense of overburden induced by the perceived rush and hurry of daily urban life. Dominated in her daily life far more by the rhythms of industrial time than traditional family time, Bessie longs throughout her diary for the imagined simplicity and purity of nature and rural domestic life. Her belief in the restorative power of the pastoral reflects similar ideas expressed in the women’s pages of the Halifax newspapers.

The women’s pages represented the worship of idealized nature through a variety of features, such as sentimental nature poetry, the syndicated animal stories written for children by Thornton W. Burgess, and the regularly promoted rural summer camps for
poor urban children ("Cousin Peggy and the Sunshine Club," of the *Chronicle / Daily Star*, and "Farmer Smith and the Rainbow Club" of the *Herald / Mail*). These features linked nature with notions of childhood innocence, another hallmark of antimodernism which Jackson Lears describes as "an implicit nostalgia for the vigorous health allegedly enjoyed by farmers, children, and others ‘close to nature.’"^{22}

Newspaper advertisements and articles promoted vacations to experience the natural beauty of the picturesque rural villages, majestic mountains and historic sites throughout the province. For example, one article promoted the scenic beauty and historic interest of a lighthouse located on an island in Halifax Harbour as a perfect antidote for the disappointments of cheap, modern amusements:

> There are no hot dog stands, no barbeque counters or soft drink shacks, and you may have to walk some distance for your water, but if you glory in the pure sea air, the clean cool water of the ocean, the sun, the sky, and the smell of the spruce, take a trip to the lighthouse.\(^{23}\)

This article emphasizes the local accessibility of restorative Nature to Halifax city dwellers, although it fails to suggest how most city residents, not owning boats, might reach this nearby island paradise, however close to home it might lie. Nonetheless, the article’s excessive evocation of uncorrupted nature would have provided, at least, vicarious escape for newspaper readers such as Bessie Wamboldt.

During the inter-war years, many families lacked sufficient resources to engage in the therapeutic revitalization of vacation travel. Even if wage rates allowed for meager savings to be accumulated for such a treat, labour standards did not ensure that every

---

22 Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization," 11.
worker would receive time off from work to partake in the restorative vacation ritual. Bessie herself receives two weeks vacation each summer of the diary, although the terms of that benefit seem unreliable:

Dr. Johnson back from his vacation. Got my two weeks today with the delightful news that they’d have to be without pay. The injustice of it is the thing that stings. [August 20, 1932]

Bessie Wamboldt’s family was among the fortunate few working class families who owned both a vacation property near the city and a car to enable transportation to their cottage. The family actually owned two rural properties, the “bungalow” at Hammonds Plains, a farming community about fifteen miles from the Wamboldt home in the city, and a “camp,” located another ten miles further inland at Kinsac, a wooded region of lakes and rivers, popular for fishing, boating and hunting.\(^{24}\) Each summer Bessie spent her annual vacation with her family at the Hammonds Plains “bungalow.” This property, inherited by Bessie’s mother, Ada Melvin, provided some of Bessie’s most satisfying opportunities to commune with the natural world. Ada’s ancestors had been among the first settlers of this village, and many family relations still lived in the area.

Surrounded by nostalgic reminders of her genealogical roots (the Melvin family, from which she derived her middle name), with aging aunts and uncles living nearby, Bessie sees the bungalow as an idyllic, pastoral haven away from “the grasping, greedy, selfish environment”\(^{25}\) of the city. Bessie loves being “with the smiling face of nature,”\(^{26}\)

\(^{24}\) Bessie only occasionally mentions visiting the Kinsac camp, although she mentions, fairly often throughout the diary, driving in that area with her sweetheart. Family photos indicate that Bessie’s brother Fred enjoyed both fishing and canoeing in that area, and the family did on occasion go to the camp for relaxation in addition to the bungalow. See Figures 4-3, 4-4, 4-5, 4-6.

\(^{25}\) Wamboldt diary, August 12, 1933.

\(^{26}\) Wamboldt diary, August 24, 1932.
and on more than one occasion she confirms the sentiment that “these two weeks have been a Godsend in the opportunity for 14 days out of the whole [3]65 to follow my inclinations & do as I pleased.” Numerous Wamboldt family snapshots captured the family’s enthusiastic pursuit of “the simple life:"

Figure 4-3: Esther, Bessie, Nina, Margaret and others, clowning with watermelon for the camera at their Hammonds Plains Bungalow, circa 1926. Photo courtesy of Rev. Neil and Shirley Bergman, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

27 Wamboldt diary, September 4, 1932. Note that 1932 was a leap year, hence 365 days.
Figure 4-4: Canoeing at Kinsac camp.
Photo courtesy of Rev. Neil and Shirley Bergman, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Figure 4-5: Fred Wamboldt (right), and unidentified person at Kinsac camp. Photo courtesy of Rev. Neil and Shirley Bergman, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
The bungalow provides for Bessie a portal to simpler times, where her workload reverts to fundamental domestic tasks of housekeeping, harvesting, and food preparation. She also engages in the production of decorative handicrafts, another activity associated with antimodern revitalization. Family visits, reading, writing and reflecting round out her pastoral refreshment:

Have been working hard at my quilt. Plan to finish it while here [at the bungalow]. … [August 25, 1932];

These lazy days [are] conducive to reading late into the night and how I’ve profited by these hours spent reviewing ancient history. How too, the peace & loveliness of the country helps me. [August 29, 1932];

Lovely fine day. Picked quite a few berries. Heavy shower this evening. Covered a tin can with brilliant bits of colored paper as I so often have wanted to do. [August 14, 1933];
Very wet but spent the a.m. in the pasture & found some luscious berries. Wrote to Φ tonight. Aunt M. up. [August 21, 1933];

All of us but Mum to the country to pick cranberries... . [September 16, 1933];

Big picnic supper for Uncle Dan MacEachern at Aunt Martha’s. Met Dorothy Parker & Gordon Nauss. [August 23, 1934];

Have been picking berries off & on all week. Had a lovely morning under the warm sun today. Feel its beneficent influence on my mind. [August 24, 1934];

These holiday Sundays so different from the usual ones. Made blueberry pan pie. Uncle Ellis here in p.m. & Uncle Will at night. Beautiful moon.... [August 26, 1934];

[brother] Fred worked all day at his car. I mailed a letter to Phi this morning. [brother] Fred & I found a small huckle-berry patch & were back to the old Melvin place. [August 27, 1934];

Last day out here for me this year. Something beautiful in the pensive autumn day and eve this has been. Sat in the kitchen tonight and read in the Elora book of the romance of Ontario’s early days.28 [August 31, 1934];

---

28 Bessie’s earlier mention of this book, on August 22, 1934, provides a better clue to this book’s identity: “Read in the Elora book of Mr. Smithurs [sic] & F.N.” Bessie’s enjoyment of the book becomes clearer when it is understood that the book is *The Love Story of Florence Nightingale and John Smithurst*. It recounts the unrequited romance between Nightingale and her cousin, who both sacrificed love for duty to God and man. Bessie may have derived a certain comfort from this story’s ending: “Their loss of happiness was the world’s gain. All may sympathize with the pair who highly resolved to give up the chance of happiness, to accept the cross of loneliness, taking upon themselves a life of service, if, per chance, their love thereby might be forgotten and separation made endurable.” From *The Love Story of Florence Nightingale and John Smithurst*, reprint ed. (Elora, Ont.: The Elora Express, 1948), 17.
Bessie strongly demarcates the urban, work environment from the pleasure and leisure of the countryside, and sees the countryside as an antidote to overwork:

What a blessing for downcast spirits this week of sunshine & country air has been. If only in the city’s rush & hurry my soul can keep that calm undisturbed. [August 26, 1932];

Left my country haven of greenery & sunshine & far vistas to comeback to the routine. Pray dear God keep the loveliness I have visioned, in my heart thru this winter season. [September 5, 1932];

Very warm day. Mr. Mack buried [sic] this p.m. Day passed quietly. Sunshine & country scenery very soothing to tired nerves. [August 17, 1933];

What a wholesome attitude of mind this pleasant country atmosphere imparts to those who seek its solace. Wrote to Phi. [August 19, 1934];

Bessie’s worship of the countryside reflects the philosophy expressed in the writing of Archibald Rutledge, a self-described “nature-lover” whose book, Peace in the Heart (1927), she mentions loaning to her brother-in-law Herbie. In this book, Rutledge observes that

often, indeed, our sorest need is for a change of environment, even though slight and temporary, which will afford us an opportunity for worship, a chance for the soul to search in freedom for the light.

Rutledge was a popular American purveyor of antimodern escapism, through books and popular articles dedicated to the celebration of the idyllic natural world.

30 Wamboldt diary, July 10, 1934.
31 Rutledge, 186.
Disdainful critics described Rutledge as representative of “the rapturous school of naturalists,”^{32} prone to an “overcharge of sentiment and an incorrigible desire to moralize.”^{33} Antimodern sentimentalists like Bessie were delighted to embrace Rutledge’s philosophy of God in nature. He opens his book with this explanation:

> By striving to read the First Gospel, which is the Book of Nature, I believe that I have come upon peace. ... Nature is the art of God; and to enter this stupendous gallery of living masterpieces, all one needs is a willing and sensitive heart.^34

Rutledge amplifies this philosophy at a further point in his narrative:

> ... I know that there must be millions who feel precisely as I do when I see the primitive, inevitable beauty of the rising sun, or the silvery somnambulism of the moon; the emotion to worship is as natural as an appeal of the heroic to a man, or the appeal of compassion to a woman. ... Is not virtuous beauty everywhere the Word of God? God’s writings — are they not the gleaming flowers and the lustral stars? The universe is a Holy Scripture; ... and he is a reader of God’s word, who ... knows that these things reveal the Maker.^35

Bessie certainly counted herself among the millions imagined by Rutledge. Occasionally, she writes explicitly of her recognition of God’s presence in nature:

> Up to Mrs. Baker’s tonight to see Goldie who looks so changed. To come from that house out into the glory of the moon flooded night almost seemed like a direct message from our Creator. [April 19, 1932];

---

^{34} Rutledge, 1.
^{35} Rutledge, 187-8.
^{36} Goldie had died, this is a funeral visit.
... Felt wonderful assurance of our immortality as I looked at the western sky tonight. Very hot. [June 10, 1933];

Spent this a.m. in the pasture & worshipped there truly & gratefully. Lay out under the trees this p.m. ... [August 13, 1933];

Warm, cloudless day. Filled with awe & wonder of the abundance in nature. Aunt Martha spent the evening with us.[August 15, 1933];

Tuesday, Aug. 15/33 Sky closely studded with brilliant sparkles of glittering stars and, arching from the southern to the northern horizon, the white path of the Milky Way. Brings one very near to the Creator of Nature’s Beauty. [August 15, 1933, Additional memorandum written at end of diary manuscript];

The desires for rest, relaxation and release from the pressures of modern living echo and amplify throughout the pages of Bessie’s diary. While vacations in the country provide the surest avenue to complete rejuvenation, Bessie addresses her pressing need for rest in smaller ways throughout her everyday life. She covets quiet time by herself, although she is not always successful in obtaining it:

... Long for an hour of quiet thought and meditation tonight. [May 24, 1932];

Have been in three nights so far this week working hard to catch up with sermons. Am getting as greedy as Mum for time in which to do the things dear to my interest. [November 2, 1932];

... My main need in life seems to be for peace & quiet & time for meditation and I get so little of it. ... [January 23, 1933];
... I have felt the need so, these past two months of a few quiet hours alone with my books and my thots but life does seem such a rush. ...

[March 8, 1933];

Half of this week that I dreaded so on account of its busyness, gone all ready [sic] and I hope to get through it with as little strain as possible. ...

[February 21, 1934];

... It's a real relaxation to go to bed without the feeling that one must be on the job in the a.m. [March 29, 1934];

Bessie’s pursuit of rest and relaxation exemplifies what Jackson Lears observed as “a loosening of the work ethic in response to ‘overpressure,’ a growing acceptance of [the] ‘Gospel of Relaxation,’ among educated business and professional people as well as factory and clerical workers.”37 She justifies her relaxation time as well-deserved repayment for what she perceives as extreme busyness brought on by the pressures of her life. Love, itself a potent symbol of the natural world, often revives and refreshes her:

My, such a busy day, but in it were two hours of perfect bliss. Those spent with my Φ. ... [December 3, 1932];

When the busy bustling day is past how wonderful ... to know the communion of our perfect love. What an hour of joy we spent together tonite. ... [January 26, 1933];

Bessie’s relationship with Fred made it possible for her to regularly access the restorative power of nature. While their automobile drives in the pastoral countryside outside the city satisfied her pursuit of romantic adventure, these drives also enabled her to commune regularly with the restful beauty of nature.

37 Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization,” 9,10.
During the 1930's, the luxury of leisure travel to rural parts of the province became more possible for an increasing number of Nova Scotians, as private automobiles became more widely available. A regular column in the *Halifax Daily Star*, "The Gasoline Gypsy" highlighted things to see and do by car throughout Nova Scotia, facilitating the return to nature by weary (and somewhat affluent) city dwellers. The Gasoline Gypsy’s quest to discover ‘authentic’ Nova Scotia highlights another uncomfortable modern/antimodern paradox: the urban-dwellers’ antimodern desire to reconnect with Mother Nature was most easily satisfied through modern transportation technologies.

Undisturbed by this paradox, Bessie celebrates the natural beauty of the suburban countryside on every road trip with Fred:

As we drove thru the country road together and saw the perfect beauty of the western sky that flushed the placid lakes ĉ its glow we talked together of the things nearest our hearts. [May 30, 1932];

That unforgettable drive to Ingramport eclipses every other happening of the day. Such a brilliant almost weird sunset. Us two close together in all that beauty. [June 10, 1932];

Already the middle of February is here and as We drove along the Bedford Road tonight there seemed more than a hint of spring in the air. And never have I seen the Basin so calm with the reflected beauty of the surrounding hills mirrored along its margin. ... [February 15, 1933]
As φ & I came from the office this p.m. for a short drive up over the hill, the sunshine sparkling on the blue waters of our Harbor made an entrancing sight. [March 18, 1933];

Met by Phi this a.m. Later we drove a short distance out the St. Margaret’s Bay Road and we enjoyed the loveliness of reviving greenery through what we called Our Casement Window. … [May 13, 1934];

These short drives outside the city with her sweetheart nourish her hunger for the loveliness of nature sufficiently to face the bustle of urban living once more. Even when the Creator is not explicitly invoked, there can be no doubt that Bessie’s preoccupation with describing the beauty of the natural world in her diary is an expression of her sensing the presence of a ‘natural’ God, inspired by an antimodernist identification of God-in-nature promoted by writers such as Archibald Rutledge.

Bessie expresses great affection for Fred’s automobiles, imbuing them with personality, as if they are characters in her story. “The Little Chariot” and “Bugletts” stand out:

Big, big surprise for me as I stepped out the door tonight. There round the corner slid a chariot and I was driven in state to the Vestry for practise. φ over to Dartmouth. [December 1, 1932];

φ got the New Chev & drove me home this evening. How I cried over parting with the little Chariot but it had to be. [April 10, 1933];

Got the little new “Lincoln Pup” today. Didn’t even say a sentimental Good-bye to Bugletts. Just let him go in a casual way. [April 23, 1936];
Characterizing the car as a “chariot” spins Bessie’s adventure into a classical fantasy setting, far more enabling of her imagined happiness than the uncomfortable, twentieth century reality of her situation. All of the pet names for the cars release the vehicles from their association with technology, softening this intrusion of modernity upon Bessie’s idyllic forays into the natural world. Naming the cars and referring to them as “little” implies a cuteness, innocence, animation and intimacy of acquaintance that diminishes their mechanical intrusiveness in her carefully constructed pastoral escapism. She refers to their escapist destinations by such terms as their “medieval castle,” “sweet, quiet, secluded, leafy dells,” “roadside nooks,” and “sheltered wayside havens.” Through the placement of the action of her narrative in these idyllic settings, Bessie shows her clandestine relationship to be sanctioned by her imagined ‘God-in-Nature.’ These pastoral settings restore a primal innocence to Bessie’s choices and actions, an innocence that is otherwise robbed from her by the manmade social structures that threaten her continued happiness.

In the context of her automobile trips with Fred, the term “resting” holds special significance for Bessie:

... he & I betook ourselves to our spot and there with the rain beating down upon our shelter we rested & refreshed ourselves in mutual love and surrender. ... [October 7, 1933];

Warm sunlight bathed the roads as Phi & I drove & rested awhile together. ...

[March 24, 1934];

38 Wamboldt diary, May 2, 1932.  
39 Wamboldt diary, July 29, 1933; August 4, 1933; May 26, 1934; June 9, 1934; August 4, 1934; September 29, 1934; April 20, 1935.  
41 Wamboldt diary, September 22, 1934.
Φ met me this a.m. as usual & again after lunch and we went out to our quiet nook on dear, dear, old Kearney Road. How wonderful it was just to rest and relax and spend that quiet time together. … [June 16, 1934];

Down the St. Margaret’s Bay Road to a little sheltered wayside haven. Rested there. Both very tired. Felt strengthened & invigorated for our return to duty. [September 22, 1934];

Out to our spot on the [shorthand] and there I received my lovely [shorthand]. Had a short session of reading & resting together, then back to routine again. [March 22, 1935];

Phi & I each had our dinner separately in town then met and drove out the road by the lakes which supply us with water. A perfect late summer’s day and we just rested in the beauty of the countryside and the joy of being together. … [September 14, 1935];

We cannot know the full extent of meaning intended by Bessie by the use of the euphemistic term “resting.” However, her choice to use this particular word in the context of her clandestine countryside rendezvous suggests a connection in her mind between the restorative satisfaction she derives from this relationship and her deeply held notion of Lears’ “gospel of relaxation” through which she seeks relief from the overburden of modern living.

Another avenue of therapeutic release from the ordinary available to Bessie was delivered through the escapist illusions of the cinema. Just as the automobile could simultaneously deliver ultramodern luxury into one’s life as well as enable escape from the burden of that modern life, the experience of the cinema could enable distraction from
stress even as it simultaneously reinforced the modern culture of romantic consumption from which many of these perceived stresses of life issued.

Bessie regularly goes to the movies throughout the period of writing her diary. The thematic tendency of Bessie’s choice of movies is suggestive of her antimodernist outlook. Surprisingly, sentimental themes are not predominant. Of course, she is thrilled with the high romantic drama of movies like *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*:

> Oh night divine, oh exquisite joy. Saw “Barrett’s of Wimpole Street” at Capitol tonight. Phi sat in row back of us. Brot Mother and me home. Heavenly to have seen that with him. [October 16, 1934]

Her clandestine relationship with Fred lends the excitement of secret knowledge to this night at the theatre with her (perhaps) unsuspecting mother, a delightful aura that must have lingered long after the family returned home that evening. Her exquisite joy no doubt derived in part from her identification with Elizabeth Barrett’s clandestine romance with Robert Browning, and her hope that her own life story might play out to a similar happy end. As an aspiring writer of sentimental poetry, perhaps she also felt a kinship with Elizabeth Barrett in this regard.

Another romantic film, *When Ladies Meet*, also inspired a deep emotional response in Bessie. This movie explores the story of a young novelist (another writer-heroine), in love with her married publisher, who has used her illicit romance as inspiration for her first novel. In the end she is abandoned by the married man, but finds solace and redemption in a more respectable relationship. Bessie mistakenly and tellingly records this movie as “The Other Woman,” noting that she and her sister Margaret
Strolled along Robie Street to the [Public] Gardens & thru them to the Capitol. Saw “The Other Woman” Good show all through. Feel terribly deserted. Guess it must always be so. [June 21, 1933]

Although she identifies with the situation represented in the film, Bessie does not seem to anticipate the romantic redemption that rewarded the fictional heroine. Her leisurely amble with her sister through the tree-lined paths and the formally-arrayed acres of blooming flowers of the Halifax Public Gardens no doubt invoked for Bessie a measure of peace and comforting Victorian nostalgia before she faced the challenge of this disturbing film.

Romance, however, is not the most common unifying characteristic of all her movie choices. Although many of the movies utilize romantic elements, the movies she records in her diary are predominantly tales of historical high adventure, such as “The Count of Monte Cristo” (19th century France), “Naughty Marietta” (18th century France/New Orleans), “Berkeley Square,” (18th century London), “Sign of the Cross,” (Roman/early Christian epic), and “The House of Rothschild” (19th century London). Jackson Lears connects this genre of narrative with the spread of anti-modernist ideas, pointing out that

during the 1890s, historical romances full of heroic exploits flooded American magazines and bookstores. A sub-literature of adventure stories for boys had existed for decades; the 1890’s witnessed its spread to a wider, adult audience.42

This literature of romantic activism portrayed the “fierce emotions and manly action of ‘real life.’ ”43 In 1896, a literary critic suggested that such stories enabled readers

42 Lears, No Place of Grace, 103.
to leave the present, so weighted with cumbersome enigmas and ineffectual activity, and to go back step by step, to other days, when men saw life in simpler aspects, and moved forward unswervingly to the attainment of definite and obvious desires.\textsuperscript{44}

Lears suggests that this genre represents another example of "the revitalizing, therapeutic function of pre-modern character, reaffirming the bourgeois ethic of autonomous achievement."\textsuperscript{45} Bessie’s love of these movies, and her enjoyment of similar books such as The Scarlet Pimpernel\textsuperscript{46} and Treasure Island\textsuperscript{47}, suggests that the appeal of the "regenerative powers"\textsuperscript{48} of such adventure plots was not limited to a male audience.

The pre-modern escapist effect of such movies would have been amplified for Bessie when she viewed them in the newly built Capitol Theatre, whose fantastic interior design, replete with gargoyles, faux stone walls, a drawbridge, and oak timbers, boldly imitated medieval castle architecture. No doubt Bessie also took pleasure in the murals depicting heroic and noble scenes from the earliest days of Nova Scotian settlement that decorated the interior walls of the theatre. See Figures 4-7 to 4-10 for further illustration of the mediaeval fantasy interiors of the Capitol Theatre, called "most modern playhouse in Dominion." by the \textit{Halifax Mail} when it opened in 1930\textsuperscript{49}.

\textsuperscript{43} Lears, \textit{No Place of Grace}, 102-3.
\textsuperscript{44} Agnes Repplier, "Old Wine and New," \textit{Atlantic Monthly} 77 (May 1896): 688-96. Quoted in Lears, \textit{No Place of Grace}, 104.
\textsuperscript{45} Lears, \textit{No Place of Grace}, 104.
\textsuperscript{46} Wamboldt diary, February 22, 1934.
\textsuperscript{47} Wamboldt diary, March 20, 1934.
\textsuperscript{48} Lears, \textit{No Place of Grace}, 104.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Halifax Mail} 31 October 1930, 21, 27.
Figure 4-7: Interior decoration of the Capitol Theatre, Halifax, N.S., called “the finest and most modern theatre in Canada” when it opened in 1930. Reproduced with permission, NovaScotia Archives and Records Management, Micheltree Collection.

Figure 4-8: Capitol Theatre interior, with heraldic flags and heroic mural depicting the siege of Louisbourg. Reproduced with permission, NovaScotia Archives and Records Management.
Figure 4-9: Stage and auditorium decor, Capitol Theatre, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Reproduced with permission, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, Micheltree Collection.

Figure 4-10: Rest area adjacent the ladies' and men's rooms, lower level, Capitol Theatre. Reproduced with permission, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, Micheltree Collection.
Bessie’s access to therapeutically revitalizing tales of historical high adventure, military prowess, and elegant, pre-modern pageantry was not limited to the cinema screen. Readers of the Halifax women’s pages were treated to plenty of vicarious thrills and escapist fantasy, cloaked beneath the guise of ‘real life’ reporting. In the women’s pages of the *Halifax Mail*, articles promoting movie star glamour and excitement were often placed physically next to nostalgic narratives celebrating the heroic “real men” of Nova Scotia’s “olden days.” For example, adjacent to an article in which European-born Hollywood actresses compared the love-making abilities of North American and European men, readers could discover the exploits of British army and navy heroes who lay buried in an ancient local cemetery. On the same page, readers could also thrill to the 18th century tale of exotic, unruly, black Jamaican rebels, “the strangest people that ever came to Canadian shores,” whose “fine physique” inspired the British army to press them into service to construct military fortifications at Halifax. (Figure 4-11)

In another example, an article exhibiting “exotic” and “distinguished” actress-beauties is juxtaposed against an article nostalgically celebrating the early nineteenth-century, winter pastime of tandem horse-sleighing, in which “teams of high-stepping steeds with gold and scarlet sleighs” could be seen driven around Halifax by naval and military officers. (Figure 4-12)

Figure 4-11: Juxtaposition of modern feminine glamour and old-fashioned rugged manliness, example 1. *Halifax Mail*, 9 January 1932, 9.
This regularly-repeated formula of adjacent placement of such stories in the women’s pages of the *Halifax Mail*, contrasted rugged manliness against feminine beauty, producing therapeutic models of vigorous, “real” men and “desirable” women. Paradoxically, these projections were not real in any sense, but instead were constructed from elements of nostalgia and fantastic wish fulfillment. The cult of vital experience,
expressed through both nostalgic heroism and the vigor of youthful beauty was alive and well in the popular media of 1930’s Halifax. Bessie’s use of dramatic, antiquated language such as “alas,” “betook,” “partook,” and “henceforth,” throughout her diary points to her absorption of this world view from the movies she watched and the newspapers and books that she read. The cloak of pre-modern, historical romanticism softens the edges of her recorded lived experience throughout her diary.

At the heart of the sensations of emptiness that motivated the antimodern quest for “real life,” Lears notes “the dominance of the religious motive, of the longing to locate some larger purpose in a baffling universe ...” Bessie’s involvement with her church community, her ever-present awareness of God-in-nature, and her passionate devotion to Fred and his ministry of her church, all suggest that she nurtured an expectation of spiritual fulfillment. Despite her constant participation in church activities, the depth of her yearning suggests that her spiritual desires remained unfulfilled. Lears points to feelings of “ethical and spiritual dislocation,” provoked by the secularization of liberal Protestantism that provides a context for understanding Bessie’s search for fulfillment:

By the late nineteenth century, liberal ministers had grown weary of the crabbed and joyless qualities of old style evangelicalism; they had seen too many people scarred by ... constant imaginings of imminent damnation. So they trimmed both

55 Wamboldt diary, January 4, 1934.
56 Wamboldt diary, October 7, 1933.
57 Wamboldt diary, March 5, 1933.
58 Wamboldt diary, March 21, 1932.
59 Lears, No Place of Grace, 181.
60 Lears, No Place of Grace, 46.
God and the devil down to size and stressed ... “the Safety and Helpfulness of Faith,” rather than its demands.

The disappearance of Hell and Satan paved the way for profound emotional change. When educated Americans began to ... reject the thought of eternal damnation, they won freedom from fear but lost possibilities for ecstasy. As heaven became less of an urgent necessity than a pleasant inevitability ... the depth of emotional life seemed shallower, the contours of spiritual life softer, than ever before.\(^61\)

Lears characterizes this softened, liberal Protestant theology of the early twentieth century as “a theology of formulized benevolence and personal well-being,”\(^62\) that became suffused “with therapeutic ideals of ‘personal growth’ and ‘abundant life.’”\(^63\) Much of Bessie’s thinking in regard to Fred and the role of the church in her life can be better understood within the context of this “therapeutic Protestantism.”

By the 1930’s, Bessie’s church, a Halifax congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) had embraced such a liberal theological outlook.

---

61 Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 44. See Figure 4-13 for a lighter take on Therapeutic Protestantism from 1934.


63 Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization,” 29.
One of the largest of protestant organizations founded in North America, the Disciples of Christ traced its roots to early nineteenth-century Protestant restoration movements in the American South. These reformers sought to encourage Christian unity, through the affirmation of the primacy of the New Testament as the sole authority defining Christian life. Their motto “No creed but Christ, and no doctrines save those which are found in the New Testament” and their tenets promoted a more personal relationship between the individual and Christ, rejecting the intervention of manmade bureaucratic structures between people and their God. Guiding principles included congregational independence from hierarchical authority and individual liberty of opinion. One historian of religious history notes that “in the twentieth century Disciples leaders have been among the most outspoken liberal theologians in the nation.”

Some clues have survived to indicate Fred’s liberal protestant leanings. In an excerpt from a sermon, printed in the December 13, 1931 church bulletin, he acknowledges therapeutically that “Jesus saves by the reinforcement of his own personality. ...Anyone whose life has grown stale and meaningless He will remake until life is again vivid with meaning.” In the church bulletin of April 17, 1932 he stresses a practical, action-oriented Christianity by indicating that “personal allegiance to Jesus Christ must be transformed into action.” Two of Fred’s sermons, transcribed and typed by Bessie and published in the local Halifax papers, also attest to his embrace of therapeutic Protestantism. He affirms that the role of the Church is “to inspire people to

---

66 NSARM, M.G. 4, Disciples of Christ – North Street Christian Church, item #51, microfilm #616.
do, to make available for us the power to bring our ideals into the actual. By inviting “the Christ within,” he sees Christ personified in each individual, a living part of each member striving to enact Christian principles. He illustrates his contention by telling a ‘real-life’ story of Christ-like forgiveness enacted between a business manager and a larcenous employee, showing that “Christ was within in that business firm.”

There can be no doubt that Bessie saw Christ within Fred. Bessie suggests divine characteristics by capitalizing “He,” “Him,” and “His” in reference to Fred in her diary:

... When I cannot be with Him I would rather be working quietly along. [June 24, 1932];

... Just a few moments of His presence is a joy and blessing. [October 5, 1932];

Passing His window in the wee sma[ll] hours. [December 5, 1932] ... It helped to realize that He also was somewhere in the audience. [April 19, 1933];

Saturday & came right home from the office. Heard His voice by phone. [June 10, 1933];

Gave Him the tie with the gold stripes today. [August 3, 1933];

The “blessed minutes” she spends with Fred are sometimes “too sacred even to write about.” Her use of the word “communion” suggests her estimation of the sacredness of their relationship:

---

67 [F.L. Wallace,] “Says Restraint Not Religion’s True Spirit: Church Only to Point Way Says Minister” Halifax Daily Star, 27 November 1933, 14.
69 Bessie’s use of “wee sma” here, in imitation of Scottish dialect expressed in the writing of Robert Burns or Sir Walter Scott, is another of Bessie’s nods to pre-modern pastoral sentimentality. In her June 15, 1932 entry, she similarly invokes the Scottish pastoral with her use of the phrase “Home in the gloaming alone ...”

166
I had such a wonderful treatment from Φ and we had such a wonderful
communion in our exchange of thought as we drove around Waverley last
night that the glow of happiness still prevails. [May 31, 1932];
Of all the times I’ve spent with Φ this p.m. was the most perfect
communion I have ever known and I have an inward assurance that such
will grow with time. [July 9, 1932];
The perfect ending to this day were [sic] those moments of communion in
our retreat. …[July 20, 1932];
Thank God for these early a.m. communions. … [October 5, 1932];
When the busy bustling day is past how wonderful to come to Fred’s
understanding to know the communion of our perfect love. …[January 26,
1933];
Saw Φ and had an hour of perfect communion with him. … [April 1, 1933]
Met Φ early tonight and we had an hour together in communion out on our
still, quiet Kearney Road. … [September 21, 1933];

What at first appears to be delusional devotion on Bessie’s part, can actually be
understood as a reasonable response to one manifestation of therapeutic Protestantism.
Jackson Lears explains that

the therapeutic ethos implied not only that one ought to pursue health single-
mindedly but also that one ought to be continuously exuding personal magnetism
and the promise of ever more radiant, wholesome living.72

70 Wamboldt diary, March 26, 1933.
71 Wamboldt diary, December 3, 1932.
72 Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization,” 15.
Applied to Protestant theology, these therapeutic ideals translated into, among other things, a cult of ministerial personality, promulgated widely by advertising agent and popular Christian writer, Bruce Barton.\(^\text{73}\) Bessie mentions loaning her copy of Barton's most famous book, *The Man Nobody Knows* to her friend Fred Ibsen,\(^\text{74}\) so there can be no doubt that she was familiar with the therapeutic Protestant ideology that the book promoted. Barton portrays Jesus as "the founder of modern business," translating the "sissified," "Lamb of God" image of Jesus into that of an "executive" possessed of "blazing conviction," "consuming sincerity," and a "vigorous physique."\(^\text{75}\)

Jackson Lears notes that Barton's book "joined advertising ideology to therapeutic ideals of abundant vitality and intense experience, suffusing the whole thing with an atmosphere of religiosity."\(^\text{76}\) He summarizes that

Barton's Jesus personified personal magnetism and outdoor living. ... Women adored him. The most popular dinner guest in Jerusalem, this vibrant Jesus was also the most successful advertising man in history -- a master self-promoter who created "big stories" by healing the sick and provoking controversy. ... He offered righteousness as the path to "a happier, more satisfying way of living."\(^\text{77}\)

Deriving his ideas from Progressive era reform notions of muscular Christianity, Barton promoted both charismatic leadership and robust health, key features of a more humanized, secularized theology. As an advertising agent and Christian writer, Barton was perfectly positioned to promote his version of revitalized Protestantism, which

\[^{73}\] Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization," 31.
\[^{74}\] Wamboldt diary, January 18, 1934.
\[^{75}\] Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of Jesus* (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, [1925]), [Introduction, 2], 1, 10, 19, 23.
\[^{76}\] Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization," 33.
\[^{77}\] Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization," 33.
“favored clergy who were “men’s men” with “hard flesh and warm blood.” Barton emphasized a “gospel of success” which equated business with transcendent service. He successfully combined Christianity with capitalism, justifying abundant living as a natural outcome of men supporting the “business” of God in the world. Barton’s fans praised him “for recognizing the spiritual nature of business enterprise, for making Jesus seem human and “real,” for giving hope in times of despair”.

Bessie’s representations in her diary of her relationship with Fred suggest inspiration from Barton ideas. In Bessie’s eyes, the energetic, charismatic Fred Wallace would have perfectly portrayed Barton’s ideals. She “listens with delight” to his “deeply interesting” sermons, finds his Bible Study sessions “very interesting,” “splendid,” “very inspiring,” “exceptionally fine” and “helpful.” She is captivated by his inspirational oration:

Φ preached as tho he were divinely inspired today - both services. The fire is in him and how my own inclination responds. ... [September 24, 1933];

Only six to Prayer Meeting but Φ gave us a wonderful account of the real Saint Nick. How his countenance lights up and his eyes shine c a divine light as he speaks. [December 21, 1932];

---

79 Ribuffo, 213.
80 Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization,” 36.
81 Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization,” 37.
82 Wamboldt diary, January 31, 1934.
83 Wamboldt diary, February 21, 1934.
84 Wamboldt diary, June 6, 1934.
85 Wamboldt diary, November 13, 1932.
86 Wamboldt diary, March 19, 1933.
87 Wamboldt diary, January 25, 1933.
The last Sunday of our Broadcast this time. Φ’s evening sermon seemed like a complete poem to me. I loved it. … [March 26, 1933];

Prayer meeting was just splendid tonight as are all our midweek services. Φ makes Bible scenes so real that one can visualize them happening.

[November 15, 1933];

Bessie documents her observation of Fred’s rugged manliness in her diary when she records that “he has a nice sunburn and caught 63 trout” after returning from his country vacation.\(^{88}\) She also evinces security in his masculine nature when she remarks that “I must teach him by my confidence & faith that I rely on his manhood & constancy.”\(^{89}\) Fred’s entrepreneurial success as a chiropractor exhibited the highest of Barton’s injunctions: As an alternative medical healer, Fred made a very comfortable living through the restoration of abundant life to patients, a service to his community of the highest order. His use of modern medical technologies such as “Morse Wave”\(^{90}\) and “Sun Ray”\(^{91}\) treatments harnessed the power of Mother Nature herself in the service of mankind. He successfully managed this demanding workload while at the same time serving as the only minister for the Disciples of Christ congregation, a service that he provided for no remuneration. Bessie could not help but be captivated by the magnetic personality of someone who so fully personified Barton’s conception of the hard-working, service-minded, humanized Christ.

Other aspects of Bessie’s church involvement and personal interests suggest that she viewed much of her experience through the lens of therapeutic Protestantism. She

---

88 Wamboldt diary, June 22, 1933.
89 Wamboldt diary, September 26, 1932.
90 Wamboldt diary, April 23, 1933.
91 Wamboldt diary, February 19, 1934.
sees her sermon transcriptions, Sunday school teaching, youth group and choir participation as fulfillment of her commitment to active service in the church. She recognizes that her church requires practical, rather than theoretical commitments from its members, although she does not always feel up to the challenge:

    My conception of our Church has changed but it is a better change I think. Have stopped idealizing the institution but realize that it needs & demands our best work. [May 29, 1932];

    ... [T]hinking of Church Work I get so discouraged sometimes for I do not seem to have the energy that enables Phi to keep eternally at it. [July 18, 1933];

    ... It seems that in our small, beloved church it is necessary that each one exert his utmost of effort, yet I have an inward conviction that God didn’t mean me to exert an influence through attempted leadership but in the love & thought & friendliness of my heart. [March 11, 1934]

She sees her own nursing work as a means of service, even if Dr. Johnson doesn’t appreciate it:

    ... Work at the office is picking up. I have given my best in service to Dr. Johnson yet he does not want to give me a living wage. ... [January 27, 1933]

Bessie expresses a desire to learn from those who successfully fulfill the call for active Christian service,92 and she mentions the personal testimonies she hears from

---

92 "It does me good to hear life experiences from those who give themselves in Christian service" Wamboldt diary, May 25, 1932.
members of the “Oxford Group,” an international evangelical protestant group that promoted the development of close, personal relationships with God through fun and laughter. Schooled in Fred’s “practical” Christianity, she would have appreciated the Oxford Group’s encouragement of the “infusion of faith and enthusiasm into the old religion, making it newly alive and practical.”

Bessie Wamboldt’s diary writing reflects numerous themes prevalent in the popular culture of her time. Ever-present beneath the busyness of this modern-minded young woman’s daily life, the dull emptiness of unfulfilled longing threatens to disrupt the personal success she works so hard to construct. Like many of her contemporaries, Bessie embraced a variety of antimodern therapeutics to dispel her deep dissatisfaction: she valued the advice of therapeutic experts, the celebration of pastoral simplicity and the invocation of God-in-Nature, the escapism of the literature and cinema of historical high adventure, and the principles of therapeutic Protestantism that favoured practical service, abundant living and continuous self-improvement.

Bessie struggles within her diary and life to accommodate both her commitment to practical service of family and community, and her assertion of personal independence and autonomy. She counters the stress ensuing from this struggle through a variety of therapeutic, antimodern strategies, through which she hopes to capture the poetry and music of life, to soothe her troubled heart.

93 Wamboldt diary, April 8, 1934.
95 Wamboldt diary, January 11, 1934.
96 “Brand New Way,” 3.
Chapter Five:

“This Perplexing Problem”:
Forging an Independent Path in Depression-Era Halifax
It is my hope and belief this night that I am coming into a healthier and yet more loving inward attitude toward this perplexing problem of my inner life. [June 21, 1932]

The preceding chapters have sought to bring some contextual clarity to the perplexing problem of Bessie Wamboldt's inner life. Insight into Bessie's lived experience can be gleaned from evidence embedded within Bessie's historical, social and cultural circumstances. At the core of this evidence, however, lies the heart of a woman. Throughout her diary, Bessie responds to the circumstances of her life through the language of her emotions. Managing her hopes and beliefs, she accommodates the conflicting pressures in her life by alternately admitting, denying and sometimes manipulating her own emotions.

Traditional assumptions suggest that women are naturally and spontaneously emotional, an idea that has in the past contributed to historians' neglect of this intimate area of human experience. Recent work by social historians, sociologists and diary theorists has questioned this assumption about women's emotional experience and has sought to widen our understanding of the significance of emotions in the context of women's lived experience.

Sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild suggests that we can learn a great deal about women's lived experience by understanding the social functioning of emotions. She proposes that "emotion, like seeing and hearing, is a way of knowing about the world."¹ She uses the term "feeling rules" to describe the emotional conventions that societies

develop to inform community members as to what they “should” feel in specific situations. She suggests that, not only does emotion act as a “messenger from the self,” but also that the willful management of feeling is a specific kind of women’s “work,” conducted in response to cultural expectations encoded in a society’s feeling rules.

Hochschild’s research shows that an individual who senses her own emotions to run counter to the feeling rules of her community may attempt to manipulate or deny her true feelings in order to match socially-accepted models of behaviour. Hochschild uses the term “emotion work” to describe this self-management of inappropriate emotional responses. Diary texts such as that of Bessie Wamboldt can map out the contours of an individual’s struggle to respond appropriately within the guidelines of a community’s feeling rules.

Historian and diary theorist Martha Tomhave Blauvelt has applied Hochschild’s theory to analyze the emotional history documented in the nineteenth-century diary of a New England woman. From her investigation she concludes that “emotion work is archetypal women’s work, [and] like housework, it was invisible.” She sees in Sarah Connell Ayer’s diary evidence that the management of emotion can constitute “a tremendous burden,” since like its physical parallel, emotion work was done for others, rather than to express women’s individuality. ... The wages of housework and emotion work alike were paid in feeling: a father’s happiness, a husband’s approval, her children’s love.

Most striking of all is the unremitting character of women’s work: continuously

---

2 Hochschild, x.
3 Hochschild, 164-5.
4 Hochschild, 7.
repeated, ever on call, expanding to fill the time available. In the labor of their hearts even more than of their hands, women’s work was never done.\(^6\)

Blauvelt concludes that Ayer’s diary served, not as a home for her “true self,” but rather as a “tool of emotional work,” in which Sarah struggled to fit her true feelings into the restrictive mould of the feeling rules available to her in the context of her nineteenth-century community.\(^7\)

Both Hochschild and Blauvelt see this work as part of a cultural exchange system: the presentation of appropriate emotions, adherence to the dictates of feeling rules, is rewarded and exchanged for intangible but desired social benefits. Hochschild explains that acts of emotion management are not simply private acts; they are used in exchanges under the guidance of feeling rules. Feeling rules are standards used in emotional conversation to determine what is rightly owed and owing in the currency of feeling. Through them we tell what is “due” in each relation, each role. We pay tribute to each other in the currency of the managing act.\(^8\)

These theories underscore the idea that emotions do not necessarily reflect “true” feelings. The labour of emotion takes place when we manipulate, conjure up, gloss over, or otherwise subvert true feeling in order to gain a reward promised by the relevant feeling rules.

Like Sarah Connell Ayer, Bessie Wamboldt struggles in her diary to shape her emotions to fit her society’s feeling rules. Bessie’s quest for romantic fulfillment can be seen as a response to expectations flowing from the relevant feeling rules she understands.

---

6 Blauvelt, 586-7.
7 Blauvelt, 587.
8 Hochschild, 18.
from the culture and community around her. By considering Bessie’s use of the “currency of feeling,” it may be possible to appreciate the emotional labour required of Bessie to meet or resist her community’s expectations.

By times, Bessie records that she is happy and satisfied in her relationship with Fred, despite the circumstances of their association:

… [W]e had an extra little lovely drive down by the station this a.m. and saw him at the office tonight which made us both so happy. [March 28, 1932];

… Love & love & love Phi. [July 26, 1933];

… This has been such a happy Saturday. Phi took me downtown this a.m. & later we met for a spin out the Bedford Road & back. … [January 20, 1934];

Had our happy moments again today. Have had them through these past years & what life giving strength they impart. [February 19, 1934];

We had our Xmas together today out the road near by the place where my baby tree came from. What a bountiful day. What a satisfyingly happy time. … [December 22, 1934];

Following the feeling rules of her culture, Bessie believes that she is happy, despite the problems inherent in her situation, because she understands that romantic success equates with personal happiness. She knows that “happiness” is the socially-appropriate emotion one exhibits in response to romantic success.

Often, rather than acknowledge personal responsibility for these emotions, she credits an external, supernatural, and irresistible force as the source of her bliss. They
capture “that elusive elf happiness”\textsuperscript{9} and dwell “in the fairyland of each other’s
company.”\textsuperscript{10} The will of God sanctions peace of mind and continuing commitment:

Had a rather poor night but God has given me peace today. My love is sure
and steadfast. Of that I am inwardly assured. Whatever comes I feel God is
with me. [September 25, 1932];

... This love of mine seems to be bigger than any thing else in me. I
cannot, cannot do otherwise than love. Even the face of God seems hidden
when I try to stop. [September 29, 1932];

Saw Phi this morning. Something seems lifted from my heart & my spirit
feels lighter in spite of the awful suspense of the last few days. …
[October 3, 1932];

... One realization as I look back. Tho at times all humanity has seemed to
fail me utterly God has supplied my need. [October 16, 1932];

One thing becomes increasingly clear of my own inner life. That I am
under compulsion to give to the fullest of my capacity emotionally &
otherwise to realize the greatest happiness. [November 20, 1932];

Good Friday. Have neither seen nor heard from Φ all day but in that
peaceful trance last night a calm & peace came to me that I feel assured
will endure. I seemed to be on the Cross ĥ Christ but He was bearing all
the pain. [April 14, 1933];

\textsuperscript{9} Wamboldt diary, January 28, 1933
\textsuperscript{10} Wamboldt diary, November 11, 1932
The days seem so wonderful starting & ending them with Φ. How I pray that I may have continued work near him. I pray God for that most earnestly. [June 5, 1933];

... I must believe that God has a purpose for our lives. [October 17, 1933];

She also justifies her attachment to Fred as fulfilling a need in him, a responsibility she feels it is her calling to address:

How glad that I did not let anything interfere with my noon visit. Φ really needs me as I need him. [June 22, 1932];

Am afraid that I rather disappointed Phi today when I should have cheered him after the strenuous energy demanding tasks of Sunday. [June 27, 1932];

Had a few minutes with Φ tonight before pageant practice but am afraid I was not a very cheering companion & he needed me to be that for he was very tired. [December 22, 1932];

Bessie observes that Fred appears happy and contented, implying by contrast that, perhaps, she is not. She is, nonetheless, willing to sacrifice her own happiness to ensure his:

... He [Phi] seems to have had a very happy contented day. I must learn that my place in his life is a very insignificant one. [June 22, 1933];

Phi is busy tonight, having three patients. Had a short chat with him by phone. How I long to see him some of these evenings without using the subterfuge and clandestine methods that must be employed under these circumstances. However he seems happy, none of the things vital to him
have been taken away and for that I feel deeply grateful. [February 1, 1934];

Warm sunlight bathed the roads as Phi & I drove & rested awhile together. He brought me an “Evening Mail.” Phoned him this evening. He seemed very happy with things as they are. [March 24, 1934];

Dear [shorthand]. I gave him my little gifts a shirt, knife, and book. Glad that he seemed so happy. … [September 5, 1935];

Phi home tonight at 6 o’clock. Saw him around 8. … Looks happy and rested & says he feels fine. [March 31, 1936]

When her own discontent emerges strongly, Bessie often disowns such emotion as “unreasonable,” or denies the true cause of the feeling. Annoyed and confused by the message her troubled emotion is signaling, she berates herself for her negative feelings, or excuses her negativity as mere “tiredness”:

Hot day. Over to Dartmouth tonight. Φ works so hard. How my heart aches for some assurance of his love. I suppose it is the catishness in me makes me positively ache to be first. [June 13, 1932];

Had such horrible unreasonable blues today. Not a patient in all a.m. Had usual visit c Φ. [July 16, 1932];

Am so disgusted & angry c myself. Spent a few hours driving c Φ & spoiled them by my silly arguing on something I know nothing about & that doesn’t add to one’s inner life at all. Φ seemed disgusted. [November 21, 1932];
These bitter griefs and blinding tears that come over some casual remark.

Why can’t I be sensible. Spent the whole evening writing to Φ & then burnt the letter. [April 4, 1933];

Round the Waverley Road with Φ tonight & how beautiful that road is.

Sometimes when I am tired I guess Φ thinks I’m glum. And our situation affects me so. [July 11, 1933];

Saw Φ a.m., noon & evening for a few moments each time. If I love him truely why should I always have this aching heart even if his ideas of honour are different from mine? [May 4, 1933];

Bessie’s denial of these negative feelings illustrates the sort of emotional labour highlighted by Hochschild’s theory. In response to moments when the rising tide of dissatisfaction breaks into her conscious awareness, Bessie tries to apply the feeling rules associated with her socially constructed persona of sweetheart and companionate, ‘emotional wife.’ To do this, she distances herself from ownership of these contradictory feelings, rather than admit that her relationship with Fred has failed to secure her complete happiness. She strengthens her denial by writing it out in her diary, reinforcing her feelings by giving physical substance to this desired ‘truth.’ In exchange for displaying the ‘correct’ sentiments, she continues to receive Fred’s affection and the related benefits that flow from her success in this role. Her emotional ‘debt’ to Fred keeps her securely committed to the relationship:

Φ has given me so much that there is a feeling of belonging utterly and completely to him. Indeed it has always been so. [October 17, 1933];
Bessie’s management of her emotions enables her to maintain her construction of herself as Fred’s sweetheart and ‘emotional wife.’ The feeling rules to which she responds correspond to the social roles that she has embraced, establishing, as all social roles do, “a baseline for what feelings seem appropriate to a certain series of events.” She continues to be able to conceive of herself as a materially, spiritually and romantically successful young woman rather than as an unlucky ‘old-maid’ who, like her friend Mabel, “misses the mark of her desires so,” despite possessing a “splendid mind” and being “very attractive when she fixes herself up.”

Arlie Russell Hochschild suggests that managed feelings are often expressed through a strategy she refers to as “deep acting.” She explains that with deep acting, emotional display “is a natural result of working on feeling; the actor does not try to seem happy or sad, but rather expresses spontaneously ... a real feeling that has been self induced.” Managed emotion displayed through deep acting is produced through a device Hochschild calls “emotion memory,” that is, memories that recall times when one has previously experienced the emotion required by the present situation. Hochschild contends that persons who feel compelled to present a certain emotional response do so by drawing on their store of emotion memory. To make remembered emotion seem real now, the individual must make believe that the previous circumstances from which the emotion issued are true in the present moment. As Hochschild explains, we use “deep

11 Hochschild, 74.
12 Wamboldt diary, November 8, 1932.
13 Hochschild, 35.
14 Hochschild, 35.
acting, emotion memory, and the sense of ‘as if this were true’ in the course of trying to feel what we sense we ought to feel or want to feel.”^15

The key to ongoing success in the presentation of managed emotion through deep acting lies in the development of a storehouse of emotional memory. No better device exists for this purpose than the personal diary. Bessie collects and preserves her most valued memories in her “inner treasure chest:”

That unforgettable drive to Ingramport eclipses every other happening of the day. Such a brilliant almost weird sunset. Us two close together in all that beauty. [June 10, 1932];

Beautiful warm day. Large attendance at prayer meeting tonight. Home in the gloaming alone, yet not alone for the beauty surrounded me and memory comforted me. [June 15, 1932];

… Memories are sweet, sweet & precious & help us to face life as we live it. [June 30, 1932];

This day brought me a wonderful precious gift. Four golden, never to be forgotten, treasured hours with my φ. How sweet that evening meal together & the companionship of those hours. Gift of [shorthand]. [July 1, 1932];

… Made new resolution to forget all the past except its experience, and love and have faith and hope. [September 20, 1932];

Spent an unforgettable night with φ on the old road. … [October 27, 1932];

---

^15 Hochschild, 40-43.
Another Saturday. Another perfect hour added to the growing chain of golden hours. Another precious memory for the inner treasure chest.

[November 19, 1932]

Bessie’s preserved precious memories contribute to her ability to continue to respond in keeping with the social roles she has constructed for herself, despite a growing sense that things are not working out as well as she had hoped in her life.

Moments of emotional truth and clarity do surface in the diary, when occasionally Bessie acknowledges that Fred’s goals and her goals for this relationship are incompatible:

Saw Φ from 5-6 p.m. in his office also this a.m. when he met me. Do I misunderstand or understand too well or is it just the difference between sexes that sometimes puzzles me about his attitudes. [June 17, 1932];

... Oh, this longing for him to do something but in spite of his declarations he never will. What does the future hold for me. [October 18, 1932];

... Oh, if Φ would only grant me his loyalty & fidelity. But his burning passion is to pursue the way he wants in life. [October 24, 1932];

... I feel to be his completely, but the grief and hurt to know that he wants me in his life only as a sort of extra. [October 27, 1932];

.... How I sigh for the impossible. Alas Φ is so willing to let things be as they are. [January 4, 1933];
… Gave Φ my cut hair at noontime. How he seems to love things like that yet apparently doesn’t care at all that present situation makes me very unhappy. [January 6, 1933];

… I can’t understand why our talk yesterday made him sick. He doesn’t want to do anything to make things different, yet he says he wants me. [February 12, 1933];

… Φ seemed very happy today. None of those inward compunctions that bother me seem to affect him at all. He says he has risen above all that but does a woman I wonder ever rise above wanting love in honor & openness? [February 15, 1933];

… I believe that he would let me go right straight out of his life altogether rather than make any change at all in his present way. I would do anything to have him in my life. [May 3, 1933];

This terrible feeling of instability in life. I know Φ is satisfied just as things are but oh, how my heart yearns for all & how I yearn for home life. [July 13, 1933];

… It grieves me so that he apparently cannot understand just what this continual caution means in my life. [July 19, 1933];

… I don’t believe he cares anything about my inner state as long as events in life arrange themselves his way. He never once has had any sympathy for the real anxiety & perplexity our situation arouses in me. [July 20, 1933];
... I have wanted so, so to feel that he is as absorbingly mine as I am his. [December 30, 1933];

Phi and I sat in the car parked around the corner, until 6:40 p.m. this evening. I had hoped that it might make him understand more fully how I long for our relationship to be based on mutual respect & desires & designs for living but if he understands his desire to go on “as is” is stronger than any other urge so I must either comply or break away. … [January 12, 1934];

... Phi worried about my unsettled state of mind but I cannot talk to him of the bitterness in my soul for he can’t seem to understand why there should be reasons for bitterness. But existing conditions are very difficult & depressing. [March 23, 1934]

This survey of Bessie’s management of her emotions throughout her diary presents an interesting pattern over time. We see her actively engaged in constructing a storehouse of happy memories in entries sprinkled throughout 1932. This same year she declares in several entries that she feels needed by Fred. Believing that she is needed reinforces her ability to play the role she has conceived for herself in his life. Throughout 1932 to 1934 she records open declarations of happiness and satisfaction with their relationship. Countering these positive declarations, she also records her struggles to accommodate the disconnect between her hopes for this relationship and the external reality of the situation. Throughout 1932 and 1933, she denies her discontent and insists that it is God’s will, not her own, that mandates her commitment to the relationship with Fred.
These denials are interwoven with moments of emotional clarity, during which she vents her anger and frustration over Fred's unwillingness to leave his wife to advance their happiness. Unwilling to end the relationship, Bessie continues to see Fred, but the tone of her emotional protest shifts during 1934 through to the end of the diary. Throughout the latter part of the diary Bessie records a degree of resignation with Fred's attitude, expressing a willingness to sacrifice her own happiness for his.

Does this mean that Bessie's diary concludes in resignation and defeat of her hopes and dreams? Bessie's diary provides clues that suggest that she had further emotional resources to draw on than those already discussed. Arlie Russell Hochschild notes that

we are most likely to sense a feeling rule as a feeling rule ... not when we are strongly attached to a culture or a role but when we are moving from one culture or one role to another. It is when we are between jobs, between marriages, or between cultures that we are prone to feel at odds with past feeling rules.\(^{16}\)

If Bessie were securely rooted in the social roles she had constructed through her relationship with Fred, she would likely feel no compulsion to manage her emotional reactions through the strategies of deep acting and emotional memory. Bessie's struggle to manage her emotions, in order to support the role she has tried to embrace, suggests that the diary reflects a period of transition, rather than stability in Bessie's life. Bessie's conception of her role within her family and personal life course is evolving throughout the writing of this diary.

From the earliest stage of writing her diary, Bessie declares a notion that seems at odds with the powerless position she espouses most of the time in her diary:

---

\(^{16}\) Hochschild, 75.
One thing I am very grateful for: the courage to face life alone as I never
once even dared to. But the hurt remains that he should choose it so.

Perhaps time will lessen its pain. [June 14, 1932]

“The courage to face life alone.” This bold declaration indicates that, from the
very beginning of her chronicle, Bessie recognizes on some level that her choices were
leading toward an independent life, despite her best attempts to live out the socially-
prescribed, gender-constructed roles her culture inspires her to desire. Following this
declaration, throughout the early part of the diary, she returns to the theme of courage
several times. Not feeling so sure of herself after this initial declaration, she asks God to
bolster the courage she fears she may not possess:

Spent our usual hour alone. How sweet to be thus together. What
desolation of heart in continued separation. I must be brave & ask God’s
help in such times [July 23, 1932]

Down to St. Matthews Church to Pine Hill Convocation tonight. Dr. Basil
Matthers speaker. It helped to realize that He also was somewhere in the
audience. Courage, I keep praying for. [April 19, 1933];

By late 1933, Bessie begins to exhibit the courage she has been praying for:

Over to Prayer Meeting tonight. I wonder if Phi knows the courage it takes
to even attend Church services there anymore. … [November 22, 1933];

… The days pass so quickly yet I seem to be accomplishing nothing. My
dream & hope of homelife is gone. Yet my heart has a strange courage I
never knew before. [September 11, 1934];
It seems the longer we live, the braver we must become to face life courageously. Some situations in my work almost unbearable but the melody of that music I heard last night has been echoing in my life today. Saw Phi a.m. and this evening. … [October 26, 1934]; … This has been a week of emotional turmoil for me but thank God I am coming out with a braver, stronger attitude toward life. [September 14, 1935]

This “braver, stronger attitude” signals a shift in Bessie’s narrative. The very next day she records:

Sat quietly in Church today listening to Phi. Have decided to take no more sermons unless he requests it. [September 15, 1935]

A few days later, her resolve about the sermon work still holds:

This whole week I have had to do nothing in the evenings but please myself. Have tried to gather up the loose ends of my life and put them in order. … [September 18, 1935]

By this simple action, Bessie signals to herself that a change has come to her life. While she continues to record private encounters and gifts exchanged with Fred, the entries grow short and more infrequent. There are only 28 subsequent entries in the diary, although there are spaces for 468 entries after September 18, 1935. She travels by train to Hantsport, Nova Scotia, to visit overnight with her married friend Connie (Smith) Avillino, who had traveled home from the United States to visit family. Bessie records an extensive discussion with Connie, although the topic is never mentioned:
Connie and I spent the a.m. in bed after having talked til about 2 p.m. [a.m.?] Mrs. Graham had a lovely dinner for us. … Connie showed us snaps of her trip abroad. After supper had a quiet walk & talk. Then later to bed where we talked some more. [April 19, 1936]

One week later, Bessie records another discussion with her friends, Doris and Edith Leonard, and her sister Margaret:

After Endeavour last evening, which I led, Doris talked to Margaret for an hour. Disturbing & unfair. Edith talked to me in her own quiet interested way. [April 26, 1936]

The content of this “disturbing and unfair” conversation remains a mystery. This April entry marks the end of Bessie’s diary, long before space in the diary has actually run out. Given that Bessie’s relationship with Fred constituted the primary motivation for keeping the diary, it is conceivable that this relationship is somehow implicated in these final conversations between Bessie, Margaret, Doris and Edith. The reader is left to wonder if the sudden and premature ending of her writing signals Bessie’s catalyzed determination to “gather up” and “put in order” the loose ends of her life.

What can be concluded from the “perplexing problem” of Bessie Wamboldt’s “inner life?” Are we any closer to understanding who Bessie Wamboldt believed herself to be? What have we discovered about what it meant to be a never married, working-class, adult woman in Depression era Halifax?

This investigation has shown that a pervasive “culture of consumption” dominated the popular media in Halifax during the 1930’s, in keeping with cultural trends throughout North America. Material consumption being linked to the acquisition of
intangible, ego-enhancing attributes encouraged the working poor to aspire to middle-class lifestyles. Bessie, her brother Fred, and her sister Margaret, all held respectable employments that suggested social and economic progress away from their working-class roots. Between the three they managed to provide a comfortable standard of living for themselves, their sister and their parents. Despite the Depression and her own relative lack of economic resources, Bessie carved out a life for herself that exhibited some measure of abundance and considerable independence of thought and action.

Suspended at the brink of adulthood when her diary chronicle begins, Bessie Wamboldt faced a precarious proposition: How was she to cross the threshold from youthful girl to adult woman without sacrificing the freedoms and responsibilities she enjoys as a single, working professional caring for her family? Unable to resist cultural prescriptions that implicated romance and marriage as prerequisites for the achievement of full female adulthood, Bessie engaged in an all-consuming relationship with the powerful, charismatic leader of her church. Her attachment to Fred enabled her to enact the culturally prescribed roles of sweetheart and companionate, ‘emotional wife,’ satisfying, at least secretly for herself, her need to cross into adulthood without actually relinquishing the freedoms and independence of youth.

Despite Bessie’s shaping of the diary’s narrative as a romantic quest plot, it is reasonable to conceive that, despite her declarations to the contrary, she did not entirely desire the public role of spouse, since marriage would likely have required her to leave the workforce and relinquish the relative freedom that her singlehood represented. Engaging in a relationship that could not result in marriage may have been her best defense to maintain the fragile independence she had built for herself. Carolyn Heilbrun
suggests that, for women who desire to live a life different from the conventional “marriage plot,” it is necessary “that some event must be invented to transform their lives, all unconsciously, apparently “accidentally,” from a conventional to an eccentric story.” She further suggests that such an act “would usually (but not always) occur in a woman’s late twenties or early thirties,” and that “it is difficult to grasp how absolutely women of an earlier age could expel themselves from conventional society ... by committing a social, usually a sexual, sin.” Heilbrun summarizes that with highly gifted women, as with men, the failure to lead the conventional life, to find the conventional way early, may signify more than having been dealt a poor hand of cards. It may well be the forming of a life in the service of a talent felt, but unrecognized and unnamed.

In making these assertions, Heilbrun is considering the biographical evidence of the lives of several famous women writers (Dorothy Sayers and George Eliot), but it is not over-reaching to suggest that such a principle may have operated in the lives of ordinary women such as Bessie, who were, like Sayers and Eliot, “educated enough to have had a choice, and brave enough to have made one.”

Bessie’s diary functions partly to gather the spiritual and emotional threads of her life into a safe space for reflection and analysis, but above all, the diary provides a psychological location within which her forbidden relationship and her forbidden thoughts can reside. Forced to deny this large part of her self, Bessie used her writing to gain some measure of creative control over her "secret" life. Writing made this part of her

---

18 Heilbrun, 49.
19 Heilbrun, 52.
20 Heilbrun, 59.
self "real", despite its invisible nature in the world of family, friends and community. It is clear that Bessie was aware that other people might read her diary. That is why she coded Fred’s name, and used shorthand to record details too important to leave out but too dangerous to be read. Despite the danger, she did write, and preserve, this diary; the only document, it seems, to have survived the years to testify to this experience of her life.

In writing this diary, Bessie validated the one role and relationship denied to her in public life. Through this text Bessie was able to say, “I exist! This is real! These things are part of who I am!” or at least, these things were a part of the person she believed she needed to be. In documenting her clandestine affair with Fred, Bessie secured proof for herself that she had passed securely from youth to maturity. By the time the diary and the relationship had finished, all external social expectations that Bessie ‘should’ marry and relinquish her independence would have dissipated. The choices she acted upon in her life, and the act of writing about those choices, both constitute a creative negotiation of the dominant prescriptions of her society. By writing this periodic account of her life, she reflected the spiritual, psychological and emotional struggles from which the fabric of her life was woven.

Was Bessie’s experience, in both writing this diary and living this life, unique? Examinations of similar diaries from the same period suggest that Bessie was in good company. In their analysis of the diaries of approximately fifty middle-class women from the early twentieth century, John Spurlock and Cynthia Magistro found that “women frequently failed to live out the emotional images they had taken as their own,” and that

---

21 Bessie Wamboldt, in fact, never married, although Fred took a new wife and moved away from Halifax after his first wife’s death in the 1940’s.
“a persistent tension underlay the emotional lives of early twentieth century women.”

They further conclude that

Mature, middle class women frequently found their emotional lives inadequate.

Rather than the feelings of happiness promised in advertisements, or the sense of fullness and completeness offered by contemporary therapeutic strategies, middle-class women often fell into periods of self-doubt and self-blame. They missed something, whether it was romance or intensity or inner calm.

Bessie’s diary reflects the broad range of therapeutic strategies she engaged to alleviate the knowing sense that something was missing in her life. In light of Magistro and Spurlock’s observations, the course of Bessie Wamboldt’s emotional history very much shows her to have been in step with others of her generation.

This thesis has sought to untangle the “webs of constructed meaning” woven throughout the text of Bessie Wamboldt’s diary. Such an undertaking was inspired by an evolving historiography that has encouraged the close examination of the lived experience of ordinary individuals within the context of their communities. Through the use of such intimate evidence as a clandestine, personal diary, I have sought to challenge notions of appropriate historical evidence. I have suggested that socially-scandalous evidence from the past requires brave and thoughtful consideration, if the full complexity of human experience is to be understood. I have drawn on a wide range of interdisciplinary scholarship, from sociology, cultural studies, literary studies and social history, in an attempt to explain the meanings of Bessie’s narrative in its subjective

---

22 Spurlock and Magistro, x.
23 Spurlock and Magistro, 159.
contexts. I have found that the concerns and preoccupations voiced in this diary flow
directly from the historical conditions under which they were conceived and written.

I have discussed major cultural trends, such as the development of mass consumer
culture and the ongoing contradiction of modern and antimodern sentiments expressed in
the popular media of the 1930's. These trends influenced both the language available and
the very ideas it was possible for a woman such as Bessie to conceive. In Bessie
Wamboldt's diary we see the intersection of one woman's hopes and ambitions with
major cultural forces that defined the parameters of the possible for her life story. Her bid
to establish her independence could only be conceived in terms of the limited cultural
scripts promoted through her popular culture. Cultural prescriptions shaped many of her
choices and perceptions, reaching deeply into her personal experience, where even the
emotions she "ought" to feel were shaped by socially constructed role expectations.
Despite these limitations, Bessie forged an independent path for herself, defying cultural
prescriptions that insisted she must marry to fulfill her biologically-mandated, social
destiny.

By using her diary to record the details she felt were "most worthy of
remembrance," Bessie Wamboldt negotiated the terms of her future independence.
Through her creative response to the limitations imposed by her society, she has left an
inspiring and authentic record of a young woman's choices and opportunities during the
interwar years in Canada. Bessie Wamboldt's diary testifies to women's creative power
to shape their own lives within the context of social, cultural and historical forces acting
upon the circumstances of their lives during the 1930's.
Afterword: For the Record

Bessie never married. In 1937 she left Dr. Johnson’s office, obtaining a clerical position with the *Chronicle Herald* Newspaper. In 1941 she began working as a stenographer for the Public Health Pathology Laboratory, a position she stayed in until retiring in the early 1960’s. She kept house with her younger sister Nine, until passing away at the age of 79, on November 16, 1981. She lived all of her life in the comfortable house her parents had worked to provide.

Phi resigned from his pastoral duties in 1947, citing the demands of his chiropractic office and “nervous fatigue.” His wife had died a few months prior to his resignation. The following year he married a woman who had been a deaconess at a local Anglican church and moved to Truro, Nova Scotia, where he died in 1954, at the age of 60. Bessie transferred her church membership to a United Church congregation, sometime before 1952. The North Street Christian Church, as a corporate entity, was dissolved in 1986.
Bibliography

Primary Sources

A. Newspapers


B. Government Documents


C. Books

Barton, Bruce. *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of Jesus.* Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, [1925].


Morse, Frederick H. *Electro-Therapeutics by the Morse Wave Generator.* New York: the author, 1921.


Prince, Samuel Henry. *Housing in Halifax: A Report on Housing Conditions in the City of Halifax including the results of an investigation by A.G. Dalzell M.E.I.C. and of a Sanitary Survey by the City Board of Health; made under the direction of the Citizens’ Committee on Housing, Halifax*. Halifax: 1932.


### D. Manuscripts and Archival Materials


### Secondary Sources

#### A. Articles


Hassam, Andrew. “Reading Other People’s Diaries.” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Spring 1987): 435-442.


Parr, Joy. “Gender History and Historical Practice” *Canadian Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (September 1995): 354-376.


B. Government Documents


C. Book Chapters


---, “Sundays Always Make Me Think of Home: Time & Place in Canadian
Women’s History.” In Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of
Women’s Work in British Columbia, edited by Barbara K. Latham and

Gillikin, Dure Jo. “A Lost Diary Found.” In Women’s Personal Narratives: Essays in
Criticism and Pedagogy, edited by Lenore Hoffman and Margo Cully. New

Holmes, Katie. “‘Diamonds of the Dustheap’? Women’s Diary Writing between the
Wars.” In Wallflowers and Witches: Women and Culture in Australia 1910-
1945, edited by Maryanne Dever. Queensland: University of Queensland

Lears, T.J. Jackson. “From Salvation to Self Realization: Advertising and the
Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930.” In The Culture of
Jackson Lears and Richard Wightman Fox. New York: Pantheon Books,
1983.

Lockridge, L. “The Ethics of Biography and Autobiography.” In Critical Ethics: Text,
Theory and Responsibility, edited by D. Rainsford and T. Woods. New York:

Occupations in Canada, 1901 - 1931.” In Rethinking Canada: the Promise of
Women’s History, edited by Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman.

Kathryn McPherson, Cecilia Morgan and Nancy M. Forestell. “Introduction:
Conceptualizing Canada’s Gendered Pasts.” In Gendered Pasts: Historical
Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada. Toronto: Oxford University

Reid, John. “The 1920’s: Decade of Struggle.” In Six Crucial Decades: Times of

Strong-Boag, Veronica. “Writing about Women.” In Writing about Canada: a
Handbook for Modern Canadian History. Scarborough, Ont: Prentice-Hall
Canada, 1990.

Williams, Raymond. “Advertising: the Magic System.” In The Cultural Studies

201
D. Books


E. Theses


Twohig, Peter L. “Organizing the Bench: Medical Laboratory Workers in the Maritimes, 1900 – 1950.” Ph.D. diss., Dalhousie University, 1999
Appendix 'A':
A Wamboldt Family Album*

* All Wamboldt family photographs in Appendix 'A' provided courtesy of Rev. Neil and Shirley Bergman, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.
Bessie Wamboldt, 1934, in front of the porch of her family home.

Bessie Wamboldt, date unknown.

Ada Wamboldt, Bessie Wamboldt, Margaret Wamboldt, 1936.
Extricated by Daughter From Wreckage

Mrs. Havlock Wamboldt, 6 Bilby Street, was buried under wreckage and had to be extricated by her daughter, Nina. Mrs. Wamboldt had her collar bone broken, and when ordered to leave the city, walked to Rockingham with broken collar bone, and from there was driven in a lumber wagon to Hammond Plains. She was now with her sister, Mrs. Joseph McKechnie. Her home is a complete wreck. Her daughter Nina was also severely injured. Mrs. Wamboldt suffered intense pain for a day and night before a doctor could be obtained.

Halifax Herald, 11 December 1917, 2.
Bessie Wamboldt, 1929
Margaret Wamboldt, 1931.

Bessie Wamboldt, 1931.
Henry Havelock Wamboldt (standing), Fred Wamboldt (lower right), third person unknown, at Kinsac camp, 1930.

Ada Melvin Wamboldt, 1931.

Henry Havelock Wamboldt, 1936.
Fred Wamboldt, Kinsac, 1930.

Esther Wamboldt (left) with "Woods Brothers Department Store employee", date unknown.
Miss Margaret Rae Wamboldt, above, popular pianist, will be the accompanist at the Fashion show which will be presented this evening in St. John’s Hall by the Ladie’s Auxiliary of the Central Baptist Church.

Above: Margaret Wamboldt and Marshall Wallace, Prince’s Lodge, 1931. (possibly Church picnic)

Below: James (Jimmie) McConnell, Secretary, Boys’ Division, Halifax YMCA, c. 1932. (“Mug’s Jimmie”, Wamboldt diary, May 14, 1932)
Above: Connie Smith (Left)  
Bessie Wamboldt (Right)


Above: Esther Brown (with purse/gloves), 1936

Above: Doris Leonard, 1934.
Church Group, North St. Christian Church, 1927. Bessie Wamboldt: front row, seated, farthest left; Margaret Wamboldt: front row, seated, 2nd from right; Laurie Cameron: back row, standing, 2nd from left; Marshall Wallace: middle row, standing, 2nd from left; Fred Wallace: front row, seated, 4th from right.

Dr. Fred Wallace, 1927.

Fred Ibsen (left) Dr. Fred Wallace (right), 1933

Bessie Wamboldt (far left) and Fred Wallace (far right), 1936.
Appendix ‘B’:
The Manuscript Diary of Bessie Melvin Wamboldt, 1932-1936
JANUARY 1

1932. Began the new year right. Sour
any Switzerland with the Altei, Midnight Watch
Service. At Charlie's Club, and then
home on our trip to Switzerland. We went.
1933. New Year's Day. Repeat our
trip to Switzerland. We went.
1933. Sunday evening. Repeat our
trip to Switzerland. We went.
1933. Mary and I entertained a few of the young people at church.
1933. Mary and I entertained a few of the young people at church.
1934. Spent a quiet New Year's Day, but
had an hour or so of quiet bliss as
I sat up on the hill. Laid down and
devotions ended us in all night.

JANUARY 2

1933. Stayed at home and worked on the
trip to Switzerland. We went.
1933. Stayed at home and worked on the
trip to Switzerland. We went.
1934. Stayed at home and worked on the
trip to Switzerland. We went.
1935. Stayed at home and worked on the
trip to Switzerland. We went.

JANUARY 3

1935. Stayed at home and worked on the
trip to Switzerland. We went.
1935. Stayed at home and worked on the
trip to Switzerland. We went.
1935. Stayed at home and worked on the
trip to Switzerland. We went.
1936. Stayed at home and worked on the
trip to Switzerland. We went.
JANUARY 8

The news of Frances Whitby's death came this a.m. To Shirley & the greatest tragedy perhaps to the little girls. She had put her arms around of friendship until she was at home. They were in her little brown dog, when I came here to be kind and understanding, take them out and credit them. After Harwood Street to see the little girls. Margaret ordered a new dress to be made.

JANUARY 9

Frances Whitby's funeral service held this a.m. at 9:30 and what a wonderful service it was. The quartet, Clara, Edith, Ed & Fred sang beautifully and the sermon was like saying a full of the hope of an immortal eternal life. Returned to the office after the service. Spent the evening, rereading to the farm, picking out the older to properly remodel and.

JANUARY 10

Mom and I went down to the Full Gospel Church tonight to hear Ed's speech on The Greatest Church. Meeting an afterwards at the entrance. He kindly drove us home. Mother was informed with the practical implications of his address.

JANUARY 11

19
**JANUARY 12**

1934. She and I sat in the car parked outside the house, until 8 p.m. this evening. I had hoped that it might rain, but it didn't. I'm still trying to figure out how to improve our relationship. Today, we went for a walk, and she suggested we should try a new design for our living room. I agree, and we discussed it for a while. I think we should make some changes in our house as well. Also, I visited a friend of mine who is feeling a bit down.

**JANUARY 13**

1934. Sue and I walked with her, while she sat in the car. I called him by phone this afternoon, and we talked about the plans we have for the future. He suggested we should try a new design for our living room. I agree, and we discussed it for a while. I think we should make some changes in our house as well. Also, I visited a friend of mine who is feeling a bit down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1934</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**JANUARY 14**

1934. As I sat there, I felt a feeling of loneliness. I don't know why, but I'm feeling a bit down. I'm thinking about going to see the movie tonight, but I'm not sure if I should. I'm not sure if I should go, but I'm feeling a bit down. I'm thinking about going to see the movie tonight, but I'm not sure if I should. I'm not sure if I should go, but I'm feeling a bit down.

**JANUARY 15**

1934. This winter has been the coldest we've experienced in a long time. I don't know if I should go out, but I'm feeling a bit down. I'm thinking about going to see the movie tonight, but I'm not sure if I should. I'm not sure if I should go, but I'm feeling a bit down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1934</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JANUARY 16

19

JANUARY 17

19

19

19

JANUARY 18

19

JANUARY 19

19

19

19
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JANUARY 20</th>
<th>JANUARY 21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954: Only the initiated would ever be able to follow my thoughts on this. Besides there is only one other I would wish to share it with. This has been such a lucky Saturday. The took me downtown this a.m. &amp; told me to go down to the Rodeo. But I half thought he wanted to buy me a coat. I was supposed to be busy here &amp; fell as I was. And then we met again. Very old Night, Phoned the news. Goodnight, show me to see May. My first time of 9 pm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JANUARY 22</th>
<th>JANUARY 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956: Caught 11 p.m. Half past two. The father brought us a re-bundage of The Proclamation this morning &amp; London of St. James Palace, Charring Cross &amp; Temple Work of our old King Edward VII of a wonderful experience to hear the cheers and braves of the London crowds, the singing of prime mourning for all the world like the tragic news of a great war, and the Police English voice of the announce.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 19 | 19 |

| 19 | 19 |
**JANUARY 24**

1933. My boy and me and took me for a little drive before play practice. It was a very nice evening to be out. We went to see a movie, and that's all. I've already seen it twice. I was thinking of another time, that I'd like to go. I've longed for a little home, with it but can't do it. I am thankful very much thankful journey dare been here.

1933. A very interesting and helpful prayer meeting service held in the Valley after which we had our annual S.A.A.S. meeting. Nothing eventful and particularly the same worship service as last year. Washed quietly home alone in the last darkness afterward. Give me a feeling of some of friends be did the same.

**JANUARY 25**

1933. When the busy bustling day is past. How wonderful it come to understand. Our understanding. Is know. The communion of our perfect love. Has an hour of joy. We spent together with. I served such an effort to go to play practice afterward.

1933. My first evening at home this week. Finished up the last two pages of the gospel from Eternity. Walk at the office in picking up. Have given my belt in service to Mr. Johnson. I do not want to give me a living. Some sort of change is being. Thank you and will find more twisted work.

**JANUARY 26**

1933. When the busy bustling day is past. How wonderful it come to understand. Our understanding. Is know. The communion of our perfect love. Has an hour of joy. We spent together with. I served such an effort to go to play practice afterward.

1933. My first evening at home this week. Finished up the last two pages of the gospel from Eternity. Walk at the office in picking up. Have given my belt in service to Mr. Johnson. I do not want to give me a living. Some sort of change is being. Thank you and will find more twisted work.

**JANUARY 27**

1933. My first evening at home this week. Finished up the last two pages of the gospel from Eternity. Walk at the office in picking up. Have given my belt in service to Mr. Johnson. I do not want to give me a living. Some sort of change is being. Thank you and will find more twisted work.
JANUARY 28

1924. A wonderful change has come to me. Conditions in my life at least some of them seem to have changed; but my inner viewpoint seems changed. I feel such a change is due to the hope for the future. Spent a wonderful hour of this f.m. in the sun and music tonight. It seems to have taught me an element of happiness.

1925. The last evening of our months. Broadcast this week. I liked the whole service. Best of all, singing The Three Voices.

JANUARY 29

1926. How I wished that I might have gone to Mrs. Kane's party tonight at the Church. Party tonight was such a success. I have hope for the future. I spent an evening tonight at the Church. I do not feel like going tonight without you. Besides, I really need the time to think and perhaps it would not have been better if I did not go. Would love it if you and I could have a social meeting occasionally.

JANUARY 30

1924. Stayed in tonight. Washing on Saturday. Smelt's Birthday. Margaret and a neighbor, had gotten some ice cream. We had a beautifully decorated ice cream cake with Happy Birthday and Smelt, written in sprinkles on the white surface. We all gave her two little gifts at dinner.

JANUARY 31

1924. Over the Prayer meeting tonight. I learned both delightful and the second lecture on the life of Saint Paul. Saw Margaret and got some feeling happy.

1925. The had given me a lift on the way only of the service was delicious interesting. I felt that the Providence of God that kept me alive.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEBRUARY 1</th>
<th>FEBRUARY 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1934.</strong> She is being tonight, leaving three patients. I had a</td>
<td><strong>1934.</strong> Saw Phie in the earliest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>side chair. Settle him by phone; how I long to see him alone in</td>
<td>morning. Three times I note for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three mornings without</td>
<td>him and drive one home at dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during the afternoons and</td>
<td>hour. The evening hours read us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clausrophobic moments that</td>
<td>together against Latin 2 called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must be emphasized under these</td>
<td>him and also talked with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circumstances. However, he</td>
<td>them about a letter he once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>were never happier. Some of the things</td>
<td>read in &quot;Virginia Jane.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vital &amp; still have no trace away</td>
<td>After a long. far and to refute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and for that I feel deep gratified</td>
<td>the implication that he did not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936. Phie had to adjust</td>
<td>his silence on the subject seems to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and semen in The Evening</td>
<td>an answer to these statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall. Read her for a short time after</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sung on the ground floor &quot;Way down&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEBRUARY 3</th>
<th>FEBRUARY 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1934.</strong> Met Phie in our accustom</td>
<td><strong>1934.</strong> Whil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place we went to Bedford. Then</td>
<td>o found the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>returned to our little room &amp;</td>
<td>gave me a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stayed for a little while under</td>
<td>wonderful letter. Perfect in its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>light. Now I see the</td>
<td>expression of thought which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gave me the last gift tonight</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was the 2nd of March. So</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this Birthday a happy pleasant</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evening.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[February 5-10 completely blank in diary manuscript.]
FEBRUARY 11

1935, Dr. Johnson left work but feeling pretty miserable. Left so discouraged with any really practical. Went back so fairly

1936. A corner one at the United Church. In view of this, not I referred a service of course, with my attitude toward the present situation.

19

19

19

FEBRUARY 12

1938. What a full day! Church, V. I. and Pedro. Fewer. Berenice's 12th of the Church. Be the blessing upon the children and

19

19

19

FEBRUARY 13

1938. To play practice that might where, with the help of prayer. This we got. Gladly Shephard's eye saw people, put together and

19

19

19

FEBRUARY 14

1939. St. Valentine's Day and a beautiful lazy day. Few great happenings this a.m. There 0 hours an expected candidate. I did feel 12

19

19

19

228
FEBRUARY 15

1933 Already the middle of February is here and 20° We drove along the Redford Road tonight. They declared more than a hint of spring in the air. There have been the snowflakes with the reflected beauty of the surrounding hills. I walked along the seawall and I seemed very happy today. Hope of these inward complications that bother one seems to affect one at all. He says he can sense all that I feel. I wonder. I wonder a great deal, wanting...

FEBRUARY 16

1934 Such a cold in my head today. I bet it is more than the exercise. I got above yesterday's IT tonight and didn't. In cold weather, I feel of my being.

FEBRUARY 17

1934 Saturday instead of leaving with Mrs. as usual. I walked until the store. The first Saturday p.m. for quite a while that I don't. So. By.

1935 Nothing affects me terribly. I don't. It is not conclusions. I have not the force to make these matters the necessarily everyday matters. There being no causes worry and satisfaction. But I know that he I slow the service and have preserved my heart. My love is faithful.

FEBRUARY 18

1934 Away sick. Yet I have an agency question. I'll try not to set this in motion. The able to get back of the business. I was away. But 11 a.m. and a rap this p.m. Then.

1935 Church tonight is service well. Staged an Endeavor afterward. He was at one quite the Central Baptist Young people.

Children's story this a.m. was about 

George Howard who became blind in the war but lived an inspiring noble life.
FEBRUARY 19

1934. Had an interesting talk today. Have had these through some years and it gives strength. There is something about it. I attended the B.P.O.E. Christmas party given in the evening and it was a very profitable thing. For example I found that all work struck me more profitably than I had done before. I had a long deep discussion with the boss. He was very interesting in the evening and did not grieve me. He did not make me feel any cold sympathy.

FEBRUARY 20

1934. These decisions where physical limitations are almost apt to make a depression affect this our uncertainty. But that was what I dreaded both in the afternoon and I think we will. We must have a great deal of real affection. It will end in the quiet room when I am most unprepared. This is a very poor thing to say, but I will do my best in the physical world to make it worthwhile.

FEBRUARY 21

1934. Half of this week that I drank as an account of its bending. Great all elated and I hope to get through it with as little strain as possible. 1934. Bayside meeting tonight. A usual of a great fire. The乔成功s a very loud and I think that. This week will be Friday night. I am very interested in the proceedings. Also I think that the work will be much more strenuous. Wished to stay there. To read.

FEBRUARY 22

1934. Saw the morning, more weight. Three forenoon moments. Sure of the concert given by the choir tonight. Such a fine of attendance. That the folk must have the privilege of listening to the concert and staying. 1935. For the rest. "Young Love, Slopping" and enjoyed it for a short while. While wishing that one more there until 11.30. The Sacred Harp which I found on the window. It was jilted last and did not bring it. Thank we have no tone for it now.
[February 25 – March 2 completely blank in diary manuscript.]
MARCH 4

1934: Felt very watched and uncomfortable until this meal ended at 8 p.m. Church service last week is M.T. calling for June on my way to church. Left 30 c. in bag. Went to church tonight but got very tired and uneasy so was glad to take a short ride tonight. Didn't even try to take down the sermon in what hand today. Must drop them until after the play.

19

MARCH 5

1934: Left to Mabelo for the 3rd. He started a delicious Turkey dinner and after some practice for tonight's recital, we found ourselves well rehearsed. Mabel and I worked "Tom Jones" for the rest of the afternoon. This was the first of our four Sunday evening's on the 3rd. Saw G. S. for lunch this afternoon.

1934: Still this cold causing much discomfort. He gave me some deep treatment which helped so much.

MARCH 6

1934: Accepted Minnie's offer to have supper at her place and go from there over to the hall. Had some tea and supper. Miss Read arrived also. Who came in is the hall arriving about the middle of our practice. He stayed 7 hours through their break from the orchestra and was quite unexpected. Received a lovely gift today of half a dozen beautiful white flower plants chosen by 'Phyllis Lane.'

19

MARCH 7

1933: Tuesday evening went to see Minnie at Minnie's. We played our titles there and after dinner. S. Chinko where Miss Read played for the strokes afterward. She had never heard one player as well before. Not if had a little time before returning home. Returning

1934: went to Walt Car. Hall again tonight for final practice and the music played as anticipated. Part came in flat. Went to Walt Car. Ball.
**MARCH 8**

1953. Three days ago she buried some. God is giving us strength and resources to go through these difficult times. I will be with her soon. Two months of a hard and lonely life. Life has been rough. I feel that she must not be left alone.

1949. That night of 'Youth Comes Tripping'. The very light glittering or the city makes it possible to think and appreciate the possibilities of life.

---

**MARCH 9**

1953. My very irregular way of keeping these notes should make this book a puzzle perhaps to all save myself. What I should wish for and in fact the need of one safe and sure confidante. The best thrill today was the visitation of a pair of gloves for my new made and truly coming down together.

1944. Said my beloved was for the thought of the God and the God who thought. 'Youth Comes Tripping' went off which better than the night. Boy from out of town received a lovely story of white Tellings from the Acknowledged farer by letter & letter in person.

---

**MARCH 10**

1954. Dr. Johnson very pretty this morning and the time passed quickly. For Saturday I had missed the order of a quarter at the ready to give me for church. After leaving the office by 11 a.m. I returned my borrowed way to Mass Hill. There had my usual Club Sandwich to taste at the Elfin Puff. Then to meet Phyllis and steadfastly around Res Hall I stopped quite beyond the building for a short while. So fresh from first these with the roof. These a group of women who the sound no house welcome. Then I thought we went. About 6:30 p.m. putting things to light running getting ready for the B. show. Said the B. will leaving by the train.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARCH 12</th>
<th>MARCH 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1934: You and whole party crossed the Land's Ark and the Lencies sunk and the words delight of 1934.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934:</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[March 14-15 completely blank in diary manuscript]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARCH 16</th>
<th>MARCH 17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1934: Reached from the west to St. Patrick's Church and saw two jewels</td>
<td>1934: Had a trip to St. Patrick's Church. Walked to see John Kemmy, caught an up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934: Had a trip to St. Patrick's Church. Walked to see John Kemmy, caught an</td>
<td>1934: Had a trip to St. Patrick's Church. Walked to see John Kemmy, caught an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934: Had a trip to St. Patrick's Church. Walked to see John Kemmy, caught an</td>
<td>1934: Had a trip to St. Patrick's Church. Walked to see John Kemmy, caught an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934: Had a trip to St. Patrick's Church. Walked to see John Kemmy, caught an</td>
<td>1934: Had a trip to St. Patrick's Church. Walked to see John Kemmy, caught an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934: Had a trip to St. Patrick's Church. Walked to see John Kemmy, caught an</td>
<td>1934: Had a trip to St. Patrick's Church. Walked to see John Kemmy, caught an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

234
MARCH 18

1933. As I came from the office the
ship was fast and rain was the bell.
the Barine was springing and the sky
covered of the clouds made me feel sorry
for the weather.

1934. Thy sightly Sunday night on the sea for
one minutes. Thought the whole service
exceptionally fine. Enjoying the sermon
was wonderful. The ship was uplifted to me. Gud Erthis'wina
a short letter to Mem. Elnard. Sunday
with me in Sunday School for the second
time and good with the teacher.

1931. Came home from church tonight.

1932. Stayed in tonight. Stayed up
and wrote the sermon right away. Started on the
August 18aanthem 1932 for Nan."the". Also
attended the church show at Estes.

MARCH 19

1933. Stayed in tonight. Stayed up
and wrote the sermon right away. Started on the
August 18aanthem 1932 for Nan."the". Also
attended the church show at Estes.

1934. Stayed in tonight. Stayed up
and wrote the sermon right away. Started on the
August 18aanthem 1932 for Nan."the". Also
attended the church show at Estes.

MARCH 20

1933. Stayed in tonight. Stayed up
and wrote the sermon right away. Started on the
August 18aanthem 1932 for Nan."the". Also
attended the church show at Estes.

1934. Stayed in tonight. Stayed up
and wrote the sermon right away. Started on the
August 18aanthem 1932 for Nan."the". Also
attended the church show at Estes.

MARCH 21

1933. Stayed in tonight. Stayed up
and wrote the sermon right away. Started on the
August 18aanthem 1932 for Nan."the". Also
attended the church show at Estes.

1934. Stayed in tonight. Stayed up
and wrote the sermon right away. Started on the
August 18aanthem 1932 for Nan."the". Also
attended the church show at Estes.

1935. Stayed in tonight. Stayed up
and wrote the sermon right away. Started on the
August 18aanthem 1932 for Nan."the". Also
attended the church show at Estes.

1936. Very helpful attitude, very
prayer meeting. Gud Estes'no. The
fastening just pulled.
MARCH 22

1933. We did a stretch on the steps to: dishwash.

1934. Did Calvin meet with Home Meal afterward. When Calvin left and I went a

1935. A pleasant evening. Was so glad to have the evening

1936. And 3 or 4 of the F. H. A.

1937. Stayed in tonight finishing a

1938. Warm sunlight brightened the rooms as I

MARCH 23

1932. Talk at the hand. Entertained a

1933. In the护士's home talked about the


1935. And I had dinner & spent time

1936. I understand what should be

1937. But existing conditions are very

1938. Read Sunday for Phil at Ester's

1939. And a stretch on the steps to: dishwash.

1940. A pleasant evening. Was so glad to have the evening

1941. And 3 or 4 of the F. H. A.

1942. Stayed in tonight finishing a

1943. Warm sunlight brightened the rooms as I

MARCH 24

1942. Good Friday spent at home working and reading. Had my dinner and happened to

1943. In Saturday home together was sweet.

1944. Read Sunday for Phil at Ester's

MARCH 25

1942. Good Friday spent at home working and reading. Had my dinner and happened to

1943. In Saturday home together was sweet.

1944. Read Sunday for Phil at Ester's
**MARCH 26**

| 19:34 | Saw my dear one early this a.m. had a delightful ride to work with him. This is the first time this season that we've been able to visit as much as we usually do. We must try to spend more time together! |
| 19:30 | 11:30 a.m. Twenty minutes ago. Seemed like a complete change from the cold I had. I enjoyed it. Saw him for a few minutes. |

**MARCH 27**

| 19:32 | Went Sunday and seemed the most beautiful day. Sun was lovely. Flowers in front porch. Beautiful day, and everything is in full bloom at the Church. |
| 19:33 | One of the most pleasant times of the week. Such a pretty day! I wish we could go for a walk. |

| 19:34 | Left house cards off to Mr. Petro and Mrs. Petro. |

| 19:36 | The off to the a.m. train for New York. Saw him for a short while before going up to make practice at Church. |

**MARCH 28**

| 19:32 | Three pages which I've written over have to be changed. It's a lot more work. |
| 19:33 | Saw my dear one early this a.m. Great time! We had a lovely ride in the car. We spent most of the time in conversation. |

**MARCH 29**

| 19:29 | End of March. Have been glad for the past two busy days. I think it is clearer. It's been more harmonious thinking of myself. I stayed at home for a short time. The week was good. |
| 19:34 | This week has gone by so quickly. The house was pretty. Went to Mass. Went to church on Saturday. |

| 19:35 | Saturday. Went to church. Got a lot of work done. We spent most of the time in conversation. |

| 19:26 | But for a short time, I was able to work some little which I had put off for so long. Home to evening tea. Home to evening tea. Home to evening tea. |

| 19:22 | Two in the front yard for Mr. Petro. We're speaking in the front yard. |

237
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARCH 30</th>
<th>MARCH 31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1933</strong></td>
<td><strong>1933</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Easter Monday busy and nothing of note but what I said. Left town down by the station this a.m. and saw Lou at the office tonight which made us both happy.</td>
<td>That spoke at the Commercial Club banquet tonight or some other luncheon. Went out to Minnie’s tonight. She is always having some one in. She is probably glad that others think she is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1934</strong></td>
<td><strong>1934</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List to Minnie’s 6 o’clock. I took me. There to St. David Church I hear “The Club.” Home and went my rounds and I heard the news from the top.</td>
<td>I went to Minnie’s this evening. Had a lovely social at the home. Shaded ourselves with some flowers. Nothing we had this week had been a little thing in the creation of prey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1936</strong></td>
<td><strong>1936</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received another special delivery letter today written the Tuesday on the head, and was very many acts. Turnbull, Serene &amp; England.</td>
<td>The home tonight at 6 o’lock. Sent card around T. Had worse of summer this little time of work. Lovely weather. Happy and rested again the next.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APRIL 1</td>
<td>APRIL 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1933</strong></td>
<td><strong>1933</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark. Received a little gift. Left tonight then and took and breakfast at 10:30 am. Went to Fort and received our mail. Mail in the car, numbers and news. The car ship is under the bridge in the station. Only one line to the station.</td>
<td>Deferredly still am assumed lots to come. Things to think on. J. gifts of all these too been &amp; unknown. That makes it exciting. Sue is for a chat with the girls to join us. Through through a friend at the station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1933</strong></td>
<td><strong>1933</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only thing that we note is that the car ship is under the bridge in the station. Only one line to the station.</td>
<td>Do all the richest while my. Love is for you. Moss. There will be the dinner at the station. That such a world there’s under the bridge in the station. That we see a popular there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1933</strong></td>
<td><strong>1933</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dull a.m. Staying in P.M. Curbing. Time. Entrance at Club tonight. I happened 6 Rose Camp Chapter. Memos. This is in some manner or 11:00. Immovable scenery. scenery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1934</strong></td>
<td><strong>1934</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailed reply to H. C. Last night. Cardinal Monday we had a pleasant one. Up &amp; Stance in the evening. But the preferred her for a chat dinner together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APRIL 3**

| 1930 | Give of the little today. Now I shall... |
| 1931 | She shall be to keep life so bright... |
| 1932 | She shall be kept from the world... |

**APRIL 4**

| 1933 | Three letters, greetings and sending... |
| 1934 | They are painful. Serene... |
| 1935 | And the whole... |

**APRIL 5**

| 1936 | All the walls and floor of... |
| 1937 | The warm, cool nights feel good... |

**APRIL 6**

| 1938 | Have new curtains to make some... |
| 1939 | We have... |
| 1940 | And the return does not come... |

**239**
April 7

1932. How difficult it is for me to write about my life. When I was young, things were much simpler. Now I have so many things to do and so little time. I wish I could afford to go back to the way of life.

1935. I had a wonderful letter from Alfred Grady. He wrote about his trip to Europe. I wish I could afford to go back to Europe. I miss the freedom of travel.

April 8

1932. So many old friends write and say how much they miss me. They write about how much they love me.

1933. I feel so happy and excited. I wish I could afford to go back to the way of life.

April 9

1932. Write a long letter expressing my thoughts and feelings. Sometimes I get so busy that I forget to write. I wish I could write more.

April 10

1932. I gave a long letter. I felt so busy that I didn't get to write. I wish I could write more. I wish I could afford to go back to the way of life.

1933. May 10. I went to church. I missed the services. I miss the freedom of travel.
APRIL 11


1933. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crook-Virginia. Used to be a member of the Drama Committee. Miss A. Crok...
APRIL 15

1932 - Last night of the play. A family dinner. Not all the good things are prompts, but we took some thought and time. So good of time.

1933 - We had a big dinner, but we didn't get it. Not much. We went to a play. No, not much. We had a big dinner. A call party tonight.

APRIL 16

1932 - Happy, happy, happy! It is so nice to have a few. We went to a play. We spent so much time! We had a big dinner. We called party tonight. It was lovely.

1933 - Happy, happy, happy! It is so nice to have a few. We went to a play. We spent so much time! We had a big dinner. We called party tonight. It was lovely.

APRIL 17

1932 - In our last letter, we had a big dinner. It was lovely! We spent so much time! We had a big dinner. We called party tonight. It was lovely.

1933 - Happy, happy, happy! It is so nice to have a few. We went to a play. We spent so much time! We had a big dinner. We called party tonight. It was lovely.

APRIL 18

1932 - Room to 'B' and had a treatment with the grateful I am for them. Such a much better they have made one feel. Now everything wonder so to get a worth while work in life.

1933 - Room to 'B' and had a treatment with the grateful I am for them. Such a much better they have made one feel. Now everything wonder so to get a worth while work in life.

1934 - Left today for York to Portsmouth. Went to see Warden with Miss Fitch. Miss Fitch will see at Warden to a parcel for Connie. Connie and Paul Graham went to Portsmouth. Art S. Will. Graham?
APRIL 19

1922. At the service tonight we saluted the flag as usual. After the service, I went over into the gym of the famous gym right almost ruined by the flash. Then we went on down to the church and talked with the pastor and some of the children. I had a good time there.

1923. Discussed the possibility of starting a new church tonight. I do not know what will happen, but it looks like it may be possible.

1924. Went to church tonight at about 8 o'clock. Mrs. Graham is coming with us. We had a good time there. I had a great time there. I was glad to see some friends.

1925. Spent the evening talking with friends. I had a great time there. I was glad to see some friends.

APRIL 20

1922. Today I did not have any church service. I spent the day at home. I had a great time there.

1923. Discussed the possibility of starting a new church tonight. I do not know what will happen, but it looks like it may be possible.

1924. Went to church tonight at about 8 o'clock. Mrs. Graham is coming with us. We had a good time there. I had a great time there. I was glad to see some friends.

1925. Spent the evening talking with friends. I had a great time there. I was glad to see some friends.

APRIL 21

1922. Did not attend church service today. I spent the day at home. I had a great time there.

1923. Discussed the possibility of starting a new church tonight. I do not know what will happen, but it looks like it may be possible.

1924. Went to church tonight at about 8 o'clock. Mrs. Graham is coming with us. We had a good time there. I had a great time there. I was glad to see some friends.

1925. Spent the evening talking with friends. I had a great time there. I was glad to see some friends.

APRIL 22

1922. Did not attend church service today. I spent the day at home. I had a great time there.

1923. Discussed the possibility of starting a new church tonight. I do not know what will happen, but it looks like it may be possible.

1924. Went to church tonight at about 8 o'clock. Mrs. Graham is coming with us. We had a good time there. I had a great time there. I was glad to see some friends.

1925. Spent the evening talking with friends. I had a great time there. I was glad to see some friends.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APRIL 23</th>
<th>APRIL 24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932: The morning's drive was quiet, but the house seemed quite constant. I felt like I had just returned after a trip.</td>
<td>1934: Real sense of fellowship at Prayer Meeting tonight. Thought the Holy Spirit was at work. Snowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APRIL 27</td>
<td>APRIL 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1933</strong></td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Did not see Paul today as he was very busy. Sometimes I got lonely. The week was ending and I was just starting a new one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1934</strong></td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The vet had me at noon, cleaned out that big nest! Alleged to be full of eggs. (
| 19 | Got the little red "Lincoln Rock" today. Didn't start any "sentimental" Good-bye to Redgutter. Left at 7:30! |
| **1935** | 1937 |
| 19 | Lovely warm day through. |
MAY 1

1932 Church service. Home over with Mama & Papa to see if we could plan for the wedding. Important thing to me was that I have had one of those rainy afternoons.

1933 I was by my bed to write until the night because I have seen my friend then and all so well. Then left. The floor was a very lovely apartment. Traveling in tent. My health is good. Playing on grass. Child's picture: Evening. Myself playing at school. Tonight.

1934 Have seen it now. Margaret, tonight. Her life. We played around. Dad in hospital. We received good news.

1935

MAY 2

1932 She had a school dance yesterday and Father and I went to see it and one day to watch the matches. She was smiling as she played the matches. She was smiling as she played the matches. She was smiling as she played the matches. She was smiling as she played the matches.

1933 We went to see a show. The girls did not play. The girls did not play. The girls did not play. The girls did not play.

1934 We have had the weather so fine. We have had the weather so fine. We have had the weather so fine. We have had the weather so fine.

1935

MAY 3

1932 Again I was very busy. I was not writing. But I was. I was not writing. I was not writing.

1933 I can't understand this. If I can't understand this. If I can't understand this.

1934 She gave me the address of the place where we were to meet. She gave me the address of the place where we were to meet. She gave me the address of the place where we were to meet.

1935

MAY 4

1932 I was not writing a letter. I was not writing a letter. I was not writing a letter.

1933 I was writing a letter. I was writing a letter.

1934 I was writing a letter. I was writing a letter.

1935
MAY 5

1932: Something must have been accumulating in my system for I was perfectly sick but well until Alum came from the Red Rocks. Oh, what! After having been so excited for the past two or three weeks, I am suddenly unwell. Perhaps I have taken a turn for the worse.

1935: Went to Church with the family. We had a very solemn service. I did not cry, but the others did. I hope it was not because I was tired.

MAY 6

1932: This was such a beautiful little book in which I observed and listened. I have read it, and it moved me. The pace of life seems slow in my life these days.

1934: Was supposed to have a party last night, but it was not successful. We had a few people, but they disappeared after a while.

1935: Went to Church all day. Much better but shaky.

MAY 7

1932: Invited all over the place for a long for Alum’s Graduation. Present from the day before. Her May be a show for the evening, but I stayed home. Made some plans for the day.

1934: To all Church services. Spent the afternoon looking over my last two weeks’ books on journalism. I hope that they are useful and helpful.

1935: The house is filled with difficulties sometimes I carry on with my writing work amid all the noise and confusion. Let’s try again tomorrow.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAY 9</th>
<th>MAY 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit to the Banwell Civic at Morris's and when I came around I found there were several to catch. I take on most safe. He very</td>
<td>Laureate's Graduation day. May to the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAY 13

1932. Had an accident that brought me home quickly from the hospital. Mrs. J. B. Ramsey brought me back this evening.

1933. Will not see the dinner today but in the evening. Reason for that being that my right eye was bandaged from the surgery.

1934. Left wonderful to see how quickly the bandages were taken out of the eyes. It is 9:30 and time to go to bed.

MAY 14

1932. Back from the hospital and we just spent a fine weekend together. Brief talk about what we called two windows. Coming home he told me the story of 'If Winter Comes.' Later he called me on the phone space home for the little black father.

1933. Went with me to church tonight. I went up for a short while after church with Mabel. Saw Ruth Wallace there.

1934. Very tired when I left the church but a lovely night. Bed time was bed. Mabel baked for a lesson in copying Mallard tonight.

MAY 15

1932. Early to this morning and saw J. B. that slipped in the snow. What a wonderful time in the evening with them yesterday.

1933. What a sweet evening drive. Road was smooth. Told him about my teaching and such a beautiful scene this evening. In the presentation for Harold. Purchased a book.

MAY 16

1932. May 16 this evening and saw J. B. that slipped in the snow. What a wonderful time in the evening with them yesterday.

1933. What a sweet evening drive. Road was smooth. Told him about my teaching and such a beautiful scene this evening. In the presentation for Harold. Purchased a book.
1932. Routine at work. Do their practice tonight. Must be home with one afterwards. Went to 11th when I walked to 31st Street with her.

1933. went to Prayer Meeting. Very interesting service at the Early Church. Mrs. MacKenzie was little Sunday at her home (Greenbush School).

1934. No prayer meeting tonight. Just a brief drive with the one and only tonight.

1932. Sunday Mass. Very pleasant. Our friends, the MacKenzie's, were with us. Didn't stay long.

1933. Homeward at work. Took a trip on the 31st Street. Frequent on the town at Bridgeport. Spent a lot of time. Miss McFarlin was at her church with a lovely crowd of people. Went to church all day as usual. Came home right off the church and got ready for whatever else tomorrow.


1935. This meant such a good day. I felt far from the oppressive heat of the day. Enjoyed the pleasant surroundings. Was my best shirt suit the usual for a week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAY 21</th>
<th>MAY 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving office at 11 had lunch in town then spent a perfect hour washing and baking some bread in the kitchen and cleaned up and went to a summer before returning.</td>
<td>Going to little tennis by along with a note. Miss M give up on the game as a delightful surprise for 4 a.m. went together. I was quite tired after the tennis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday with the sound of sweet music Listened at Miss G who we discussed to and wrote my twelve small pages. I worked all afternoon right after cleaning service.</td>
<td>Unprepared at the office today. Had a little problem with papers for two sessions. Miss P and Miss Postage with Miss F and Miss Moore in the union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home report. Washing being white washed. Spent the evening doing and writing song this morning.</td>
<td>Up to Wabel’s to supper. Read “Poor Splendid Wings.” Miss me unexpectedly brought me home &amp; left me getting well. I was still working that night.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAY 23</th>
<th>MAY 24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To office where I received a wonderful letter. Then to the practicum and drove around town. Home at 11 p.m. and went to bed.</td>
<td>Up to the store. Worked all a.m. to 8 p.m. talked to My in Mr. King’s room at home of quiet thought and meditation tonight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 9 a.m., work, evening. Left a long time with new taught. All three floors wired. Operation. Hall stay, another pretty evening. Carrying on with me a bit of performance continue.</td>
<td>Worked at putting my card in to order. Cooking dinner &amp; staying in bed. Talked till 2 a.m. Worked on of business. Business, etc. At home all day, up late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Roger Working with Miss M. Johnson. Mr. Mac this thought while washing the dishes this evening stepped to suppers.</td>
<td>Holiday. Miss Bored. Laundry. May 19th Capital. Miss two also. Home left. Before from town this a.m. Expected around this evening.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAY 29
1932. My conception of our Church has changed. But let me not change. I think.
19
1932. I am down to the service room tonight and saw the perfect beauty of the whole-
19
1932. thing that flashed. I placed them in the glass and talked together of the things we re-
19
1932. solved.
19
MAY 30
1932. I was down to the Church and talked about the boys today. In preparing for
19
1932. tonight everyone helped. I was glad
19
1932. that they were together. One thing for which I am
19
1932. very thankful was the advice they gave me concerning the boys.
19
1932. This was a stirring talk tonight on
19
1932. Sunday's temper in the world.
19
MAY 31
1932. I had such a wonderful treatment from [illegible] and we had such a wonderful
19
1932. communion in our ephism of thought for the future.
19
1932. I had a prayer meeting and the
19
1932. study of the "Early Church" from Acts on
19
1932. our evening together we
19
1932. went. I got my little wooden toy completed.
19
1932. finished and set up in my room. Well always
19
1932. keep it as a token of time spent. I hope these words
19
1932. will be near my bed a year and many years.
19
JUNE 1
1933. I didn't go to church meeting tonight. I was
19
1933. home and talked to them about the first of the Lord's Sunday a.m. sermon.
19
1933. We passed the time to the Church track and I'm glad I was there that the
19
1933. weather was of little help.
19
1934. Sold the trunk to Miss [illegible] and got it to
19
1934. Harmonic. Miss [illegible] was my companion in the [illegible] tonight. After the fruit it was "By
19
1934. Nature's Grace" and had tea.
19
JUNE 2

1932. Up to Mrs. Monrow for supper. discourse with her.
1933. M — after supper. Walked in the park for a few moments at night.
1934. Stayed late. May 1st was our last visit.

JUNE 3

1932. This holiday being quiet we stayed up late. Went and spent the night at the Hotel.
1933. Celebrated the holiday by going to hear the concert and the children while the parents went to see the concert in another city.
1934. Beautiful quiet day and my mind is at rest. 'Took a rest.

JUNE 4

1932. Saturday. In the evening Mr. and Mrs. Johnson came all the way from St. Paul.
1933. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson came all the way from St. Paul.

JUNE 5

1932. All day Mr. and Mrs. Johnson came all the way from St. Paul.
1933. Wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Johnson from St. Paul.
1934. Wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Johnson from St. Paul.
JUNE 6

1932. Had a wonderful treatment tonight. Have certainly made me feel better. Left at 10:30 & had B go to Portsmouth.

1933. Took Mr. & Mrs. L. & Mrs. A. to see my new place. Beautiful, home at 250.00. Wish the land could have been rented.

1934. Mary & D. & Bankett at our good friend there. Whaled & smoked. About the hidden year in jar. Left Miss & Mr. & Mrs. Bankett.

1935. Mary fell today on the steps & hurt her leg.

JUNE 7

1932. Their supper & entertainment. Had a few words of music for the first time since she came down from the year.

1933. Was surprised at being in such a state last night after having such a short supper last night. Stayed in until 9 pm. Both J. & L. are home from work.

1934. Finished up steps for Mr. & Mrs. B. for this time of year. Saw Mr. & Mrs. B. for breakfast. Got up late this morning the first for some time.

1935. Tony helped down just leaving when I arrived home for supper.

JUNE 8

1932. Mary, Marshall to see Nola. Drive to Polvay. Marshall & had a drive home.

1933. Scrubbing & grandson on the Rocks. All up & went into front rooms to change.

1934. Saw Dr. A. this a.m. Added 7 is my best & lovely morning of all. Mary & I were out this evening but in came around 9:30 & went into the kitchen. Dr. Polvay & I were in the kitchen.

1935. Left & was. Goal for a conference at the church next week. Went to Simonson this back & fell over.

JUNE 9

1932. Stayed with my brother last night. They worked all evening. To many small jobs that I could not stay over to view the sky but it was very beautiful about 10:30. When I retired.


1934. Dr. Polvay & used grandchildren today. Would have missed them. Will see them this evening. They had a great deal when I left last night.

1935. Dr. Graham & Mr. St. John preaching at North Church today.
JUNE 10

1932. Unforgettable drive to Dornoch. 
1933. Summer rains made no other happening of 
the day. Such a black, dead, Presbyterian day. 
1934.Saturday came right home from the 
office. Heard the radio by phone. Boy had left 
home. Felt wonderful assurance of our unbreakab 
everything'll been. 
1935. A trip to the Old Stello Hotel 
this morn. To play for their service, 
instead of Mr. and Mrs. who said not with 
Nancy. But took me there - thought we had 

JUNE 11

1939. Had a wonderful Saturday. I was with a 
1943. Lord's love, once to Dartmouth. Thought 

JUNE 12

1939. Children's Day Programme at Sunday School. 
1943. To buy, Bravin's beat a white 

JUNE 13

1939. Hot day. Clues to Dartmouth. Thought 
1943. Ah, as love. It's you, God. And my heart asked you more 

256
JUNE 14

1931. One thing I am very grateful for: the courage to face life alone. I have never seen God in this. But the hint remains that he should choose it as. Perhaps time will show its

1933. Join to prayer meeting. Mr. Burt

1934. Tired as good. Brought me a good, box of assorted paper Internet. They left at the shop. First it was quiet.

1935. The last lovely and sunny day exist. The world turned Books have become and the hope of watching

JUNE 15

1931. Beautiful warm days and plenty of sunshine. First day of fishing. Part of the beauty surrounded me, and beauty confuted me.

1934. These days alone in the office gave me an excellent opportunity to leave a letter. Prepared for another day. I had no doubt that each day

1935. Was so wished the late getting this work's lunch is not. This is not been arranged for in the office. The long rest was, and not with a little overwork rejected.

JUNE 16


1935. Wrote a letter this a.m. So much to report after lunch and we went out to our guest room. Will not date the letter. The place is wonderful. We went out to a good and

1936. This book in his world; created

1937. This book in his world; created

JUNE 17

1932. Saw p. from 3-5 p.m. in the office. Other times I have heard me. Do I mean understand or understand to such an extent, that something

1933. Do we have this for a good moment of

1934. Mr. Wallace's Mr. Ely at his house tonight. Had not felt p.m. At home.

1935. This book in his world; created a series of pictures on Morning's

1936. This book in his world; created a series of pictures on Morning's
June 18

1932. I believe gave one this night to beautiful drive around Waverly as a trip for the fact that we 110 ed and 110 on the meeting.

1933. I gave on a wonderful feature to today for which I feel particularly grateful at this time. We had 110 ed tonight to 110 ed to 110 ed with 110 ed temper.

1934. Sometimes the office scene subsided and speed of feel I am creating something worthy. Remember be a dead help too on this thing.

1935. Two weeks tonight places upon pole on the 110 ed to improve the right by 110 ed early.

June 19

1932. Summer thumps end for the first time this season in tonight's remorse.

1933. We had a 110 ed of iron and 110 ed it out of the house.

1934. A rather depressing mood captured me today as weather is the Garish tonight HS and Holbert.

June 20

1932. My hand is a little heavy and belief this day that I am coming into a better and yet more growing united attitude to the soil and the folk. I am the only one you own to.

1933. Mrs. S. called long before 110 ed to the garden. 110 ed to the special. I am the only one you own to.

1934. Holiday. We had a period of being. We were then on the field.

1935. Two weeks tonight places upon pole on the 110 ed to improve the right by 110 ed early.
June 22

1932. You are glad that I did not let anything interfere with my noon visit. I really need one and I need sleep.

1933. I took my mul this a.m. He has a new worm borer - bought by George. The worm was left at the house, battery, and garage. 2:00 p.m. I spent a very happy, untroubled day. I must leave that of house duties as soon.

1934. First of our lunch time together at Barrow Cove. Prepared Smacks whole wheat bread, coffee, and a taste of good eaten together. Had my first remittent of this season together. Home about 4 o'clock. She took me to Paballo, where before we parted for the day.

June 23

1932. One of those unbroken with spells of speed or quickness. And the food on a half of a table in the right quick time for quick eating.

1933. What a perfect day! What a wonderful time. Most remarkably fatigued.

1934. Started at Sunday School. Three, around three.

1935. Sun: Sunday. The predicted this a.m. on Christmas Day well the confusion of his Queen Mary a end of service. Baptism tonight.

June 24

1932. This evening was the fullness of God's wonderful. When I cannot use food it would seem be working quietly along.

1933. Sunday. Spent the p.m with and after Church. She was sitting for me and took a walk. Then home, took some coffee to bed.

June 25

1932. Thank God faith and hope seem to be lingering in the depths once more. These reading p.m's have helped them recover.

1933. Mother took 2 o'clock for the first of the Jesus Mary in the old ladies home. She lives there with her sisters and cousins but has a wonderful sound.
June 30

1932. The evening it was quite a greeting. Thank you to the Long Island Club. The band played, regatta. Names are Gerät. We had trouble putting our life on a boat. It was difficult.

1933. Today was the usual wedding anniversary. I was all right. We had to plan for tomorrow's lesson. Saw the wedding hospital.

1934. Chose from the beach at York Beach. Wonderful time with blue flag and the blue ocean. We made preparations for tomorrow's lesson. Saw it from the hospital.

July 1

1934. Today brought a very small, precious gift. It was golden. Never before forgotten. Precious. How sweet that coming week together. The anniversary of our first gift.

1934. Congregations rather dim by the church. My health was back home in church. My sling. We were two after church tonight.

1934. A visit to my doctors. The services of North Street and West Parish were wonderful. Great attendance at both services. Very much change for the month.

July 2

1934. Saw J. for a few moments at noon. Changed tracts. Rusty to Bungalow. I had to read. Late afternoon, we decided. Read to a gift, before retiring. We had a day for the beach.


July 3


[July 4 - 5 blank]
**JULY 6**

1932: Our P.M. and choir practice afterward.

1933: Here on the grassy slopes by "J," we had our third Picnic Luncheon. Hustled yet to get coffee and canned fruit salad. Fish was, surprising and hard delicious at fish. Went out afterwards. Then post treatment by then the drive back to the city.

1934: Enjoyed a wonderful hour with my new document boy. Filled each envelope letter in as carefully and neatly as they were the original agreements.

1935: After having some dance we went next around the lake, the next walk and misted in a quietly quiet place. Back to the city at our second time.

1936: Had returned my suit down early one week we were arrived of that attended a presentation some fresh laundry for yourself.

**JULY 7**

1932: Mama's Birthday tomorrow. Ask O. gave her a very pretty flower card. Book the little blue proof document boy to I.

1933: In Dr. J.'s office after work today but now strange I felt. Cannot capture the old feeling of such a careful accurate with him. In love of sage, I am 

1934: Should have been of union service at attendance at the ball. We switched record of this into for some curious. And, some of the Church tonight.

1935: Enjoyed a wonderful hour with my new document boy. Filled each envelope letter in as carefully and neatly as they were the original agreements.

1936: After having some dance we went next around the lake, the next walk and misted in a quietly quiet place. Back to the city at our second time.

1937: Had returned my suit down early one week we were arrived of that attended a presentation some fresh laundry for yourself.
JULY 10

1932. Thought it very good to have it in my 65th class and to see venge
1932. Still prof. of the office. Was
time and he had to eat all the times.
1932. Received a letter in the mail.
1932. Sent the mail and the letter in the mail.
1932. Read the mail and the letter in the mail.

JULY 11

1932. Still prof. of the office. 
1932. Received a letter in the mail.
1932. Sent the mail and the letter in the mail.
1932. Read the mail and the letter in the mail.
1932. Sent the mail and the letter in the mail.

JULY 12

1932. Very dull day for work. 
1932. Received a letter in the mail.
1932. Sent the mail and the letter in the mail.
1932. Read the mail and the letter in the mail.
1932. Sent the mail and the letter in the mail.

JULY 13

1932. Received a letter in the mail.
1932. Sent the mail and the letter in the mail.
1932. Read the mail and the letter in the mail.
1932. Sent the mail and the letter in the mail.
1932. Read the mail and the letter in the mail.
JULY 14

1932. No Choir practice Down to the office to give of a treatment for that awful cold. Still had some early. I got a good night's rest.

1933. Laying to rest a while. Met the calling at the office for one, thought this went over the time, but thought we were waiting, but there was no call.

1934. Spent the rest of the time in the office.

JULY 15

1932. So cold. A good deal better, but still feels miserable.

1939. Not sure just where I went. Such a beautiful sight in the sky, with a long train this p.m. Beautiful, beautiful view. Gathered some dinner, took a walk for the Church, foresaw the thing took some time.

1935. Stopped the Redford Road. Did a patient and I went alone. We had a beautifully peaceful, heart-warming little chat together.

JULY 16

1932. Had some horrible unreasonable blow today. Not a patient all, and had a visit. My doctor came to see me. He gave me these dear lines:

'Oh, what a weary world, and weary, weary life!"

1933. The exchanged Juliette with the story of electrolith tonight. Met over after Church. Passed one up. Some returning from county party, the same May. Watched a church service very, very quiet.

1934. Have wanted to type my story, 'The City of God.' I never should have found time yet. I just have to do them. But the Sundays have never taken up enough space to write.
JULY 18

1932. Connie Smith's wedding. Up late last night. From the wedding scene to the wedding office. After the wedding scene with friends. Carse May for first time to the wedding office.

1933. Speaking of the picture of church work and how we married sometimes for I do not have the energy to have to keep everything in order.

JULY 19

1933. After work early. Helped May with some writing. Went to the yard. May and I to the store. May and I to the store. Spent a few moments later with g. as he was going to see.

1934. Saw Mr. and Mrs. and we got talking about ourselves. There are not that many.

JULY 20

1933. Weather not very nice.

JULY 21

1934. The end of a week of observance. The Lord has been with us. There were some steps with him. He was very great and grateful.

1935. Busy on observations. Thrice My God is there. It is a beautiful one. On the 1st considerable time to consider and copy. Not quite finished yet.

265
### JULY 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1932</th>
<th>In all evening &amp; helping cuddle make a warm quilt for kids. In the evening spoke to Aunt &amp; got some ice cream.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Sister is going to see the Johnson's picture shows. Received of Mrs. Miles many nice cards. Were very welcome but for the poor time.&lt;input&gt; &lt;input&gt; &lt;input&gt; &lt;input&gt; &lt;input&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Beautiful card postcard from Mrs. Today, such a brief cannot help but feel that such a kind person is a dear friend. Checked up blue cap room.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### JULY 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1932</th>
<th>Did up after 3 PM and received a big package of lovely new cloth. It is beautiful but how the thought can take so I hope to start sewing it soon.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Decided today that he must go to the general tomorrow. Got a beautiful present yesterday. Spent a wonderful time tonight spending &amp; serving in other gifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>My last night of being &amp; thank God it was fine from the awful house turned after the last two weeks. John Shepherd is just the evening visiting with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>My last trip to the rocky, each at 4. A snack of eggs and sandwiches. Performance tonight. Beautiful evening in a quiet day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### JULY 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1932</th>
<th>My Birthday. Such a lovely one - several nice surprises. Supper at Memorial House. Pretty cake arranged for me. It seemed like a little girl just party.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>G &amp; Milton &amp; Mr. Miles finished. Called May &amp; A. Bridgewater &amp; said she was welcomed. However, she talked about town. There was no one. Talked here for a long time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Climbed up to my room on Saturday for Sunday Birthday Pears. Cards lovely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### JULY 29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1932</th>
<th>Wrote two little poems lunch time. Had three 5.0 on our trip to Westmore tonight. Had lovely dinner home and had lovely.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>And I saw some of Emily today and enjoyed an hour quiet and told.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Minnie gave me such a pretty card and treasure in a birthday gift &amp; a beautifully worded card &amp; all things received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Lovely birthday again. Gave from all the lovely folks - Wallace &amp; Ethel, Frances &amp; Ida. It is really Minnie's I wish her. Washed up &amp; Church things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 7</td>
<td>AUGUST 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922: Saw Mr. Smith at the office after work. He gave me a good treatment for the headache pain on my right side. I was home through the quiet darkness of the night.</td>
<td>1922: Suffering all day. Still very sore and unwell. Had done very little. Saw Dr. Smith at Smith's Downtown. The pain is less this evening. To be together, called me. Take all this now. How could I?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

```
AUGUST 7
1922: Suffering all day. Still very sore and unwell. Saw Dr. Smith at Smith's Downtown. The pain is less this evening. To be together, called me. Take all this now. How could I?
19
19
19
```

---

```
AUGUST 8
1922: Suffering all day. Still very sore and unwell. Saw Dr. Smith at Smith's Downtown. The pain is less this evening. To be together, called me. Take all this now. How could I?
19
19
19
```

---

```
Dr. J. L. Wallace
Burt's Corner  
New Brunswick

Deaths
Aug. 9, 1922
```

---

270
AUGUST 9

1933

Have been busy these days getting caught up with all the appointments and work at lunch. Have waited upon a very important client for their approval. Written several estimates for the work. Came home very late.

1933

Off this a.m. I woke suddenly at 0 a.m. and then learned that they were expecting us at the Country Club. Came home very late.

19

AUGUST 10

1933

No Bayne meeting. Went down to wind through Townsend, a little drive afterwards. Went to the beach home and got home very late. Came home very late.

1933

W. Goldson back this a.m. Drove to a.m. harvest.

19

AUGUST 11

1933

Convention opened tonight. Rain began again, all reducing as they say it. I went to lunch hour and was called for dinner and met Mayor John D. at the Green. Lunch at the Green. Met Mayor John D. in the office. There is nothing much done. What to do next? Letter to Mrs. Y tonight.

19

AUGUST 12

1933

Goin' down to wind through Townsend. I am away to the Beach and be back in the morning. Left Mayor John D. to lunch at the Green. Met Mayor John D. in the office.

1933

Starting our two-week vacation. Left tonight via all out and were over the first day. To the beach. I am au courant with the great selfish environment for a while.
### AUGUST 13

1925: The poem Touched to the American Home by Sullivan, with such touching sentiment, it makes one feel such a failure in life. God grant courage to go on in the midst of defeat.

1933: Spent this am in the country, worshipped there truly and gratefully, lay outside the tent and pray. Prayed that God would help us in our difficult and cruel situation.

1934: Have a baby girl. Born in Thursday last.

### AUGUST 14

1922: Called Dr. and Dr. Saurie in to the office for a few moments. If I did come to life what have I given up to life. Are you afraid with him this pm. On leaving.

1933: Lovely fine day. Picked quite a few berries. Hardy cherry this evening.

1934: Called in cake with brilliant but of some paper as I so often have wanted to do.

### AUGUST 15

1924: End of Convention here yesterday. So many lovely appreciations of my little poems.

1933: Wore, countless days. Skilled with new for the first time. nearer home. Most expeditious this evening.

### AUGUST 16

1934: Made a new resolution. To try to adjust my life so that unnecessary things waste of energy may be eliminated. Not trying to convince others of advantage or.

1933: Recall from picture. This is by Char with music of Mr. Mac's murder.

1934: Have, best that not thought.
### AUGUST 17

- **1932**: Wrote & J. didn't go to PM. How great this week seemed! But that constant annoying pain in my neck makes me glad of a soft pillow at night.
- **1933**: Very warm day. Mr. Mack has not been here. I spent the day getting some work done at the office.

### AUGUST 18

- **1932**: Gliding very well and enjoying with headache and bladder. First I longed for it & now I have it - the presence of its size.
- **1933**: Onemarvelous home very near good. Dawn (pause & remove) I went & Aunt M. taught. Wrote Love's gift! 3:30 p.m.

### AUGUST 19

- **1932**: A very short time before the church service. I tried to go & roamed. Then I tried to get some blue & camp.
- **1935**: Missy & I went out & took Missy & took Missy & I had a blimp.

### AUGUST 20

- **1932**: Dr. Johnson back from his vacation. Get my two weeks today with the delightful news that they'll have to be with us.
- **1933**: Missy brought her out to lunch and we didn't get to the wind. Missy brought her out. Missy & Thompson took it in. Missy & brought back home tonight.
- **1934**: Made my letter, both. A strange feeling this day followed by a novel never before.
AUGUST 21

1932. Two wonderful letters from yesterday and did not go to Church at all today. Stayed in bed until three o'clock. Painted the room, and wrote letters to many people. Went to see a movie and then went home to sleep.

1933. Spent the day at home and did some gardening.

1934. Received some invitations to a party and decided to go.

AUGUST 22

1932. Had a terrible headache all day and did not want to do anything.

1933. Visited a friend and then went home to rest.

1934. Had a really good time at the party.

AUGUST 23

1932. Aunt Matie sent all the letters and said she would visit soon.

1933. Spent the day at home and read a book.

1934. Received some letters from family and friends.

AUGUST 24

1932. Letter from home today and what a lovely surprise! Received a letter from my sister, who is going to visit soon.

1933. Visited a friend and went out for dinner.

1934. Had a really good time at the party and received many invitations.
### AUGUST 25

1932. Have been working hard at my
guest house. Have to finish it while
1932. What a bangup ~

### AUGUST 26

1932. What a bangup parade of

### AUGUST 27

1932. All bustle in the family. Uncle Bob's

### AUGUST 28

1932. Had tried to keep ~

---

*Note: The text appears to be written in a cursive style, which makes some words hard to read.*

---

275
AUGUST 29

1982. Have been thinking all day that late into the night and am prepared for some home tonight. Glad we have a long weekend ahead.

AUGUST 30

1982. Have been thinking all day that late into the night and am prepared for some home tonight. Glad we have a long weekend ahead.

AUGUST 31

1982. Had a minute chat with Elsie. Saw Jack off to his through a misted glass. All done for December tonight.

SEPTEMBER 1


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>SEPTEMBER 2</th>
<th>SEPTEMBER 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 2, 1932. 9:30 a.m. Willie Clyde, a friend of my father, arrived.</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 3, 1932. 9:30 a.m. Willie Clyde, a friend of my father, arrived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He brought me some fresh flowers and other gifts.</td>
<td>He brought me some fresh flowers and other gifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 3, 1932. 12:30 p.m. I attended church.</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 3, 1932. 12:30 p.m. I attended church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prayed for my family and asked for blessings.</td>
<td>Prayed for my family and asked for blessings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 4, 1932. 7:00 p.m. I went to my friend's house.</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 4, 1932. 7:00 p.m. I went to my friend's house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We spent the evening together.</td>
<td>We spent the evening together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 5, 1932. 9:00 a.m. I attended church.</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 5, 1932. 9:00 a.m. I attended church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prayed for my family and asked for blessings.</td>
<td>Prayed for my family and asked for blessings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER 6</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922. As Johnson away from the office all day, so I cleaned up. Took good of</td>
<td>1932. First time taught an organized class. Newer was sure the kid was familiar. As he cleaned up the 2 pm. class for Mrs. Johnson, present as a volunteer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934. Stayed in and worked tonight. Changed the sheets. Work in my Spanish class. Like it very well. Indeed now that this job is completed. Some of the classes are in good condition for the winter.</td>
<td>1939. Back from S. L. Class and enjoyed teaching there. Week of my first trip was very hard. My own lack of preparation &amp; aOr</td>
<td>1936. First Sunday for full service in the church. Big crowd present as there was an exciting sermon of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SEPTEMBER 10

1932. Hy was on the outskirts of town in the office. She was there to use for her usual duties in the preparations of the church. Hy is still a faithful and dependable lady.

1934. Mr. Johnson spoke to me in the office and I have the impression that he was telling me about something important. He is a quiet and reserved man.

1935. Hy has just arrived and I have the impression that she is not the same as before. She is much more forthcoming.

SEPTEMBER 11

1932. Back again into church routine for the week. The sound of our voices filled the air. I hear the children's voices as they sing their songs. It is a beautiful day.

1934. Continued work in the office today. The day has been busy and productive.

1935. Had a pleasant conversation with Mr. Johnson. He is a pleasant and kind man.}

SEPTEMBER 12

1932. Spent the morning with Hy. She is very thoughtful and has a kind heart.

1934. Spent the morning with Mr. Johnson. He is a kind and thoughtful man.

1935. Spent the morning with Mr. Johnson. He is a kind and thoughtful man.

SEPTEMBER 13

1932. Spent the morning with Hy. She is very thoughtful and has a kind heart.

1934. Spent the morning with Mr. Johnson. He is a kind and thoughtful man.

1935. Spent the morning with Mr. Johnson. He is a kind and thoughtful man.
SEPTEMBER 14

1934 Had a very nice meal today in town. Then went out and walked by the lake, which was very pretty with water. Perfect late summer’s day and we just rested in the beauty of the countryside and the joy of being together. It was a restful and emotional time for both. Thank God I am coming out well in health, stronger attitude toward life.

SEPTEMBER 15

1934 To programming. Had a hard day, but I had to work and work it. Such a welcome rest to expand and strengthen one another’s spirit, doing nothing.

1935 If I had this very nice new seat that today’s we went down to hands down, and on the rocks by the stream. Saw the beautiful graceful seagulls. But by their wings, loomed, saw the white spray against the clean white face of the gulls rock. Amazed the idea, took some rest.

1935 Was quietly in church today, listening to. Have decided to take a new avenue while it is requested it.

SEPTEMBER 16

1934 Made quite a circuit around town. The old house was in good condition and we found pleasant. Didn’t expect that it would be so pleasant.

1935 All of our best wishes to the boat. It brought me home delicious to eat. It was a good place to get a bunch of fragrant flowers.

SEPTEMBER 17

1935 Thought I got on the return pretty well. Today, have immediately after church. Just to spend my lonely. Gave up picking at the piano.

1934 Had home tonight, wish I was having anyone to see back was melted in thought.

1935 The thought I got on the return pretty well. Today, have immediately after church. Just to spend my lonely. Gave up picking at the piano.
SEPTEMBER 18

1923. A cold. Some fever present.

1924. In the middle of this rainy rainy day

1925. This whole week I have had

1926. to do nothing in the evenings but

1927. read myself. Have tried to gather

1928. up these loose ends of my life

1929. and see them in order. Received

1930. a lovely little letter from some

1931. girl friend. Kept busy making

1932. some mat which I nearly completed.

1933. The 19th 5th of the

SEPTEMBER 19

1922. Saw 4 at 8:00 p.m. I had to

1923. go in after the ball of dancing was

1924. over. Which just seemed to

1925. have a confidential talk tonight.

1926. I met a friend on the way as about

1927. seeing Mary last night. Someone had

1928. been a little ill. I just said why I

1929. cannot explain but I could not point a finger.

1930. Lovely sunny warm Thursday.

1931. A boy on a date. A date off Young Women

1932. This and together we spent a little time at

1933. the club at the newly opened Little Red

1934. off Mary. Only a try in the 10th of tickets. Does off Shiloh and good

SEPTEMBER 20

1925. Miss Home from Ranger. Made

1926. an effort to forget all business

1927. and enjoy some good time and have

1928. both and talk.

1929. To Ranger Meeting Miss

1930. Aro Johnson there with all the boys. Came right home. Read some

1931. of Magnificent Eleanor. Good book

SEPTEMBER 21

1932. Made a date tonight and we

1933. had an hour together and communed

1934. with our still quiet Eleanor.

1935. She took me to my flat

1936. home so that I might clear the carpet

1937. up for another. And good bye. To say well

1938. with the Agamemnon of my anticipations

1939. that with the Intermediate
SEPTEMBER 22

1935. Why should I be shaken if the cause of Israel being set free in
promises is completed? For mine which I am now to deliver to others
as a promise, I am with my father, for I have been put to sleep
so that I may sleep more than for myself. If I have self-sentience
now, I need goodnight. Then my alone.

1934. Down the St. Margaret's Bay Road.
A little sheltered and shaded. But
tree. North very dark. Did everything.
I incorporated for our return to duty.

SEPTEMBER 23

1938. Good wonderful treat today.
Climb up with great emotion. At the
breakfast, yet so many. I am alone.
As I thought, it was a dream. Feeling
and experience each other's. I am
be with him for a full show in such
an atmosphere of beauty's degrees.

SEPTEMBER 24

1932. Spent till 5 p.m. with a. Wonderful
bit of the last. I think another might be his choice. Give me his confidence that
of about Kathleen MacRitchie.

1935. Fished as the he were leisurely
enjoyed today both scenes. The join in
round and low and very much in the water.
But God that he desired may be won.

SEPTEMBER 25

1932. Had another a poor night last. God
fave give me peace today. May love be
and and steadfast. Of that I am the least.
Sure. What ever we do feel God is with me.
SEPTEMBER 26

1934. Saw S. lunch hour and be read
me another note from Kathleen. Made S. bring
me back to lunch time. I think it's better
that I see him in the morning and not when
we're eating, though I warn him of this when
I see him. Have to walk from car to house
to get him to work.

SEPTEMBER 27

1932. All these difficulties that come
in make me realize that a little
must roll away without me
triumphantly doing
something. How
much more
something.

1934. Wrote a letter from	b

SEPTEMBER 28

1932. Stormy rain out tonight so
we made some typecar of copier.

1939. Way down in our little
roadside house, almost to Harrisburg. Stopped
there for a while, then continued
arriving down a road, crossed road
and came to a small
village. Began rain. Then rounded back
for thirty miles.SENT the evening at
village. Takes a lot o
**SEPTEMBER 30**

1933. Such an interview this pm with a certain woman (can I degrade that noble term?). She was so kind and frank that I was afraid I might fall in love. But afterwards I was so glad I didn't.

1933. What a glorious autumn landscape! Only saw this Saturday p.m. as we drove through the Harrisville Road. Stopped at one spot for a rest. It was quite beautiful.

1934. To all Church services, Mrs. J. and myself.

1934. Went for a long walk about the countryside this noon. It seemed so close.

**OCTOBER 1**

1932. Sat in the a.m. and listened to Sermons. The Church was so lovely. But after the sermon I felt depressed. In the evening I had a party. We had quite a good time.

1933. Promotional Play in L. of N. H. for Intermediate girls. Heard from one of the girls by phone. This afternoon I had tea at home.

1933. Went to church service, Mrs. J. and myself.

1934. Went for a long walk about the countryside this morning.

**OCTOBER 2**

1932. Sat in the a.m. and listened to Sermons. The Church was so lovely. But after the sermon I felt depressed. In the evening I had a party. We had quite a good time.

1933. Promotional Play in L. of N. H. for Intermediate girls. Heard from one of the girls by phone. This afternoon I had tea at home.

1934. Went to church service, Mrs. J. and myself.

1933. Went for a long walk about the countryside this morning.

**OCTOBER 3**

1932. Sat in the a.m. and listened to Sermons. The Church was so lovely. But after the sermon I felt depressed. In the evening I had a party. We had quite a good time.

1933. Promotional Play in L. of N. H. for Intermediate girls. Heard from one of the girls by phone. This afternoon I had tea at home.

1934. Went to church service, Mrs. J. and myself.

1933. Went for a long walk about the countryside this morning.

1934. Sat in the a.m. and listened to Sermons. The Church was so lovely. But after the sermon I felt depressed. In the evening I had a party. We had quite a good time.

1934. Promotional Play in L. of N. H. for Intermediate girls. Heard from one of the girls by phone. This afternoon I had tea at home.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCTOBER 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932 Saw Lt this a.m. and again at 2 p.m. What a time of mental training this past week has been for us both. Adieu to Lt today. Met him this evening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933 Lt's mother came, failed to see him. He brought all home at me a little. Went to exhibition with Lt. Sent a wonderful time. Lt on me, receive time. Tonight, all was well this evening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934 I did not lose their last last night. Got real trouble maker today, gave me a wonderful treatment. Brought me home, called for drink, drink. They bought up stream.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCTOBER 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932 Thank God for three early a.m. communications! Gaz a few moments of His presence is a joy and blessing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935 Wastate of work tonight had Lt caught me when they were gone. Started the lecture &quot;Triumph over Doubt&quot; tonight. Had a wonderful treatment today.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCTOBER 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1935 Very rainy we decided showers all day. This morning, coming from the office I met a girl with auyen. He had them driven up by Lt. And then our little drive home. The current which was as close around and a short telephone conversation completed our commission for today. Supper tonight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCTOBER 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1935 They had the rain business today. But after my lunch, he went to the inn and where I saw a fellow, Roquemore, out. He left it and he went to his car and then we talked. The rain business was not in this. We visited Richard wherever we were and remained. The time of a high place and went on to sleep over in my bed. It being a very pleasant atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1923</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Sunday as teacher of Sunday School exchanged with Mr. Will of Essex St. tonight. Received the reminder received in today's news about keeping gratitude in our heart. While tonight's service ministered to spiritual needs because I feel barely. Because they may be my two words might be a challenge, sending thing to town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>286</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[October 10 – 13 blank]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCTOBER 14</th>
<th>OCTOBER 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1923</strong></td>
<td><strong>1972</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, the afternoon on which we feel that a full house of relaxation and delightful companionship may be ours. This should be our time when we start out both some day we seem to have returned to live ages before we began our homeward trip. The afternoon was long with falling sun, as gorgeously beautiful.</td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

286
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| OCTOBER 16 | 1932. Took the Golden Sunday School today. Church got and look back. As at times all humbleness has seemed to fail me utterly. God has supplied my need. 1933. But oh, I am afraid that I 
|           | greed. Have taught here for many years. Today the Lord. Still don't want to go anymore. Without self and love sacrifice today. 1934. In night service, oh, how different. Now Barrett of Woodville & & Capital Church. The sit in crowd back & yes,. Pray for them. We have, heavenly help can take him. |
| OCTOBER 17 | 1932. Word today. That Emma Wright died last night. She had everything & love for what amount. I had gone instead. I wonder if it would be the solution of all this world. 1933. He has given me so much that there is a feeling of belonging to a world & completely & home. Still let's had always been, & have. I must believe that God has a purpose for us. 1934. |
| OCTOBER 18 | 1932. Came to Dartmouth with a lot of very money. Oh, this long gone thing & do something full of joy & happiness to never hold. Who has the future. 1933. Night of the Annual Dinner. Meeting at the Church, so stayed home and finished up. The Sundays service. 1934. |
| OCTOBER 19 | 1932. Half holidays for citizens. Stay at the Church, spent it chatting with very close room at the Church. Washed and wound up. Customary Curtains. 1933. The year was a beautiful spectacular, met place taught & school teaching des 
|           | igne looked. Where inspired resolutions stay as quickly at times. 1934. |
OCTOBER 20

1935 Saw Elie after work. Bad news: he has received a week's pay. He's having a rough time. He hasn't spent any of his money in the store. He's been told he must pay his debts. He's in deep trouble. Called on a friend who gave him a job. Worked seven hours. His pay is $7.50. His car is in the shop. His wife is very ill. He's been told he must pay his debts. He's in deep trouble.

1936 The sky was grey and the wind was strong. The clouds were dark and the sun was hidden. The trees were bent. The leaves were falling. The people were wearing their coats. It was a cold day. The rain was pouring down. The streets were flooded. The cars were splashing. The people were walking quickly. It was a cold day. The rain was pouring down. The streets were flooded. The cars were splashing. The people were walking quickly.

OCTOBER 21

1935 Today, though, our circumstances have improved. We've found some work to do. We've been told we must pay our debts. We're in deep trouble. We've been told we must pay our debts. We're in deep trouble.

1936 The sky was grey and the wind was strong. The clouds were dark and the sun was hidden. The trees were bent. The leaves were falling. The people were wearing their coats. It was a cold day. The rain was pouring down. The streets were flooded. The cars were splashing. The people were walking quickly. It was a cold day. The rain was pouring down. The streets were flooded. The cars were splashing. The people were walking quickly.

OCTOBER 22

1935 Had very pleasant today. Worked for a little while. Saw a friend. He's had a hard time. He's been told he must pay his debts. He's in deep trouble. He's been told he must pay his debts. He's in deep trouble.

1936 The sky was grey and the wind was strong. The clouds were dark and the sun was hidden. The trees were bent. The leaves were falling. The people were wearing their coats. It was a cold day. The rain was pouring down. The streets were flooded. The cars were splashing. The people were walking quickly. It was a cold day. The rain was pouring down. The streets were flooded. The cars were splashing. The people were walking quickly.

OCTOBER 23

1935 All day at North St. My class of 14 divided today. The class was divided by constant complaints.

1936 The sky was grey and the wind was strong. The clouds were dark and the sun was hidden. The trees were bent. The leaves were falling. The people were wearing their coats. It was a cold day. The rain was pouring down. The streets were flooded. The cars were splashing. The people were walking quickly. It was a cold day. The rain was pouring down. The streets were flooded. The cars were splashing. The people were walking quickly.
OCTOBER 24

1922. Received a letter from 8 o’clock this a.m. / Took it down to read with p. Oh, if / I could only stand me a leg [illegible]. / But the burning part in the pride the boy

1923. Le Bap Sacr at the church. Mr. / Wilson’s. Got my butterfly box. Was my / green dress for the second time. Read book / Spouse me home in the car.219

1924. A very rainy day. Not busy / at office. Wrote to Mrs. Margaret A. / Out to Bethlehem up to store noted / Names Bruno Mazzichetti. He gave me / a little scroll this evening will not / stick past inside box of box. It also / pushed me up brought me home of the / concert. throat took Maggie Tott

OCTOBER 25

1922.

1923.

1924.

OCTOBER 26

1922. But a very big for today. Large / Roger writing tonight. Walked home alone / under the quarter sky. My wife felt the / most of more time spent on spiritual things / wrote me in the letter only as a word of affection

1923. It seems the longer we live / the longer we must become to face / life courageously. Some situations / in my work almost unbelievable. But the / work of the spirit I found last night / to do better in my life today. Late / this a.m. and this evening. After / supper went to St. Michael’s for the

OCTOBER 27

1922. Spent an unforgettable night with / in the old yard. Got to be his teacher. But the / grief is not long to know that he /
OCTOBER 28

19: Work on the street car, this am.
19: Called for the show last night.

OCTOBER 29

19: Work on the street car, this am.
19: Called for the show last night. Good morning.
19: Work on the street car, this am.

OCTOBER 30

19: Work on the street car, this am.
19: Worked on the street car, this am.

OCTOBER 31

19: Worked on the street car, this am.
19: Worked on the street car, this am.

NOVEMBER 1

1932. In another November. Think I'd do
the happiest mental state of all if I had the freedom
to work on anything. I've been busy and doing
what little I can. There must be some slight loss.

1933. After Glaucoma meeting. Left Andy
and I stayed in the Century Hotel on.

1934. I was told that it was to be put in
just needed to Youth come Crying. 19

NOVEMBER 2

1935. Have been in three months ago for
this work wishing hard to catch up with everyone.
I'm getting a great deal of work that is.

1936. Saturday Nov. 2, 1935.Received
a lovely little gift today. A case

1937. Small enough to fit in my

1938. Small enough to fit in my

1939. Small enough to fit in my

1940. Small enough to fit in my

NOVEMBER 3

1941. Again spent the morning at home. Finely
made some small changes in the butterfly. Now I have
work with pretty flowers and few fabrics. A bit
from writing. It is one of the quietest equipments.

1942. We met Mrs. Fuller & my sister to
a delightful time both with Dressel Island.

1943. Still chance read it still.

1944. Sunday 28 Thule's Memos in.

1945. The sky was really gray.

1946. Christian's. So we went to
Chad's with the others.


1948. First time I had been to the town.

1949. Since the moved to Bessie. We

1950. It's with home with back to town.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>Wanted to transcribe a marked hand note tonight but didn't. Stayed in the evening and prepared for my evening class. Received Florence Phillips latest minute invitation for the evening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>Can we glad to have just the younger group to teach this Sunday School. How they welcomed today under the discipline. So glad we gave them our little kindness handshake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 7</td>
<td>Mabel down tonight. Hope Mabel. She seems to miss the warmth of her classroom. But she has such aB Alied sound and an easy attraction with the girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 8</td>
<td>How selectively I cut the meal tonight for the &quot;book that will not let me go.&quot; The &quot;book.&quot; I believe, has been had elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932. Did in real fiction once tonight for...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932. Had a lecture down to St. Anselm's this a.m. I sent one and two...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOVEMBER 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932. Had a lecture down to St. Anselm's this a.m. I sent one and two...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOVEMBER 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932. How I love you. I don't believe that the...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOVEMBER 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932. How I love you. I don't believe that the...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933 Church service beautiful especially the prayer this a.m. Tonight's service very inspiring. Just had a few good-night words over the telephone. Spent all afternoon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOVEMBER 15</th>
<th>NOVEMBER 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1933 Qlt in the quiet night invited for a precious hour. A storm was difficult to get out for, even a short time, without influencing all other circumstances. | 1933 To Minnie's for supper, as P.M. 
Sunday school meeting. Home to find Zena & forest who came in tonight. We had Mary Turner's in my room. Showed one to Maudie. |
| 1933 Prayin' meeting was just splendid tonight at our Sunday school service. A local Bible society set that one over most than happening. | 1933 |

| 19 | 19 |
| 19 | 19 |
| 19 | 19 |

294
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOVEMBER 17</th>
<th>NOVEMBER 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1922. Eve of November: Drive a couple of hours with Mrs. Seaver to see her. My life seems full, very full to me, even the outside of American life is restricted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923. When things are bad, try to take it all. The sun is shining, the day is clear. The sun is shining, the day is clear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924. I know what life is like. It is hard. The sun is shining, the day is clear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925. I shall be home tonight. Mrs. Seaver has been very nice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926. I know what life is like. It is hard. The sun is shining, the day is clear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOVEMBER 19</th>
<th>NOVEMBER 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927. Another Saturday. Another project from added to the growing herd of golden names. Another pleasant memory from the same three years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928. I preached in Female Bureaus. In some way, there was no church. No the chair out to Rockingham town and more. And the church has deep sense of being some sympathy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929. I know what life is like. It is hard. The sun is shining, the day is clear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

295
NOVEMBER 21

1931 This lady said to me today, "Tell me how are you today?" I answered, "I am well, thank you." She replied, "How is your health?"

1932 Still passing time, my dear. How is your health?"

NOVEMBER 22

1931 He said today, "Tell me how are you today?" I answered, "I am well, thank you." He replied, "How is your health?"

1932 Still passing time, my dear. How is your health?"

NOVEMBER 23

1931 To my wife, "I am feeling so much better today. Thank you for coming by."

1932 Passed the rest of the day quietly. No news of any importance.

NOVEMBER 24

1931 Ann said, "Come to tea."

1932 Passed the evening quietly. No news of any importance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 25</td>
<td>1922: Today nothing. I feel I especially need... 1933: Had a couple of hours drive to St. Margaret's Bay Road. He told under my window: If there were only a few of him with which to pierce the darkness of the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 26</td>
<td>1932: Very noisy and Saturday, spent an hour with G in the office. The finding my greatest pleasure in what I can contribute. 1933: Was able to get both same ones today. Shortened the 6:30 latter tactics for tomorrow. No. These Sunday evenings in the Church which can see, are spent in quiet reading and thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### November 29

| 1932 | Instead of going out into the
|      | streets early, I stopped in to
|      | see Mr. Whiting. I thought
|      | I might improve my position.
|      | I was about to be disappointed.
|      | by the absence.

| 1935 | This made me a great partial to
|      | the idea of going back and
|      | feeling up the trail again.
|      | It was a half dozen or more
|      | of the people in the trail.
|      | They were all a part of the
|      | crowd, and I felt a little
|      | lonely. But I got on hand
|      | and went down to an early
|      | breakfast tonight.

### November 30

| 1932 | Instead of musing out into the
|      | streets early, I stopped in to
|      | see Mr. Whiting. I thought
|      | I might improve my position.
|      | I was about to be disappointed.
|      | by the absence.

| 1933 | Woke up with a pleasant surprise
|      | of two or three days of wonderful
|      | success in the trail.
|      | I only felt a little wear of
time for which I felt
|      | ashamed, and went back to an
|      | early breakfast tonight.

### December 1

| 1932 | Rained in and finished up a
|      | few short drives. Now we were
|      | getting to feel the cold.
|      | Some days there were
|      | snowy drives.
|      | Trevor had a
|      | wonderful achievement.
|      | He went up in the air and
|      | down again with ease.

| 1931 | The wind was as usual and
|      | the snow from west.
|      | He planned to drive back
|      | to the middle of the
|      | trail to be sure.

### December 2

| 1932 | Stayed in and finished up a
|      | few short drives. Now we were
|      | getting to feel the cold.
|      | Some days there were
|      | snowy drives.
|      | Trevor had a
|      | wonderful achievement.
|      | He went up in the air and
|      | down again with ease.

| 1933 | Stayed in for a few short
|      | drives in the office. Now we had
|      | a wonderful achievement.
|      | He went up in the air and
|      | down again with ease.
|      | The wind in the air was
|      | strong and gusty.

## Footnotes

- Trevor had a wonderful achievement.
- The wind in the air was strong and gusty.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECEMBER 3</th>
<th>DECEMBER 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My such a brown day but in it were two hours of perfect blue. There seemed with one of it. It was rain to wash a boat. This was June's last paper writing all that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And my pleasure in the man for still I saw who a call from the boy from the yard on. The Bank of great time tonight a companion evening to the Green Gang.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECEMBER 5</th>
<th>DECEMBER 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding appearance of this 20 hours. Not quiet walk in Wonders 12:30 12:30 a.m. The golden moon's quiet stare shining on beauty. He was lightning and cats.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[December 7 – 14 blank]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECEMBER 15</th>
<th>DECEMBER 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**December 16**

1933. Wonderful drive with Alice. Left the house good way to Fall River. Good enough road on the road to make the going good. Mother and I got my little shell tree of the apple thing. I opened it up and put it on the table in the window. Folded a sheet over it. Passed my window.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECEMBER 17</th>
<th>DECEMBER 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1933 This a.m. 5 spoke of the "Celebration of Christmas. I had a quiet afternoon. All to myself. Enjoyed it wrapping up gifts. Got a lot of my room at 2 a.m. It was essential at certain times. Spent most of the evening. Afternoon fruit. Missed. A long that we finished together.
| 1933 Said the A church time that I have spoken to. Came to the church. 7 a.m. We left the church. Then we had a short practice for our choir concert. Then home, and to bed. |
| 19          | 19          |
| 19          | 19          |
| 19          | 19          |

300
**DECEMBER 19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>We got stuck driving due to snow on the road. We arrived at 9 a.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DECEMBER 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>I didn't know it all day for I did not get to the house. Played football, a book, and possibly stole from someone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DECEMBER 21**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Had a good walk tonight. Played football, played tennis, and walked around.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DECEMBER 22**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Played football, played tennis, and walked around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Took a long walk tonight. Played football, played tennis, and walked around. I was very tired.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

301
DECEMBER 23

1933
Park with grumpy. What a light
Evening with mother. We ate fish
in the kitchen, a happy tone. All the
attending to. 17th. Thank God from
the head of the house. Very happy
stopped at the house. Gift came
some books of history. We
expected to send excess. All the gifts
were under the Christmas tree.

1934
What a pity I have failed to read
1933! Xmas with him... This 1934 was a happy tone. All the
family including the little one together.

DECEMBER 24

1933
Park with mother. What a lovely
Evening with mother. We ate fish
in the kitchen, a happy tone. All the
attending to. 17th. Thank God from
the head of the house. Very happy
stopped at the house. Gift came
some books of history. We
expected to send excess. All the gifts
were under the Christmas tree.

1934
What a pity I have failed to read
1933! Xmas with him... This 1934 was a happy tone. All the
family including the little one together.

DECEMBER 25

1933
Park with grumpy. What a light
Evening with mother. We ate fish
in the kitchen, a happy tone. All the
attending to. 17th. Thank God from
the head of the house. Very happy
stopped at the house. Gift came
some books of history. We
expected to send excess. All the gifts
were under the Christmas tree.

1934
What a pity I have failed to read
1933! Xmas with him... This 1934 was a happy tone. All the
family including the little one together.

DECEMBER 26

1933
Park with grumpy. What a lovely
Evening with mother. We ate fish
in the kitchen, a happy tone. All the
attending to. 17th. Thank God from
the head of the house. Very happy
stopped at the house. Gift came
some books of history. We
expected to send excess. All the gifts
were under the Christmas tree.

1934
What a pity I have failed to read
1933! Xmas with him... This 1934 was a happy tone. All the
family including the little one together.

302
December 26

Christmas Monday. What a blessing to have the quiet of Christmas...and a promise of a God's presence that we have found now.

December 27

1932: Mrs. Johnson came in. Worked two hours, then finished the remaining work. Attended the church service with Mrs. Hoskins. Worked late at the office. Supper was eaten at home.

1933: So busy, I don't have much time to write. But...I have noticed a change in my attitude...a relaxation of my personality. I seem to be more patient. I seem to be more understanding.

1934: Annual Christmas tree. The children and I spent the evening together. We had a wonderful time. It was a beautiful evening. We decided to spend the evening together. We had a wonderful time. We decided to spend the evening together.

December 28

1932: Again about all day. Worked a lot. Worked more than usual. I have a lot of work to do. I have a lot of work to do.

1933: The cold weather has persisted. It was cold in the morning. It was cold and windy. I had a lot of work to do. I had a lot of work to do.

1934: The children and I went for a walk in the park. We had a wonderful time. The park was beautiful. We had a wonderful time.

December 29

1932: (Note attached to December 25 page.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>December 29</th>
<th>December 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Wonderful day spent with family and loved ones. Just a quiet, peaceful day.</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Still very cold. 10° below zero this a.m. Rode horse down town. Left for a short distance while waiting for a train. Stayed in town. Went into the office and had a treatment. Left to make my supper &amp; stay the night. Read, played, &amp; talked with the children.</td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Still very cold. 10° below zero this a.m. Rode horse down town. Left for a short distance while waiting for a train. Stayed in town. Went into the office and had a treatment. Left to make my supper &amp; stay the night. Read, played, &amp; talked with the children.</td>
<td>1934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MEMORANDUM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>December 31</th>
<th>December 31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Memorie tickets bought. Lovely.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Toilet set, silver尺度: and rug.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>This me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>First bought a Philco Radio.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Started my first knit sweater.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Bought returned my new cabinet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>