

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

By

Joyce Thomson

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Approved By:

Dr. Gillian Thomas  
Supervisor

Dr. John Reid  
1<sup>st</sup> Reader

Dr. Toni Laidlaw  
External Examiner



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## **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.



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**Foreword:**

**Bessie Wamboldt's Diary**

**Bessie M. Wamboldt**

Bessie Melvin Wamboldt, 79, of Halifax, died Monday in the Victoria General Hospital.

Born in Halifax, she was a daughter of the late Henry and Ada (Melvin) Wamboldt.

She was a registered nurse, graduating from Cambridge Hospital, Cambridge, Mass., and in later years was a stenographer at the pathology laboratory in Halifax. She was a member of United Memorial Church, Halifax.

Surviving are ...

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Canadian Bible Society.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> 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,

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<sup>1</sup> *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, "Obituaries," November 17, 1981, 27.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

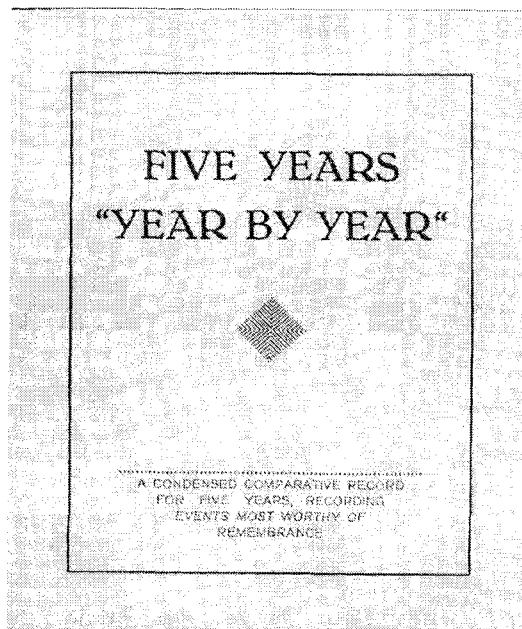


Figure 1-2: Title page, manuscript diary of Bessie Wamboldt, 1932-1936.

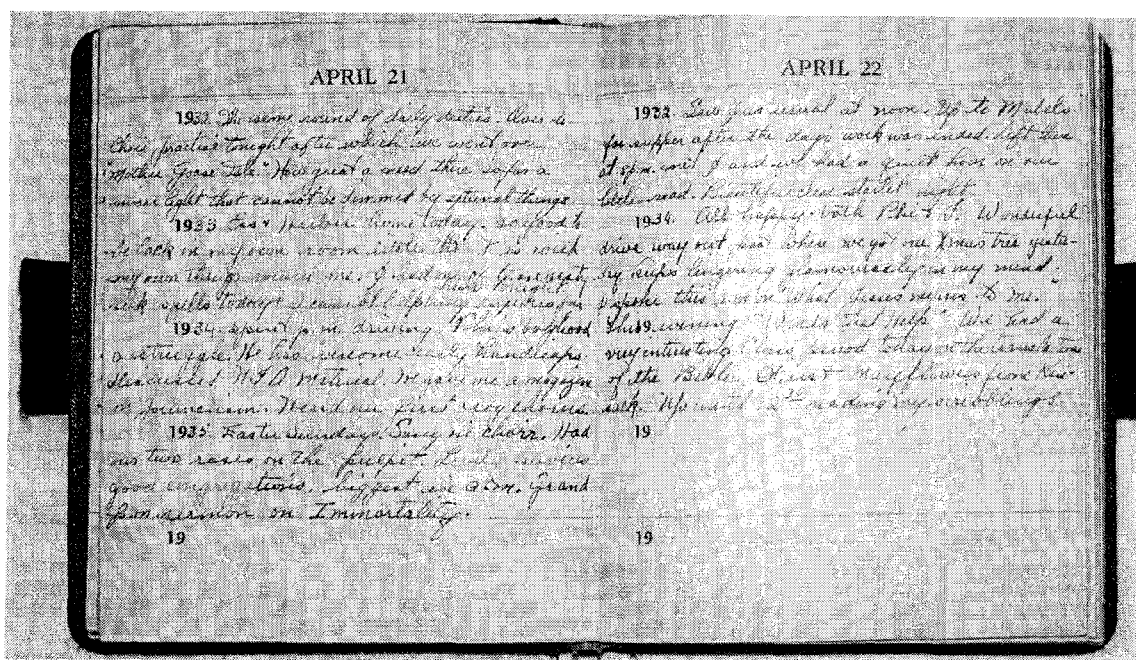


Figure 1-3: Line-a-day formatting, manuscript diary of Bessie Wamboldt, 1932-1936.

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"<sup>3</sup> 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."<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> The evidence must be faced honestly, objectively, accurately, and fairly.<sup>6</sup> The

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4 This now-commonplace phrase was popularized by E.P. Thompson's article: "History from Below," *Times Literary Supplement* (7 April 1966): 269-80.

5 Jerome G. Manis, "What Should Biographers Tell? The Ethics of Telling Lives," *Biography* 17, no. 4 (1994): 386.

scholar must weigh the facts, but must not pass moral judgment on them.<sup>7</sup> The full complexity of lived experience must be embraced, and oversimplification must be avoided.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> While harm to individuals, living or dead, should be avoided,<sup>10</sup> 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

---

6 Larry Lockridge, "The Ethics of Biography and Autobiography," in *Critical Ethics: Text, Theory and Responsibility*, eds. D. Rainsford and T. Woods (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 133.

7 Leon Edel, *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 33.

8 Linda Wagner-Martin, *Telling Women's Lives: The New Biography* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 8.

9 Edel, 92.

10 Andrew Hassam, "Reading Other People's Diaries," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (Spring 1987): 438.

unidentified “scribblings.”<sup>11</sup> 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.]

---

<sup>11</sup> 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<sup>12</sup>:

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

---

<sup>12</sup> In all cases here, the italic emphasis is mine.

... Out  $\bar{c}$   $\Phi$  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  $\Phi$ . 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.<sup>13</sup>

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."<sup>14</sup>

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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.

14 Katie Holmes, " 'Diamonds of the Dustheap'? Women's Diary Writing between the Wars," in *Wallflowers and Witches: Women and Culture in Australia 1910-1945*, ed. Maryanne Dever, 40 (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1994).

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."<sup>15</sup>

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."<sup>16</sup> 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.

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<sup>15</sup> Margo Cully, ed., *A Day at a Time: the Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present* (New York : Feminist Press, 1985), 12, 14.

<sup>16</sup> Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 12.



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."<sup>17</sup> 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

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<sup>17</sup> Suzanne L. Bunkers, "'Faithful Friend': Nineteenth-Century Midwestern American Women's Unpublished Diaries," *Women's Studies International Forum* 10, no. 1(1987): 16.

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  $\bar{c}$ , 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.<sup>18</sup> 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

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<sup>18</sup> 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:**

### **“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,<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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

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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.<sup>3</sup> 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,”<sup>4</sup> 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.”<sup>5</sup> 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.

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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."<sup>6</sup> An exploration of Bessie Wamboldt's individual, subjective record of her life during the 1930's will provide an opportunity to

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<sup>6</sup> Sally Alexander, "Becoming a Woman in London in the 1920's and 30's," in *Becoming a Woman and Other Essays in 19th and 20th Century Feminist History* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 205.

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."<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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

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<sup>7</sup> Kathryn Carter, ed., *The Small Details of Life: 20 Diaries by Women in Canada, 1830 – 1996* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 6.

<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> Recent diary scholars such as Kathryn Carter<sup>10</sup> 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."<sup>11</sup>

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

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9 Veronica Strong-Boag, "Writing about Women," in *Writing about Canada: A Handbook for Modern Canadian History* (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1990), 175.

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.

11 Strong-Boag, "Writing about Women," 176.

involvement. Women's lives (especially their domestic activities) have not always been considered historically important.<sup>12</sup>

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."<sup>13</sup> 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."<sup>14</sup>

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

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<sup>12</sup> Carter, *Small Details*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> 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 Columbia*, eds. Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, 48 (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> Conrad, "Sundays," 68.

reveal much about the women who are conspicuously absent from our public records.<sup>15</sup>

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 *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."<sup>16</sup>

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."<sup>17</sup> 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

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<sup>15</sup> Conrad, "Sundays," 70.

<sup>16</sup> Peter N. Stearns, "Social History Present and Future," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 14.

<sup>17</sup> Paula A. Fass, "Cultural History / Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 41.

stresses the need to demonstrate explicit connections between particular social and cultural behaviors and broader historical theory<sup>18</sup>.

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.<sup>19</sup>

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

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<sup>18</sup> Fass, "Cultural History," 45.

<sup>19</sup> Kathryn Carter, *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.”<sup>20</sup> 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.”<sup>21</sup>

These “older, male-defined traditions of history, with [their] focus on war and diplomacy, elitist institutions, and male heroes and ‘nation builders’ ”<sup>22</sup> 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

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20 Veronica Strong-Boag, “Contested Space: The Politics of Canadian Memory,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1994): 9.

21 Strong-Boag, “Contested Space,” 9.

22 Franca Iacovetta, and Mariana Valverde, eds., *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women’s History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), xiii.



Canadian peoples.”<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup> Identified by Natalie Zemon Davis (in the European context) as the history of “women worthies,”<sup>26</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup> 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.”<sup>28</sup> 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.

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23 Strong-Boag, “Contested Space,” 12.

24 See for example Carl Berger, “Tradition and the ‘New’ History,” in *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900*. 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 259-320. For a full overview of the current status and future prospects of the still-new social history, see the special theme issue of the *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003).

25 Margaret W. Andrews, “Review Article: Attitudes in Canadian Women’s History 1945 – 1975,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 12, no. 4 (1977): 69.

26 Natalie Zemon Davis, “Women’s History in Transition: the European Case,” *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 3/4 (Spring-Summer 1976): 83.

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.<sup>29</sup> 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

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. 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

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<sup>29</sup> For representative early works in this field, see for example Sheila Rowbotham, *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. *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1977).

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.]<sup>30</sup>

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.”<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup>

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

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30 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 Press, 1999), 4. For more on Thompson’s use of ‘experience,’ see E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963).

31 Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 18.

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.<sup>33</sup>

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.<sup>34</sup>

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.<sup>35</sup> 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

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33Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1, no. 1 (1975): 3.

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.’<sup>36</sup>

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.<sup>37</sup>

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

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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.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> 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.”<sup>40</sup> She rejected the traditional historian’s “search for single origins” in favour of the concept of “processes so interconnected that they cannot be disentangled.”<sup>41</sup>

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38 Parr, 362.

39 Denise Riley, *“Am I That Name?” Feminism and the Category of “Women” in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 113-114.

40 Scott, 43-44.

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.<sup>42</sup> Joy Parr has characterized the criticism of recent work in gender history as both ferocious and hostile.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup>

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

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<sup>42</sup> Joan Hoff, “Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis,” *Women’s History Review* 3, no. 2 (1994): 149 - 68.

<sup>43</sup> Parr, 356.

<sup>44</sup> 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."<sup>45</sup>

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

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45 Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "Postmodern Patchwork: Some Recent Trends in the Writing of Women's History in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 72, no. 4 (1991): 441.



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.<sup>46</sup> 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

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46 S. Jay Kleinberg, ed., *Retrieving Women's History: Changing Perceptions of the Role of Women in Politics and Society* (Oxford: Berg Publishers/UNESCO, 1988), ix.

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.”<sup>47</sup> 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.”<sup>48</sup> 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.”<sup>49</sup> Rather than continuing to treat personal diaries as mere “transparent windows onto scenes of social history,”<sup>50</sup> 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.”<sup>51</sup>

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

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47 Carter, “Small Details.” 19.

48 Margo Cully, ed. *A Day at a Time: the Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present* (New York : Feminist Press, 1985), xi.

49 Judith Sauerbrey, “My Letter to the World: Twentieth Century Women and Their Diaries” (PhD. Diss., Union Institute, 1991), 15.

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?"<sup>52</sup>

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....' "<sup>53</sup>

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.<sup>54</sup>

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.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Sally Robinson, *Engendering the Subject: Gender and Self-representation in Contemporary Women's Fiction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 4.

<sup>53</sup> Robinson, 5.

<sup>54</sup> Stuart Hall, David Held and Anthony G. McGrew, eds., *Modernity and Its Futures* (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with the Open University, 1992), 277.

<sup>55</sup> Morwenna Griffiths, *Feminisms and the Self: the Web of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1.

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.<sup>56</sup>

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.”<sup>57</sup>

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....<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Griffiths, 82.

<sup>57</sup> Griffiths, 85-90.

<sup>58</sup> Robinson, 13-14.

Like the Marxist proposition that “men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please,”<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup>

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.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), 15.

<sup>60</sup> Griffiths, 93.

<sup>61</sup> 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.”<sup>62</sup>

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.

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<sup>62</sup> John C. Spurlock and Cynthia A. Magistro, *New and Improved: The Transformation of American Women's Emotional Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 9.

## Diaries and the Discipline of History

Kathryn Carter reminds us that “diaries are in dialogue with history,”<sup>63</sup> 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.”<sup>64</sup> 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.”<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> 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.”<sup>67</sup> The

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63 Carter, *Small Details*, 11.

64 Strong-Boag, “Writing about Women,” 181.

65 Strong-Boag, “Writing about Women,” 181.

66 Carter, *Small Details*, 21.

67 Betty Jane Wylie, *Reading between the Lines: the Diaries of Women* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1995), 30.

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.<sup>68</sup>

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

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<sup>68</sup> Dure Jo Gillikin, “A Lost Diary Found,” in *Women’s Personal Narratives: Essays in Criticism and Pedagogy*, eds. Lenore Hoffman and Margo Cully, 134, 137 (New York: Modern Languages Association, 1985).



desire and loss, the compelling inner directives of the structure of sexual difference.<sup>69</sup>

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.”<sup>70</sup>

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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  $\Phi$  often & often. [May 28, 1933]

Bessie Wamboldt took full advantage of her small diary's potential to capture the "precious" hours<sup>1</sup> and "sweet" moments<sup>2</sup> of her life, to document both her "busyness,"<sup>3</sup> and her periods of "welcome" rest<sup>4</sup>. 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.

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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

[t]he 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....<sup>5</sup>

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

[f]or 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.<sup>6</sup>

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

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5 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 Columbia*, eds. Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984), 13.

6 Laura Brock, "Beyond Domesticity: the Use and Value of Women's Leisure Time in Halifax, 1880 - 1930" (M.A. Thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1998), 13.

home and family environment.<sup>7</sup> 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."<sup>8</sup> 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"<sup>9</sup> 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

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7 Tamara Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: the Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 6-8.

8 Hareven, 355.

9 Conrad, "Sundays Always," 13.

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.”<sup>10</sup>

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.”<sup>11</sup> 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

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

11 John Reid, “The 1920’s: Decade of Struggle,” in *Six Crucial Decades: Times of Change in the History of the Maritimes* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1987), 161.

Nova Scotian rural economy, but also buoyed the shipping trade vital to the economic well-being of urban Halifax.<sup>12</sup>

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.”<sup>13</sup> In Halifax, according to the 1931 census, men averaged an even lower annual wage of \$1090.<sup>14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup> Working women often contributed to a family economy, in which several wages could be pooled to maximize the living conditions for the entire family.<sup>16</sup> 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.”<sup>17</sup>

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12 Fingard, Guildford and Sutherland, 140-41.

13 John Herd Thompson, and Allen Seager, *Canada 1922 - 1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 138.

14 *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1933-42), Vol. V, 20.

15 *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. I, 277.

16 For explorations of this “family wage” phenomenon, see Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-town Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) and Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993).

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."<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Thompson and Seager, 151.

<sup>19</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women In English Canada, 1919 - 1939*. Rev. ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), 42.

<sup>20</sup> See Betsy Beattie, *Obligation and Opportunity: Single Maritime Women in Boston, 1870-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), for an interesting analysis of the experiences of Maritime women who went to the "Boston States" in search of training and work.





Figure 2-1: Bessie Wamboldt at nursing school (far right), Cambridge, Massachusetts, pre-1930. Photo courtesy Rev. Neil and Shirley Bergman, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Throughout the diary she is employed, five and one half days a week,<sup>21</sup> 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."<sup>22</sup>

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21 The half-day took place on Saturday morning.

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.

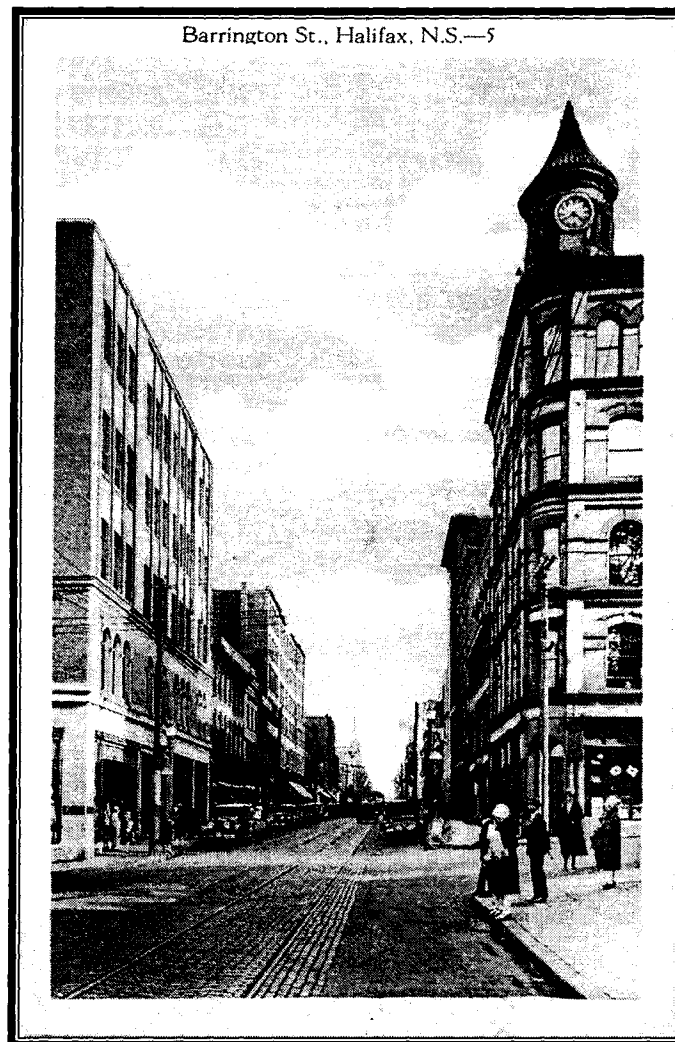


Figure 2-2: Barrington St., downtown Halifax, circa 1932. Bessie Wamboldt worked in the General Trust Building, the five-story building in the right foreground; Eaton's Department Store is located in the building across Barrington St., in the left foreground.

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.<sup>23</sup> 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."<sup>24</sup>

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,"<sup>25</sup> 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

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23 Might Directories, *The Halifax City Directory: to Which is Added a Directory of Dartmouth and Suburban Directories of Bedford, Fairview, North West Arm, and Rockingham* (Toronto: Might Directories Atlantic Ltd., 1930 – 1936).

24 Horace M. Miller, ed. *The Dental Office Guide: A Manual for Students, Dental Assistants and Dentists* (Oregon: Horace M. Miller, 1934), 180.

25 Albert Edward Webster, ed. *A Manual for Dental Assistants* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1932), viii.

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.<sup>26</sup>

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.<sup>27</sup> Second, by

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<sup>26</sup> Miller, 180.

<sup>27</sup> 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

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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.<sup>28</sup>

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.<sup>29</sup> Margaret Conrad observes, among the diary writers she has examined, that “women in the paid labour

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28 Webster, 37, 38, 41.

force ... often carried domestic traditions such as housecleaning, the celebration of anniversaries and personal friendships into the workplace.”<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup>

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.”<sup>32</sup> In her discussion of nineteenth century single

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29 Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw and Donna Smyth, *No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771 – 1938* (Halifax: Formac, 1988), 264.

30 Conrad, “Sundays Always,” 9.

31 Conrad, “Sundays Always,” 4.

32 Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850 – 1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 90.

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.<sup>33</sup>

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,”<sup>34</sup> 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,”<sup>35</sup> 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

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<sup>33</sup> Vicinus, *Independent Women*, 92.

<sup>34</sup> Eva Gamarnikow, “Sexual Division of Labour: The Case of Nursing,” in *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, ed. Annette Kuhn and Ann Marie Wolpe (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 120; quoted in Vicinus, *Independent Women*, 93.

<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> In Canada, dental assistance courses had been available from the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario as early as the 1920's,<sup>37</sup> although no such formalized courses appear to have been provided in Halifax by the Dalhousie University School of Dentistry until the 1950's.<sup>38</sup>

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."<sup>39</sup> 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"<sup>40</sup> 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

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36 Miller, 180.

37 Webster, 2.

38 Oskar Sykora, *Maritime Dental College and Dalhousie Faculty of Dentistry: A History* (Halifax: Dalhousie University Faculty of Dentistry and the Nova Scotia Dental Association, 1991), 93-94; 148.

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.<sup>41</sup>

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.”<sup>42</sup> 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 *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.”<sup>43</sup>

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.<sup>44</sup> Her shorthand and typing skills are constantly honed through her transcriptions of church sermons, copies of which are sometimes provided to other church members.<sup>45</sup> On at least one occasion she records preparing one of her minister’s sermons for publication in the *Halifax Daily Star* newspaper.<sup>46</sup> 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

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41 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 *Halifax County Dental Society* < <http://www.pcdentist.com/hfxcounty.htm> > (May 3, 2005), paragraph 1.

42 Wamboldt diary, November 7, 1933.

43 Webster, 31.

44 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.

45 Example sermon transcription entries, Wamboldt diary: May 21, 1932; September 28, 1932; March 24, 1933; November 26, 1933; January 30, 1934; May 24, 1934.

46 Wamboldt diary, November 26, 1933. The *Halifax Daily Star* was one of two evening newspapers published in Halifax during the 1930s.

clothes<sup>47</sup>) and gifts of “sermon paper and shorthand tablets”<sup>48</sup> from her church minister. She mentions “practising invoices,”<sup>49</sup> and worries that she lacks sufficient spare time for “the reading & practising that I really want to do.”<sup>50</sup>

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.<sup>51</sup> 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!”<sup>52</sup> 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.”<sup>53</sup> This attire invariably included a “white gown, white shoes and stockings and a white cap covering the hair” The only article of

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47 Wamboldt diary, April 7, 1932.

48 Wamboldt diary, June 14, 1934.

49 Wamboldt diary, August 1, 1932.

50 Wamboldt diary, April 11, 1932.

51 Bregstein, 56.

52 Bregstein, 57.

53 Webster, 38.

traditional nursing attire that Bessie mentions is her purchase of “white shoes,”<sup>54</sup> but it can be imagined that, given her registered nurse status, she would have sought to dress in uniform, as expected in the workplace.



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”<sup>55</sup> 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]

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<sup>54</sup> Wamboldt diary, June 8, 1935.

<sup>55</sup> 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,"<sup>56</sup> 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."<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup>

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... ."<sup>59</sup> Dental assistant training texts did place greater emphasis on selecting staff who exhibited appropriate demeanor and dress over those

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<sup>56</sup> Webster, 156.

<sup>57</sup> Peter L. Twohig, "Organizing the Bench: Medical Laboratory Workers in the Maritimes, 1900 – 1950" (PhD. Diss., Dalhousie University, 1999), 164.

<sup>58</sup> Twohig, 179, 180.

<sup>59</sup> 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."<sup>60</sup>

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.<sup>61</sup> 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:

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<sup>60</sup> Miller, 6.

<sup>61</sup> *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. V, 63.

... 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.”<sup>62</sup> 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<sup>63</sup>**

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<sup>64</sup> or occasionally by car, despite the distance to be traveled on difficult roads from Bridgewater to Halifax.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Twohig, 177-78.

<sup>63</sup> See *Appendix ‘A,’ A Wamboldt Family Album*, for photographs of relatives and friends mentioned in this chapter.

<sup>64</sup> Wamboldt Diary, May 19, 1933.

<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup>

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

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<sup>66</sup> Might Directories, *The Halifax City Directory ...*, 1932-1936.

<sup>67</sup> Suzanne Morton, *Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920's* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 55-61.

some situations was averted through the generosity of adult children.”<sup>68</sup> 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 *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.”<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup> The amenities of the house included four bedrooms, an indoor bathroom, telephone and electrical

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68 Morton, 61.

69 “Extricated by Daughter From Wreckage,” *Halifax Herald*, 11 December 1917, 2. See Appendix ‘A’ for a reproduction of this article.

70 Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, M.G. 36, Series R, R 212, 6 *Bilby Street, W.H. Wamboldt: Damage Report, Drawings, Correspondence*.

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

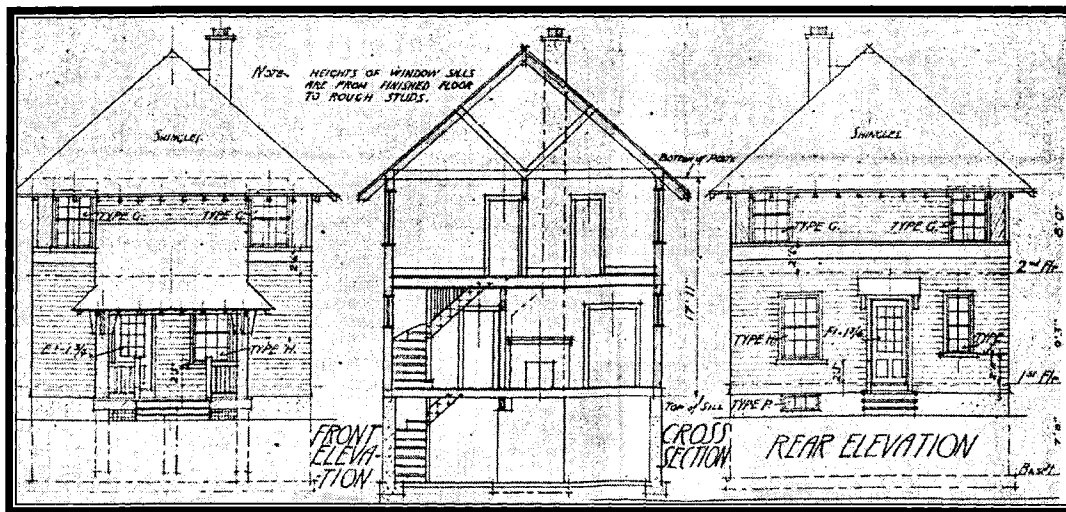


Figure 2-4: Wamboldt Home, Front Elevation, Cross-Section and Rear Elevation. Bessie's bedroom window was on the second story, left side of the Front Elevation.<sup>71</sup>

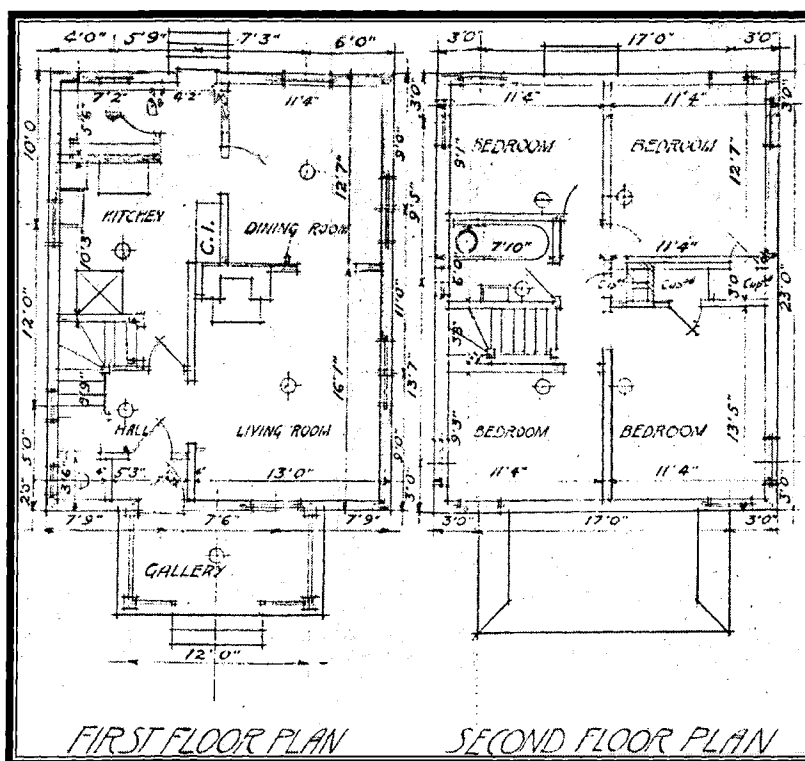


Figure 2-5: Wamboldt Home, floor plans. Bessie Wamboldt's room appears to have been the small one on the left of the front of the second floor. "The big room" that she sometimes shared with Margaret and Nina is likely the one on the front right of the second floor plan.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> 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."<sup>72</sup> 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."<sup>73</sup>

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.<sup>74</sup> In fact, the architecture and design of the reconstructed Richmond Heights was itself a key

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<sup>72</sup> Morton, 17-18.

<sup>73</sup> Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, 139.

<sup>74</sup> 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.<sup>75</sup>

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:

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<sup>75</sup> 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 Φ 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"<sup>76</sup> 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

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<sup>76</sup> 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”<sup>77</sup> which she must exercise each day, it is within the “sanctuary”<sup>78</sup> 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];

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<sup>77</sup> Wamboldt diary, July 19, 1933.

<sup>78</sup> 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 c̄ 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 c̄ trepidation. ... [June 9, 1934];

She admits that one of her "greatest enjoyments" is reading,<sup>79</sup> Her tastes favour historical settings, enjoying both high adventure novels such as *Treasure Island*,<sup>80</sup> *The Scarlet Pimpernel*,<sup>81</sup> and *A Prince of the Captivity*,<sup>82</sup> as well as character literature that emphasizes personal struggle, moral choice and relationships, such as *Silas Marner*,<sup>83</sup> *Tom Jones*,<sup>84</sup> *Wuthering Heights*,<sup>85</sup> and *Pilgrims Progress*.<sup>86</sup> She mentions reading the biographical fiction about the Pre-Raphaelite painters and writers, *Poor Splendid Wings*:

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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*,<sup>87</sup> further confirming her taste for the romantic spirit of olden days. She also reads character works with contemporary settings, such as *Magnificent Obsession*<sup>88</sup> and *If Winter Comes*.<sup>89</sup> She reads the local newspapers<sup>90</sup> (the *Halifax Herald / Mail* and the *Halifax Chronicle / Daily Star*), enjoys writing magazines such as *Author and Journalist*,<sup>91</sup> and records with excitement her receipt of two instructional books on journalism which she expects will be “cram full of helpful hints for me.”<sup>92</sup> Many of her reading materials are received as gifts or borrowed from friends.

She quotes from the poetry of Canadian author Marjorie Pickthall,<sup>93</sup> 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.<sup>94</sup> 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 c̄ 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];

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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.

94 Thompson and Seager, 165 – 169.

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."<sup>95</sup> 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];

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<sup>95</sup> 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.”<sup>96</sup> 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,”<sup>97</sup> 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 c̄ 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

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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.<sup>98</sup> 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.<sup>99</sup> 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];

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<sup>98</sup> A congregation of the American protestant denomination known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

<sup>99</sup> Might Directories, *The Halifax City Directory* ... , 1932-1936.

... 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"<sup>100</sup> 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];

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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/emruf2/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 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>101</sup> 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*,"<sup>102</sup> this game was apparently popular among religious Canadians, who "in times past have found crokinole a morally acceptable pastime."<sup>103</sup> Crokinole historian Wayne Kelly reports that

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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.<sup>104</sup>

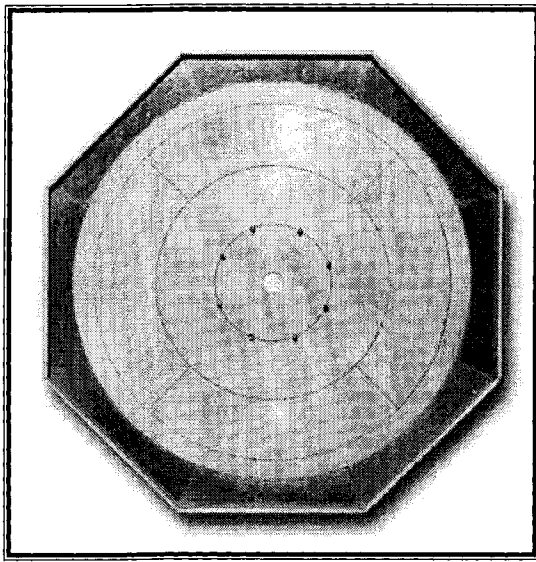


Figure 2-6:  
Crokinole Board, circa 1934, from the collection of Wayne Kelly, reproduced with permission.

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];

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<sup>104</sup> 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.



Figure 2-7: Nova Scotian Hotel, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1932. Reproduced with permission, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management Negative 2120, W.M. Schaffner, photographer.

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<sup>105</sup> 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];

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<sup>105</sup> "Weddings: Avillino – Smith" *Halifax Mail* (19 July 1932), 14. See also *Appendix 'A'* for a photograph of Connie and Bessie together.

... 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 c̄ 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<sup>106</sup> 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<sup>107</sup>, enabled one such foray. Bessie

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106 Kathy Lee Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

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 Piercey [sic] home tonight. Had a very enjoyable time trying to play Bridge. But most of all enjoyed their beautiful grounds. Φ 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,<sup>108</sup> 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,<sup>109</sup> 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

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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.”<sup>110</sup> 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.<sup>111</sup> 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

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<sup>110</sup> Brock, 133-4.

<sup>111</sup> 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."<sup>112</sup> 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

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<sup>112</sup> 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,<sup>113</sup> 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

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<sup>113</sup> 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.<sup>114</sup> This means that, of the 5187 Halifax women aged 25 to 34 reported in the 1931 census,<sup>115</sup> 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.<sup>116</sup>

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

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<sup>114</sup> *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. III, 124.

<sup>115</sup> *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. II, 272.

<sup>116</sup> 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.<sup>117</sup>

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.”<sup>118</sup> 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 *Halifax Herald / Mail*, cited this ability to be independent as a primary characteristic of a “modern” girl:

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<sup>117</sup> Sally Alexander, “Becoming a Woman in London in the 1920’s and 30’s,” in *Becoming a Woman and Other Essays in 19th and 20th Century Feminist History* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 207.

<sup>118</sup> 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.<sup>119</sup>

The *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.<sup>120</sup>

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:

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<sup>119</sup> Dorothy Dix, "Summit of Ambitions as Viewed by Today's Youth is to be Most 'Modern,' " *Halifax Mail*, 22 January, 1932, 11.

<sup>120</sup> Virginia Vane, "Be Independent as this is Key to the Situation," *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.<sup>121</sup>

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:"<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Peiss, 70.

<sup>122</sup> 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.<sup>123</sup>

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

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<sup>123</sup> Strong-Boag, *Janey-Canuck*, 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<sup>124</sup> 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 c̄ Mug's Jimmie<sup>125</sup> 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.

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124 Likely Laurie Cameron, fellow church member and friend.

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<sup>126</sup> 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 beaux. 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

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<sup>126</sup> 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."<sup>127</sup> 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.

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<sup>127</sup> Virginia Vane, "Horror of Being 'Old Maid' Sister; Other Answers." *Halifax Star* 18 January 1932, 4.

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."<sup>128</sup> 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.<sup>129</sup> Several of her entries reflect an awareness of her awkward positioning within the possibilities of 1930's female life course:

How I love Φ. 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.

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<sup>128</sup> "My boy met me and took me for a little drive ... ." Wamboldt diary, January 24, 1933.

<sup>129</sup> 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,"<sup>130</sup> 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];

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<sup>130</sup> 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.<sup>131</sup> 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];

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<sup>131</sup> 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 c̄ 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 c̄ 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.<sup>132</sup> 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.<sup>133</sup> 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,"<sup>134</sup> and she writes of giving unspecified "treatments"<sup>135</sup> 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

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132 Joy M. Loban, *Technic and Practice of Chiropractic*. (Denver: Bunn-Loban Publishing, 1928), 368-370.

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”<sup>136</sup> with Fred, even when she is working at home alone:

... Stayed home and tried to transcribe part of  $\Phi$ 's last Sunday a.m. sermon. [June 1, 1932];

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

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

Busy on  $\Phi$  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];

Had the whole evening to myself so did Mr Elgy's sermon for  $\Phi$ . Kept me occupied for a couple of hours. ... [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<sup>137</sup>, 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:

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<sup>136</sup> Wamboldt diary, September 17, 1932.

<sup>137</sup> 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."<sup>138</sup>

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.<sup>139</sup> 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.<sup>140</sup> 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."<sup>141</sup>

Bessie describes her preparation of one of Fred's sermons for publication in the local newspaper, in keeping with this goal suggested by Broadus.<sup>142</sup> 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

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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.<sup>143</sup> Congregation records indicate that Fred's wife was active in the leadership of the church's women's group.<sup>144</sup> 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

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<sup>143</sup> Albert W. Palmer, *The Minister's Job* (Chicago: Willett, Clark, 1937), 66-78.

<sup>144</sup> Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, M.G. 4, Disciples of Christ – North Street Christian Church, *Minutes, Women's Missionary Society*, microfilm #614.

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.”<sup>145</sup> While enjoying waged work, she recognized its precarious nature, and she understood society’s message that marriage offered the “most secure means of livelihood.”<sup>146</sup> 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.”<sup>147</sup> The attainment of romance became inextricably linked to consumerism, since, “as advertisers made very clear in

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<sup>145</sup> Strong-Boag, *New Day Recalled*, 81.

<sup>146</sup> Strong-Boag, *Janey Canuck*, 16.

<sup>147</sup> Strong-Boag, *Janey Canuck*, 14.

copy that blanketed the Dominion, purchases were essential to successful womanhood.”<sup>148</sup>

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... .”<sup>149</sup> Cultural critics of the day acknowledged that romantic love was based in fantasy and unrealistic expectations.<sup>150</sup> Nonetheless, the “magic system of advertising”<sup>151</sup> 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.

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148 Strong-Boag, *New Day Recalled*, 86.

149 Eva Illouz, *Consuming the Romantic Utopia: Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 48.

150 Illouz., 49-54.

151 Raymond Williams, “Advertising: the Magic System,” in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1993): 410 - 423.

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.<sup>152</sup>

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,"<sup>153</sup> despite the awkward circumstances that made the resolution of this relationship ultimately untenable. Living in "the perfectness of love's atmosphere,"<sup>154</sup> 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

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<sup>152</sup> Illouz, 49.

<sup>153</sup> Wamboldt diary, May 18, 1932.

<sup>154</sup> 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  $\Phi$  would like me better if I could afford to doll up the way Etha<sup>1</sup> can. [April 7, 1932]<sup>2</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup>  $\Phi$ 's wife.

<sup>2</sup> 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.”<sup>3</sup> 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.

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3 Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 64.

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.<sup>4</sup> 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

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<sup>4</sup> See George Juergens, *Joseph Pulitzer and the New York World* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966) for an exploration of the connections between mass media advertising and the development of newspaper women's pages.

mundane act of shopping into a sensuous and enjoyable experience for the bourgeois public.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the store represented a “distinctly feminine” public space into which women shoppers were welcomed.<sup>7</sup>

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.”<sup>8</sup>

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

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5 Felski, 66.

6 William R. Leach, “Transformation in a Culture of Consumption: Women and Department Stores, 1890- 1925,” *Journal of American History* 71, no. 2 (1984): 331.

7 Felski, 68.

8 Leach, 322-324.

restaurants, lunch counters, nurseries, playgrounds and rooftop gardens.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

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,<sup>11</sup> 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.”<sup>12</sup>

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9 Leach, 329, 326.

10 Felski, 68.

11 Located directly across Barrington St. from Bessie’s workplace. See Figure 2.2, Chapter 2.

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.<sup>13</sup> 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:

... Helped Mug select amethyst ring at Birks. ... [July 19, 1932];

... Did some Xmas shopping & was busy all nite.

[December 3, 1932];

... Went to some of the stores after work tonight. ... [January 19, 1934];

... Mug & Nine to fashion show at Eatons [department store]. [March 19, 1934];

... Went down to Kelly's [luggage and leather goods store] at lunch hour and picked out a little Morocco key case ... . [May 12, 1934];

... Went out to Simpsons [Department Store] then back to Gottingen St. where I bot white shoes \$2.49. [June 8, 1935];

... Phi took me to Robertson's Store [variety store, Gottingen St.] before we parted for the day. [June 22, 1935];

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<sup>13</sup> 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  $\Phi$ ) ... .

[October 7, 1933];

... had my usual Club Sandwich & coffee in the Fifteen cent Store & met

Phi. ... [March 10, 1934];

$\Phi$ '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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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.”<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup>

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

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14 Illouz, 38.

15 Illouz, 48.

16 T. J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*. (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 139.

17 John C. Spurlock and Cynthia A. Magistro, *New and Improved: The Transformation of American Women's Emotional Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 8.



consumer could feel she had come to possess both the tangible object as well as an associated psychological “bundle of attributes.”<sup>18</sup>

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”<sup>19</sup>**

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<sup>18</sup> Eva Illouz, *Consuming the Romantic Utopia: Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 38.

<sup>19</sup> “A Happier You” [advertisement] *Canadian Home Journal* October 1933, 76.

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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

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.”<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup>

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!”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Illouz, 37-8.

<sup>21</sup> [advertisement, Colgate Ribbon Dental Creme] *Halifax Herald*, 20 April 1932, 11.

<sup>22</sup> [advertisement, Oxydol household soap] *Halifax Herald*, 9 April, 1932, 12.

<sup>23</sup> [advertisement, McClary Gas Range] *Halifax Herald*, 20 April 1932, 11.

<sup>24</sup> [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.”<sup>25</sup>

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.”<sup>26</sup>

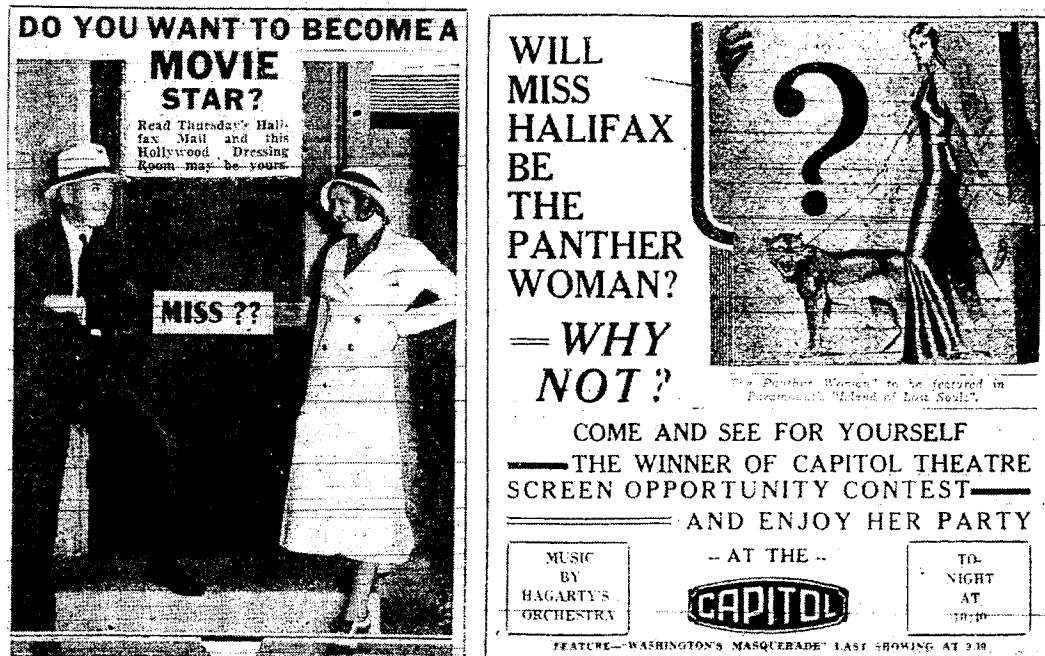


Figure 3-1: Hollywood glamour contest advertising, *Halifax Herald / Mail*, 1932. Left: *Halifax Mail*, 20 July 1932, 14; Right: *Halifax Herald*, 18 August 1932, 8.

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

25 “Hollywood Show Girls Come Out of Hiding,” *Halifax Daily Star*, 28 January 1932, 11.

26 “Gives Chance in Films to Halifax Girl,” *Halifax Mail*, 21 July 1932, 3.

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!"<sup>27</sup> Some stars taught women to be "lady-like, sleekly-groomed," and "quietly seductive"<sup>28</sup> while others taught men how to "make a girl feel that she is the only girl in the world."<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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."<sup>31</sup>

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

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27 [advertisement, Lux soap] *Halifax Daily Star*, 6 April 1932, 8.

28 "The Beauty of 1932 Must be Exotic or Distinguished for "It" Girls's Reign is Ended," *Halifax Mail*, 23 January 1932, 9.

29 "Romance Still Sought – Men Need to Learn Lesson," *Halifax Mail*, 9 January 1932, 9.

30 Kathy Lee Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 153.

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

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

... Spent an hour  $\bar{c}$  him [ $\Phi$ ] this p.m., then out to Fred's<sup>32</sup> 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,<sup>33</sup> 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."<sup>34</sup>

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32 Fred Ibsen, husband of Bessie's friend Minnie, and choir master at Bessie's church, manages the Fit-Rite Shoe Store, on Quinpool Road, Halifax.

33 Wamboldt diary, January 5, 1933.

34 Wamboldt diary, November 2, 1935.



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  $\Phi$  would like me better if I could afford to doll up the way Etha<sup>35</sup> can.

[April 7, 1932];

... Wore my very best clothes for the usual

Sat. p.m. visit. [May 20, 1933];



Figure 3-2: Miss Hill’s Beauty Salon advertisement. *Halifax Mail*, 31 October 1930, 19.

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

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35  $\Phi$ ’s wife

and self respect in the rituals of church-going, promenading, and visiting.

Appropriate attire was a requirement of social participation.<sup>36</sup>

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,"<sup>37</sup> and although she dreams of finding "more lucrative work,"<sup>38</sup> 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."<sup>39</sup> 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,<sup>40</sup> and she enjoys his teasing

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36 Peiss, 63.

37 Wamboldt diary, October 29, 1932.

38 Wamboldt diary, January 27, 1933.

39 Lary May, *Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 213.

40 Wamboldt diary, October 19, 1933.

attention when she wears her sister's "sparkly earrings" for a youth group play performance.<sup>41</sup> 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."<sup>42</sup>

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.<sup>43</sup> 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];

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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 Hill<sup>44</sup>. ... [March 10, 1934]

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44 Miss Hill included "wigs for hire" among the services offered at her salon, see Figure 3-2.

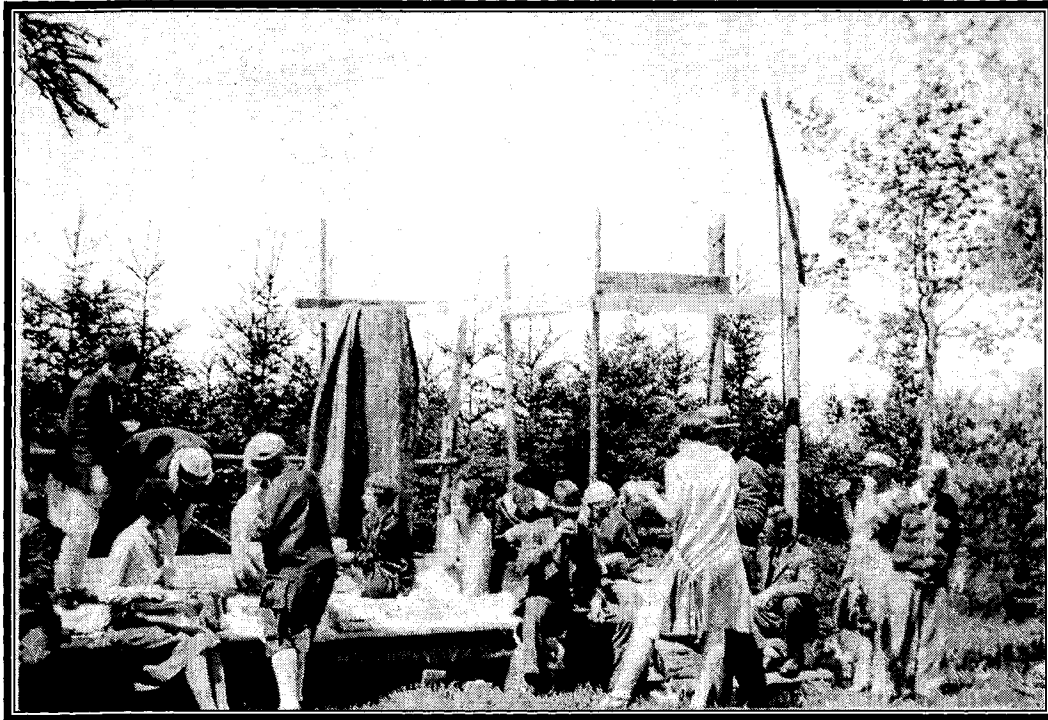


Figure 3-3: Dramatic performance preparations, Young People's Society, Disciples of Christ Summer Camp, West Gore, Nova Scotia, circa 1932. Photo courtesy of Rev. Neil and Shirley Bergman, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia



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."<sup>45</sup> Many of the identified gifts exchanged between Fred and Bessie<sup>46</sup> 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

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<sup>45</sup> Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 6.

<sup>46</sup> 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”<sup>47</sup> 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.”<sup>48</sup> 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

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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 c̄ 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 10° 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. Kipperd 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.<sup>49</sup>

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,"<sup>50</sup> 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.'"<sup>51</sup>

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."<sup>52</sup> 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

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49 Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth Century America*, Johns Hopkins paperback ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1989), 19.

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.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup>

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

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53 [advertisement, Calay soap] *Halifax Herald*, 23 March 1932, 5.

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.<sup>55</sup>

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 c̄ 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];

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<sup>55</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup> 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];

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<sup>1</sup> John C. Spurlock and Cynthia A. Magistro, *New and Improved: The Transformation of American Women's Emotional Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 13.

Feeling very sick and miserable with headache and biliousness. How I longed for  $\Phi$ '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  $\Phi$  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  $\Phi$  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  $\Phi$  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

[D]issatisfaction 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.... [T]he 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.<sup>2</sup>

Barbara Felski similarly describes this same phenomenon of intense longing, as “a distinctly modern sense of dislocation and ambiguity”<sup>3</sup> 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.”<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

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2 T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Press, 1981), 4-5.

3 Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 13.

4 Felski, 12-13.

5 Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 218.

Jackson Lears notes that “antimodern impulses ... were rooted in longings to recapture an elusive “real life” in a culture evaporating into unreality.”<sup>6</sup> He also suggests that antimodernism was more than simple escapism. Instead, he suggests that antimodern ideas often coexisted with enthusiasm for material progress.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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

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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.<sup>9</sup> Lears sees this enthusiasm as one expression of a cultural phenomenon he calls the therapeutic world view, 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,”<sup>10</sup> which Lears refers to collectively as the “cult of vital experience.”<sup>11</sup>

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,”<sup>12</sup> 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];

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9 T.J. Jackson Lears, “From Salvation to Self Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930.” In *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*. edited by T. J. Jackson Lears and Richard Wightman Fox. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 9.

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  $\Phi$  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  $\Phi$ . 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  $\Phi$  tonight. [October 1, 1932];

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

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

Out to Minnie's to supper.  $\Phi$  took me. Then to St. David's Church to hear "The Elijah." Home and from my window saw  $\Phi$  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."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.’”<sup>15</sup> Therapeutic ideals included the concepts of self-improvement, spontaneity, robust health, abundant life, the celebration of nature, and the cultivation of personal magnetism.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>, 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

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14 Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 52-53.

15 Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization,” 26.

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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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."<sup>20</sup> 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]

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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.

# Suppose Love Is Real In This Case

By VIRGINIA VANE

Dear Miss Vane: In reading your columns, I have noticed that there have been a number of letters dealing with the problems of girls who have fallen in love with married men. It is usually assumed by the writers of most of the letters that the girl in question is a cheap little flirt, out to get everything she can from another woman's husband. In other words she is branded as a gold-digger. No thought seems to be given to the girl who loves a man sincerely and lives with the constant dread that trouble might materialize in the future.

I admit that there are far too many cases of girls running after married men with no definite reason other than that of getting a so-called thrill out of a dangerous situation. And those girls are wrong I agree decidedly.

But what about the girl who can and does love her married man sincerely and steadfastly and truly—who would rather die than have any trouble ensue either for herself or for the man she loves? Isn't there something to be said for her?

PUZZLED.

Neither my correspondents nor this column have been, trying to prove that all the girls who fall in love with married men are wicked young sirens, nor selfish gold-diggers. What we've been trying to point out to misguided maidenhood that any girl who falls in love with a married man and doesn't take prompt and efficient steps to get over it—is just plain foolish.

And to this end we've printed letters from philanderers and philanderers' wives, disgruntled home-wreckers and trusting damsels seeking to show that nine-tenths of the married shiks who cause flappers' hearts to flutter, are nothing more than artists in bluff.

Admittedly there are illicit romances founded on real love. That is two people find suddenly that they're feeling the real genuine blue white emotion towards each other. Neither of them has wanted it. Neither of them is happy about it. But the emotion is there and it's too strong to be denied.

So far there is real love and plenty of it. But when the affair begins to drag itself out over a period of months, there begin to be indications that somebody is wrong—somebody is lacking in the kind of love that makes the world go round.

For if a man and woman feel the right way toward each other their instinct will be first and foremost to protect each that he is hopelessly tied for life—will not make his existence unendurable by reminding him constantly of all the happiness he might have had. She will not let him run the risk of losing any peace and security he has. She will let him go in order to give him the chance of finding at least tranquillity in the home he has made for himself. For she knows that so long as she is his constant companion, his home life is merely torture to him, and he cannot live normally and happily.

Similarly the man who is experiencing a true and tender passion will have no desire to make the woman he loves the heroine of a life-long clandestine romance. It will give him no happiness as time goes on to know that he can never offer her real protection or security. If he cannot be free to marry her, he will let her go rather than involve her in a relationship which will only hurt her in the end.

For the married man knows that eventually he has a home to go back to—a wife who will put up with him—friends who will forgive him for any slight irregularity of behavior they may have noticed.

But have you ever considered the fate of the girl who gives up her life to a hopeless infatuation for a man who is not free? Society punishes her for society has no mercy on those who love on the wrong side of life marriage lines. Her friends grow weary of giving her good advice and drift away. Her family disowns her. She is

completely dependent on one man for happiness and protection.

And it may have dawned on you if you've looked around and inspected some of the matrimonial situations near you, that the most infatuated husband sometimes falls out of love with his wife so that only the fact of their marriage keeps him by her side. Doesn't it occur to you therefore that the most infatuated lover might tire of his affinity to an extent which made it irksome for him to see her at all? What do you suppose then becomes of the girl who has given up her friends and family and her other chances of marriage, to follow blindly the great love of her life?

A wife may lament over the sign of her increasing age—but she has a certain serenity in facing the future for law and order decree that her husband should continue to be her mainstay and her support in her old age. And what sense of security can the fading mistress feel when she knows that she is bound to her protector only through love and that man's love is too often a fleeting fickle thing?

One of the most bitter experiences in life is that of renouncing a love founded on true feeling but even more bitter is the knowledge that through one's own weakness and selfishness one has degraded love and helped to ruin it.

That is why we urge the girl who has found her man too late, to give up the bitter sweet happiness offered her and look for a substantial lasting peace of mind which will enable her to lead a full and eventually happy life.

Figure 4-1: Virginia Vane, *Halifax Chronicle*, February 2, 1934, 7.

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,<sup>21</sup> 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.

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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).

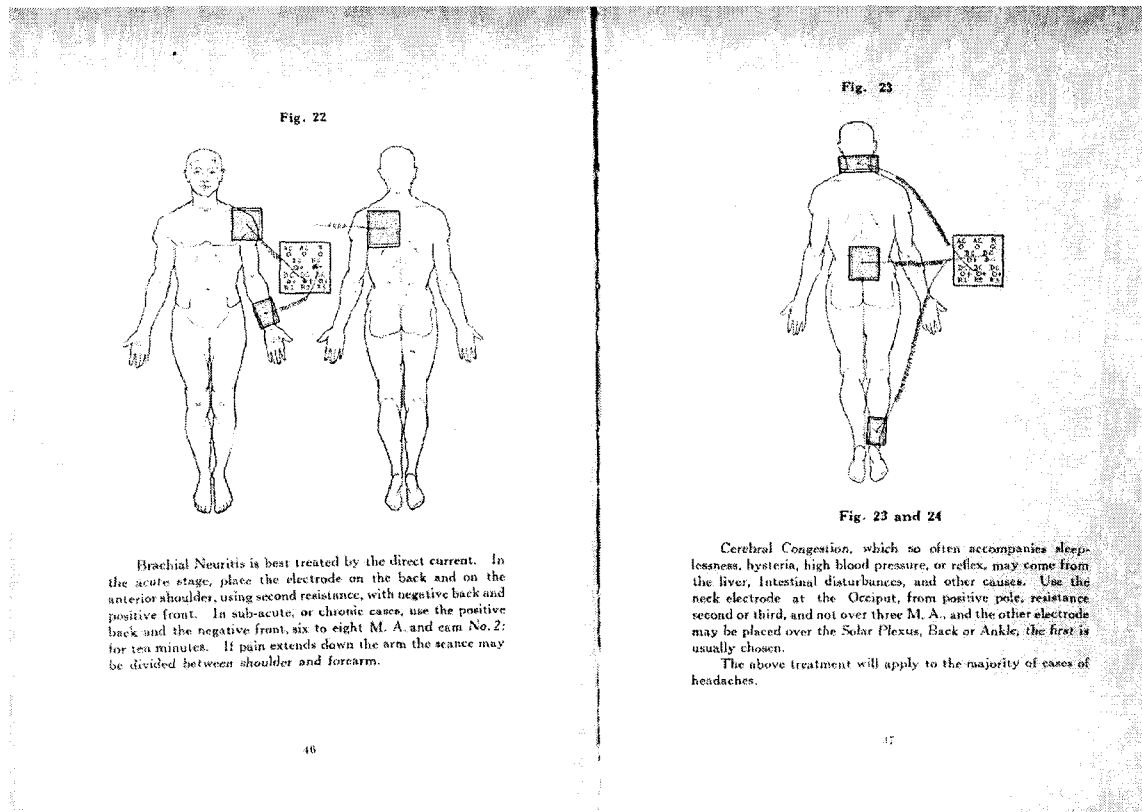


Figure 4-2: Morse Wave application instructions, in Frederick H. Morse, *Electro-therapeutics by the Morse Wave Generator*, (New York: the Author, 1921), 44-45.

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.’”<sup>22</sup>

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.<sup>23</sup>

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

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<sup>22</sup> Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization,” 11.

<sup>23</sup> W. L. Ross, “Mauger’s Beach Light,” *Halifax Daily Star*, 21 July 1932, 10.

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.<sup>24</sup> 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"<sup>25</sup> of the city. Bessie loves being "with the smiling face of nature,"<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>25</sup> Wamboldt diary, August 12, 1933.

<sup>26</sup> 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.”<sup>27</sup> 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

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<sup>27</sup> 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



Figure 4-6: Fred Wamboldt fishing 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.<sup>28</sup> [August 31, 1934];

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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, perchance, 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 come back 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 burried [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"<sup>29</sup> whose book, *Peace in the Heart* (1927), she mentions loaning to her brother-in-law Herbie.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup>

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

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29 Archibald Rutledge, *Peace in the Heart* (New York: Doubleday, Doran: 1931), xi.

30 Wamboldt diary, July 10, 1934.

31 Rutledge, 186.

Disdainful critics described Rutledge as representative of “the rapturous school of naturalists,”<sup>32</sup> prone to an “overcharge of sentiment and an incorrigible desire to moralize.”<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

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.<sup>35</sup>

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.<sup>36</sup> 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];

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32 “Books,” *New York Herald Tribune* (27 November 1927): 17. Quoted in *Book Review Digest ... Books of 1927*, s.v. “Rutledge, Archibald Hamilton.”

33 *Saturday Review of Literature* 6 (7 June 1930): 1113. Quoted in *Book Review Digest... Books of 1930*, s.v. “Rutledge, Archibald Hamilton.”

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."<sup>37</sup> 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.

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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 c̄ 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,”<sup>38</sup> “sweet, quiet, secluded, leafy dells,”<sup>39</sup> “roadside nooks,”<sup>40</sup> and “sheltered wayside havens.”<sup>41</sup> 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];

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38 Wamboldt diary, May 2, 1932.

39 Wamboldt diary, July 29, 1933; August 4, 1933; May 26, 1934; June 9, 1934;

40 Wamboldt diary, June 16, 1934; July 28, 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 uniting 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" (19<sup>th</sup> century France), "Naughty Marietta" (18<sup>th</sup> century France/New Orleans), "Berkeley Square," (18<sup>th</sup> century London), "Sign of the Cross," (Roman/early Christian epic), and "The House of Rothschild" (19<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup>

This literature of romantic activism portrayed the "fierce emotions and manly action of 'real life.'" <sup>43</sup> In 1896, a literary critic suggested that such stories enabled readers

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<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup>

Lears suggests that this genre represents another example of “the revitalizing, therapeutic function of pre-modern character, reaffirming the bourgeois ethic of autonomous achievement.”<sup>45</sup> Bessie’s love of these movies, and her enjoyment of similar books such as *The Scarlet Pimpernel*<sup>46</sup> and *Treasure Island*<sup>47</sup>, suggests that the appeal of the “regenerative powers”<sup>48</sup> 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 *Halifax Mail* when it opened in 1930<sup>49</sup>.

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43 Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 102-3.

44 Agnes Repplier, “Old Wine and New,” *Atlantic Monthly* 77 (May 1896): 688-96. Quoted in Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 104.

45 Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 104.

46 Wamboldt diary, February 22, 1934.

47 Wamboldt diary, March 20, 1934.

48 Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 104.

49 *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.

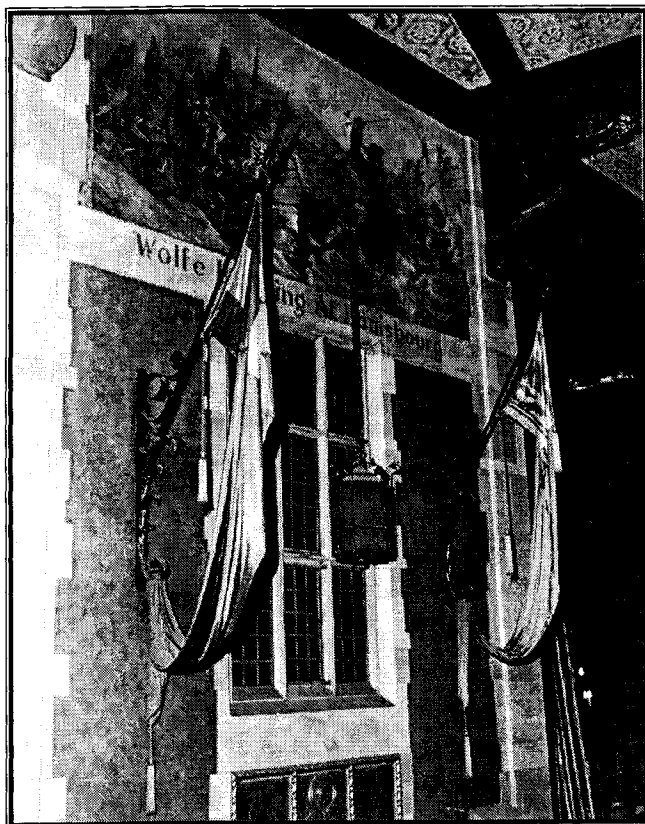


Figure 4-8: Capitol Theatre interior, with heraldic flags and heroic mural depicting the siege of Louisbourg.. Reproduced with permission, NovaScotia Archives and Records Management,

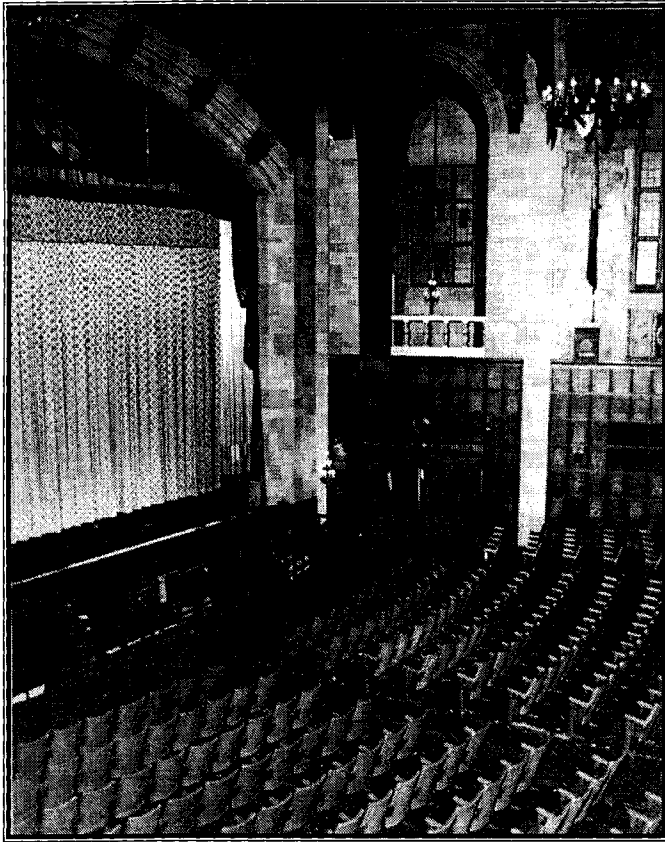


Figure 4-9: Stage and auditorium decor, Capitol Theatre, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Reproduced with permission, NovaScotia Archives and Records Management, Micheltree Collection.



Figure 4-10: Rest area adjacent the ladies' and mens' rooms, lower level, Capitol Theatre. Reproduced with permission, NovaScotia 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,<sup>50</sup> readers could discover the exploits of British army and navy heroes who lay buried in an ancient local cemetery.<sup>51</sup> On the same page, readers could also thrill to the 18<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup> (Figure 4-11)

In another example, an article exhibiting "exotic" and "distinguished" actress-beauties<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> (Figure 4-12)

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50 "Romance Still Sought – Men Need to Learn Lesson," *Halifax Mail*, 9 January 1932, 9.

51 "Many Heroes Lie in Old Cemetery" *Halifax Mail*, 9 January 1932, 9.

52 "Winter Too Cold for the Maroons," *Halifax Mail*, 9 January 1932, 9.

53 "The Beauty of 1932 Must be Exotic or Distinguished for "It" Girls's Reign is Ended," *Halifax Mail*, 23 January 1932, 9.

54 "Halifax Scenes Can Never Be Repeated," *Halifax Mail*, 23 January 1932, 9.



Figure 4-11: Juxtaposition of modern feminine glamour and old-fashioned rugged manliness, example I. *Halifax Mail*, 9 January 1932, 9.



Figure 4-12: Juxtaposition of modern feminine glamour and old-fashioned rugged manliness, example II. *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,"<sup>55</sup> "betook,"<sup>56</sup> "partook,"<sup>57</sup> and "henceforth,"<sup>58</sup> 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 ..."<sup>59</sup> 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,"<sup>60</sup> 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

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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.<sup>61</sup>

Lears characterizes this softened, liberal Protestant theology of the early twentieth



century as “a theology of formulized benevolence and personal well-being,”<sup>62</sup> that became suffused “with therapeutic ideals of ‘personal growth’ and ‘abundant life.’”<sup>63</sup> 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.

Figure 4-13: “Poor Pa,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 2 February, 1934, 7.

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

<sup>62</sup> Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 45.

<sup>63</sup> 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.”<sup>64</sup>

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.”<sup>65</sup> 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.”<sup>66</sup> 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

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64 Harrell, David Edwin jr. “Restorationism and the Stone-Campbell Tradition” vol. II of *Encyclopedia of American Religious Experience: Studies of Traditions and Movements*, ed. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams. (New York: Schribners, 1988), 845.

65 Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, M.G. 4, *Disciples of Christ – North Street Christian Church*, item #51 Church bulletins, World Day of Prayer and Maritime Convention programmes, circular letters to North Street Christian Church members, 1931-1963. Microfilm #616.

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.”<sup>67</sup> 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.”<sup>68</sup>

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]<sup>69</sup> 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”<sup>70</sup> she spends with Fred are sometimes “too sacred even to write about.”<sup>71</sup> Her use of the word “communion” suggests her estimation of the sacredness of their relationship:

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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.

68 F. L. Wallace, “The Christ Within” *Halifax Mail*, 1 February 1936, 12.

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 ...”

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.<sup>72</sup>

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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.<sup>73</sup> Bessie mentions loaning her copy of Barton's most famous book, *The Man Nobody Knows* to her friend Fred Ibsen,<sup>74</sup> 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."<sup>75</sup>

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."<sup>76</sup> 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."<sup>77</sup>

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

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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.”<sup>78</sup> Barton emphasized a “gospel of success”<sup>79</sup> which equated business with transcendent service.<sup>80</sup> 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”<sup>81</sup>

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,<sup>82</sup> finds his Bible Study sessions “very interesting,”<sup>83</sup> “splendid,”<sup>84</sup> “very inspiring,”<sup>85</sup> “exceptionally fine”<sup>86</sup> and “helpful.”<sup>87</sup> 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 c̄ a divine light as he speaks. [December 21, 1932];

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78 Leo P. Ribuffo, “Jesus Christ as a Business Statesman: Bruce Barton and the Selling of Corporate Capitalism,” *American Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1981): 211.

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.<sup>88</sup> 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."<sup>89</sup> 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"<sup>90</sup> and "Sun Ray"<sup>91</sup> 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

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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,<sup>92</sup> and she mentions the personal testimonies she hears from

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<sup>92</sup> "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,”<sup>93</sup> an international evangelical protestant group that promoted the development of close, personal relationships with God through fun and laughter.<sup>94</sup> Schooled in Fred’s “practical” Christianity<sup>95</sup>, 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.”<sup>96</sup>

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.

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93 Wamboldt diary, April 8, 1934.

94 “Brand New Way to Talk Religion is Outlined by Various Speakers,” *Halifax Daily Star*, 9 April 1934, 3, 7.

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."<sup>1</sup> She uses the term "feeling rules" to describe the emotional conventions that societies

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<sup>1</sup>Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 29.

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,”<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> 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.”<sup>5</sup> 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

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2 Hochschild, x.

3 Hochschild, 164-5.

4 Hochschild, 7.

5 Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, “The Work of the Heart: Emotion in the 1805-35 Diary of Sarah Connell Ayer,” *Journal of Social History* 35, no. 3 (2002): 586.

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup>

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

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<sup>6</sup> Blauvelt, 586-7.

<sup>7</sup> Blauvelt, 587.

<sup>8</sup> 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”<sup>9</sup> and dwell “in the fairyland of each other’s company.”<sup>10</sup> 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  $\Phi$  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  $\bar{c}$  Christ but He was bearing all the pain. [April 14, 1933];

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9 Wamboldt diary, January 28, 1933

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.  $\Phi$  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  $\bar{c}$   $\Phi$ . [July 16, 1932];

Am so disgusted & angry  $\bar{c}$  myself. Spent a few hours driving  $\bar{c}$   $\Phi$  & spoiled them by my silly arguing on something I know nothing about & that doesn't add to one's inner life at all.  $\Phi$  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  $\Phi$  & then burnt the letter. [April 4, 1933];

Round the Waverley Road with  $\Phi$  tonight & how beautiful that road is.

Sometimes when I am tired I guess  $\Phi$  thinks I'm glum. And our situation affects me so. [July 11, 1933];

Saw  $\Phi$  a.m., noon & evening for a few moments each time. If I love him truly 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:

Phi 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."<sup>11</sup> 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."<sup>12</sup>

Arlie Russell Hochschild suggests that managed feelings are often expressed through a strategy she refers to as "deep acting."<sup>13</sup> 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."<sup>14</sup> 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

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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.”<sup>15</sup>

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  $\phi$ . 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  $\phi$  on the old road. ... [October 27, 1932];

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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  $\Phi$  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  $\Phi$  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  $\Phi$  is so willing to let things be as they are. [January 4, 1933];

... Gave  $\Phi$  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];

...  $\Phi$  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  $\Phi$  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.<sup>16</sup>

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:

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<sup>16</sup> 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.”<sup>17</sup> 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.”<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

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.”<sup>20</sup>

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

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17 Carolyn Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1988), 48.

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.<sup>21</sup> 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

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<sup>21</sup> 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.”<sup>22</sup>

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.<sup>23</sup>

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

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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.

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**Appendix 'A':  
A Wamboldt Family Album\***

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\* 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. Havelock Wambolt, 6 Bilby street, was buried under wreckage and had to be extricated by her daughter, Nina. Mrs. Wambolt had her collar-bone broken, and when ordered to leave the city, walked to Rockingham with broken collar bone, and from thence was driven in a lumber wagon to Hammonds Plains. She is now with her sister, Mrs. Joseph McEachern. Her home is a complete wreck. Her daughter Nina was also severely injured. Mrs. Wambolt suffered intense pain for a day and night before a doctor could be obtained.

*Halifax Herald*, 11 December 1917, 2.



Nina Wamboldt (left); Margaret Wamboldt (centre); Esther Wamboldt, (right), 1918. (Temporary accommodations, Dartmouth, following the Halifax Explosion.)

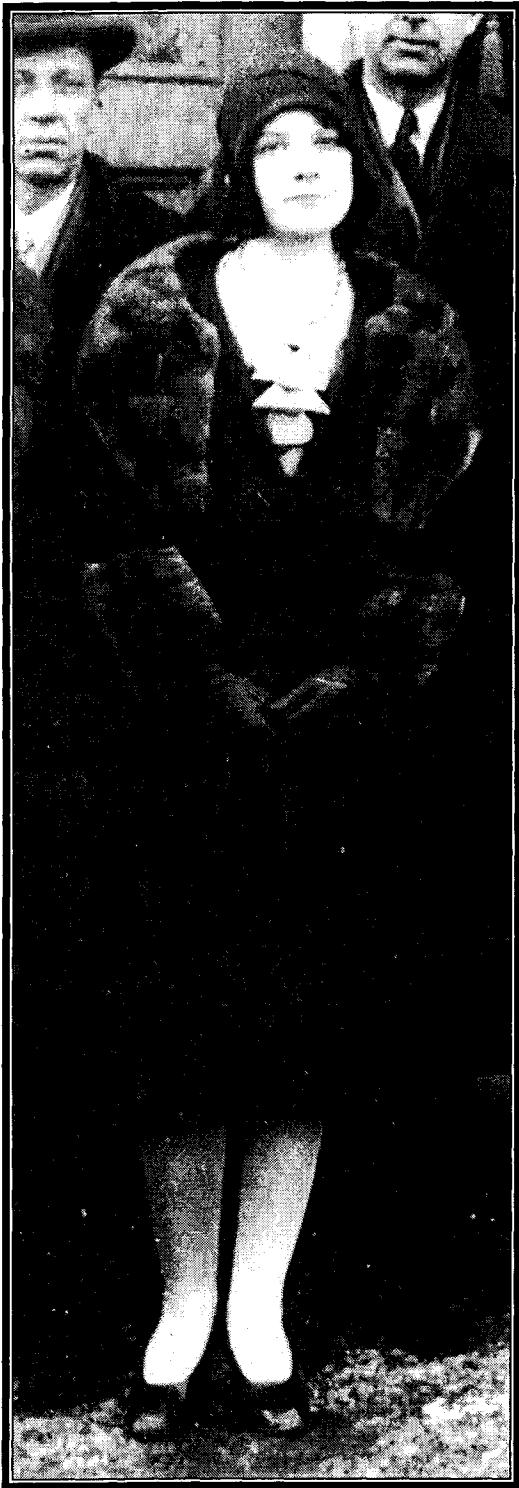


Esther Wamboldt (left), Nina Wamboldt (centre), Bessie Wamboldt (right), 1918. (Temporary accommodations, Dartmouth, following the Halifax Explosion)



Bessie Wamboldt, 1929





Margaret Wamboldt, 1931.



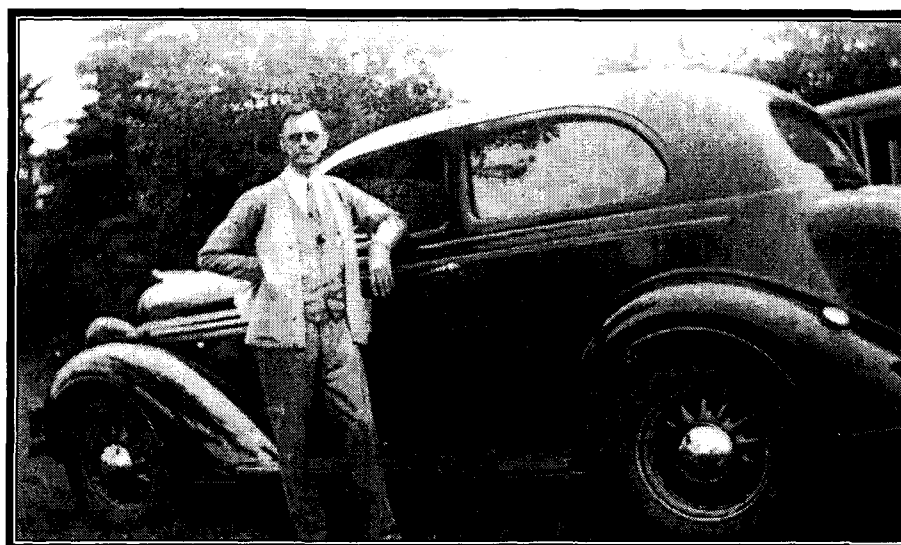
Bessie Wamboldt, 1931.



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.

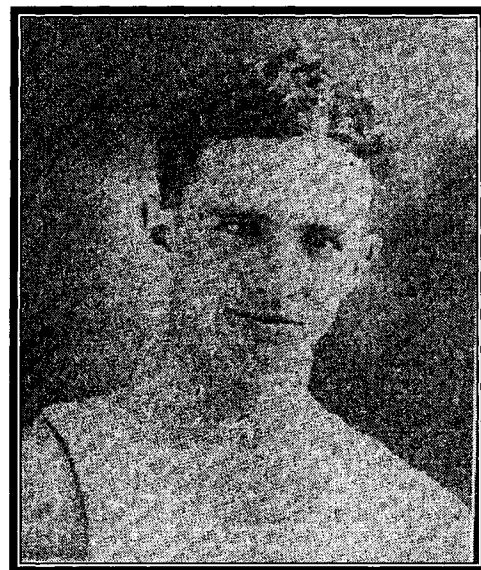


**Above and Below:** Margaret Wamboldt, Halifax Social News Notices, circa 1932, preserved with Wamboldt family photo collection.



**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:** Edith Leonard, 1934.



**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, 2<sup>nd</sup> from right; Laurie Cameron: back row, standing, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left; Marshall Wallace: middle row, standing, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left; Fred Wallace: front row, seated, 4<sup>th</sup> from right.



Sunday school group, North St. Christian Church, September 1936.  
Esther Brown: front row, standing, far 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. Saw my Sweetheart both with the Midnight Watch Service at Charles St. Church and this p.m. on our trip to Dartmouth & Waverley.

1933 New Year on Sunday. Repeated our Xmas Pageant tonight. Margaret entertained a few of the young people after church. Dred presented with a Radio Lamp by choir.

1934 Spent a quiet N. Year Monday but had an hour or so of perfect bliss & g up on the hill. Enveloping mist & darkness enfolded us on all sides.

1935 In all day. Murg & I to Garrison tonight. saw Count of Monte Cristo. The pecked us up and brought us down. Bad storm on way home.

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# JANUARY 2

1933 Shall make use of this space neglected since last year. Spent all a.m. putting my room to rights & disposing of unuseable gifts. After dinner here Smith & me at 3<sup>30</sup> and took me for a lovely drive with him out the Bedford Road. Then to Mabels to supper & afterward read until 2 a.m. when I crawled into <sup>my</sup> bed.

1934 Am developing a wonderfully protective inward attitude towards Mrs. Johnsons pessimism. God has provided for me beautifully. Will continue.

1935 Phi says things that reveal his inner attitude so clearly, they hurt me thru & thru. Last night of special course classes. He picked Margaret up on way over.

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# JANUARY 3

1933 up and away before Mabel as either was up this a.m. Met & sound the corner where he was patiently waiting for me the I was quite later down to the first D. B. A. meeting I ever attended. Heard very interesting lecture on Louis Pasteur by Dr. Dailhous. Walked home alone. Glad to retire.

1934 Went to P.M. tonight & the thought indicated by Mrs. Allen on Pauls Conclusion in Acts 22 really helped me. but one each individual must decide for himself.

1935 Saw Phi a.m. and tonight. Didn't go in to the office at noon tho he bro't me home. Finished a sermon tonight.

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JANUARY 8	JANUARY 9
1934 The news of Francis Kinty's death came this a.m. Shocking & the greatest tragedy perhaps to the two kiddies. Shedd put her few words of friendly warmth sent at times time away in my little treasure box & when I am prone to be hard and unforgiving, take them out and read them. Went to Harwood Street to see her tonight. Margaret ordered a spray to be sent from us.	1934 Francis Kinty's funeral service held this p.m. at 2.30 and what a wonderful service it was! The quartette Doris, Edith, Shred and Reed sang beautifully and the sermon was life giving & full of the hope of an immortal & eternal life. Returned to the office after the 19 service. Spent this evening ripping up two four spring coats in order to properly remodel one.
19	19
19	19

JANUARY 10	JANUARY 11
19	1934 Mum and I went down to the "Full Gospel Church tonight to hear Chas. speak on "The Practical Christ". Meeting us afterwards in the 19 entrance he kindly drove us home. Mother much impressed with the practical implications of his address.
19	19
19	19
19	19

JANUARY 12

1934. Phi and I sat in the car parked around the corner, until 6<sup>40</sup> p.m. this evening. I had hoped that it might make him understand more fully how 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. Mabel down to night. Walked up with her at 11 p.m.

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JANUARY 13

1934. Saw Phi and rested with him awhile on the Kearney Road this afternoon. Called him by phone this evening and afterwards sat & pondered his scarf. God has given me a vision, in my feeling for him, of what perfect love can mean. His stronger than he can break through me apart but my heart feels I should break any personal tie in order to be associated with him. Altho it may not be Christian I long for him to feel thus, also.

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JANUARY 14

1934. As I felt there was a conflicting personality seated beside me in Church this a.m. it prevented me from taking the morning sermon in shorthand & was so sorry not to have "If Winter Comes" among our collection. And to Minnie's fur supper to listen to the broadcast afterward, topic of sermon "Possessing our Possessions". Getting off tram car at Gollinque Street I was met by Phi who brought me home the rest of the way.

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JANUARY 15

1934. This winter has been the coldest we've experienced but due to P's thoughtfulness I have minded it very little. 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. However not unless that change would include parent relationships. Saw Phi morning & evening. Muz to "Crock" at O. Wallace's. Spent the evening typing.

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JANUARY 16	JANUARY 17
19	1934. Prayer Meeting night as I went over very few there at first but others came in later so we had a nice meeting.
19	Phi later said he felt very tired but couldn't tell from the way he conducted the meeting. Walked home with the young girls Pearl & Frances. Phi met me & drove me over to the meeting.
19	Will picking up at the office. How I pray for the opportunity to earn a sufficient livelihood to give me independence & thus his happiness. I do need it so.
19	19
19	19

JANUARY 18	JANUARY 19
1933. Received my beautiful, beautiful envelope this morning and it is just what I have always longed for. And as I met & thought in the Hall of the St. P. Bldg. he gave me a letter to <del>write</del> & told me it was to R MacArthur. Just the fact of them corresponding gave me such a headache I had to stay away from Prayer meeting to compose & discipline myself.	1934. 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 & spend my extra time with him. Went to some of the stores after work tonight & then met Phi again. Later he goes to Dodge where he takes part in conferring the 31 <sup>st</sup> . Stayed at home tonight and finished the sermon "Not mending." I love the feeling they give me by being able to share in Phi's work and his beloved sermon.
1934. Stayed in tonight. Sent Minnie's dishes back to her & lent Fred my book "The Man Nobody Knows," as he was anxious to read it.	19
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JANUARY 20	JANUARY 21
1934. 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. When we separated, he to buy his coat & I mine and 19 then we met again. Very cold night. Phoned Phi & said Goodnight. Stay here to see Meg. My coat came at 9 pm.	19
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JANUARY 22	JANUARY 23
1936. Tonight at 10 p.m. Halifax time the Radio brought us a re-broadcast of The Proclamation this morning in London at St. James Palace, Charing Cross and Temple Bar. of our new king Edward VIII. A wonderful experience to hear the shouts and noises of the London crowds, the booming of guns sounding far all the world like the angry roar of a great lion and the precise English voice of the announcer.	1933 Croquisole party on at Minnie's but I simply couldn't go. My main need in life seems to be for peace & quiet & time for meditation and I get as little of it. But 19 oh, God has been so good & gracious in what he has given & I. It is the long & earnest desire of my heart that it may be continued. My constant prayer.
19	19
19	19



JANUARY 24	JANUARY 25
<p>1933 My boy and me and took me for a little drive before Play practice. Oh these evenings seem so wasted. Why did I engage in this when I already have so much to do. 19 Must be more wise another time. How I long for a little home with J. but that cannot be. I am thankful, very very thankful for my dear home here.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1933 A very interesting and helpful Prayer meeting service held in the Vestry after which we had our annual S.S. meeting. Nothing eventful and practically the same working corps as last year. Walked quietly home alone in the soft darkness afterward. Gave me a feeling of sadness &amp; I know he did the same.</p> <p>19</p>
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JANUARY 26	JANUARY 27
<p>1933 When the busy bustling day is past how wonderful to come to Fred's understanding to know the communion of our perfect love. What an 19 hours of joy we spent together. I seemed such an effort to go to play practice afterward.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1933 My first evening at home this week. Finished up the last two pages of the "Gospel from Patmos." Work at the office is picking up. I have given my 19 best in service to Dr. Johnson yet he does not want to give me a living wage. Some sort of change is being thrust upon me. Must find more lucrative work.</p> <p>19</p>
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19	19

JANUARY 28

1932. A wonderful change has come to me. Conditions in my life at least some of them look as hopeful as ever but my inner viewpoint seems changed. It is such a blessing to have hope for the future. Spent a wonderful hour & 1/2 this p.m. & he rang up again tonight. We seem to have caught that elusive elf happiness.

1930. The last evening of our month's Broadcast this year. I liked the whole service best of all. Sermon The Three Voices.

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JANUARY 29

1934. How I wished that I might have gone to Mrs. Ramo's to the "Crock" 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.

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JANUARY 30

1934. Stayed in tonight watching on records Orrel's Birthday & Margaret as a surprise had gotten him a beautifully decorated Ice Cream Cake with "Happy Birthday & Orrel" inscribed in pink on the white surface. We all gave him our little gifts at dinner-hour.

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JANUARY 31

1934. Over to Prayer meeting tonight & listened with delight to the second lecture on the life of Saint Paul. Saw Margaret afterward who hasn't been here for some months. Had a nice talk with Mrs. Biganron & went home feeling happy.

19 Phi had given me a lift on the way over & the service was deeply interesting & I felt that the providence of God had kept me all day.

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FEBRUARY 1	FEBRUARY 2
<p>1934. Phi is busy tonight, having three patients. I 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.</p> <p>1936 Phi had his picture and sermon in the Evening Mail. Saw him for a short time after being in the Garrick to see "Way down East".</p>	<p>1934. Saw Phi in the "early morning" three times at noon for he met &amp; drove me home at dinner hours. The evening hour was used as together again. Later I called him and also talked with him about a letter I announced had read in "Virginia Jane". 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.</p>
19	19
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FEBRUARY 3	FEBRUARY 4
<p>1934. Met Phi in our accustomed place &amp; we went to Bedford &amp; then returned to our little road &amp; stopped for a little while under the old Pine Tree. Phi gave me a wonderful letter, perfect in its expression of devotion which I later read &amp; placed with my sacred treasures. He gave Margaret her little gifts tonight as tomorrow as her Birthday. I spent a quiet pleasant evening at home.</p> <p>1936 Phi officiated at Masonic service for funeral of Mr. D. W. Cameron at United Memorial Church.</p>	
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[February 5-10 completely blank in diary manuscript.]

FEBRUARY 11	FEBRUARY 12
<p>1933. Mr. Johnson back to work but feeling pretty miserable. I feel so discouraged with my weekly pitiful. All it does is put board. A negro one at that, and carfare. In to see of this p. mt I caused a scene of course, with my attitude toward the present situation.</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1933 What a full day. Church. S. S. Old Ladies Home. Minnie's to supper. Mabel down after Church. The one blessing was that short drive with G. 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 one.</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p>

FEBRUARY 13	FEBRUARY 14
<p>1933 To play practice last night where, with the help of several others we got Daddy Shepherd's jig-saw puzzle put together and it revealed his smiling face. Home quite late. I hope I have finally had lessons enough to teach me "No more plays in future."</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1933 St. Valentine's day and a beautiful Lacy heart Card brought great happiness this a.m. Then at noon an unexpected pendant. I did feel as happy. But there is that aching demand for something deeper. I am a loner. A prisoner where, at least, the strain + stress of life could be lost in fellowship.</p> <p>1934. Sent Phil a little doggie card for Valentine's Day. He gave me a beautiful card + a box of perfume. These various discussions we have seem to be bothering him. But 1934 with Minnie, tonight I was the third of the Community Circle. Heard the two interesting fragments which was of great enjoyment + profit to me.</p> <p>19</p>

FEBRUARY 15	FEBRUARY 16
1933 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. Last night I saw the Basin so calm with the reflected beauty of the surrounding hills mirrored along its margin. I seemed very happy today. None of those inward compulsions that bother me seems to affect him at all. He says he has never above all that but does a woman I wonder ever was above wanting	19
1934 Such a cold in my head it bothers me more than the usual ones I get. Got shoe mending kit tonight in Club & Ten Cent Store & stitched my pump shoes	19
19	19

FEBRUARY 17	FEBRUARY 18
1934. Saturday & instead of driving with Phil as usual I went into the office. the first Saturday p.m. for quite a while. that I've done so. Anything hurting & affects me terribly & while he is concerned I haven't the heart to do things to make him suffer the occasionally my worried thoughts find expression to him causing worry and anxiety. But he knows that he alone possesses and has pleased my heart. My love is faithful	1934. Annie away sick. G'd have an appendix operation. S.S. not so well conducted as usual because of last minute arrangements. Was able to get both of Phil's sermons today. Had a rest and a nap this p.m. Over to Church tonight as usual but stayed to Endeavour afterwards as we had as our guests the Central Baptist Young people. Children's story this a.m. was about George Foxwell who became blind in his teens but lived an inspiring & noble life.
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19	19

FEBRUARY 19	FEBRUARY 20
<p>1934. Had our happy moments again today. Have had them through these past years &amp; what life giving strength they impart. Tonight I attended the B. G. F. J. Girls Party given in the Vestry and it was a very profitable thing for me as a means of contact with my S. S. class as they all belong. Had 19 had a sun Ray treatment dinner here for my cold &amp; I looked like I had been somewhere under the tropical sun. But it did marvels for it cured my cold completely.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1934. These mornings when physical limitations are almost apt to have a depressing effect. Try one's endurance. felt sufficed but at cleared up early in the afternoon and felt more normal. Phi must have a great deal of real affection to see me through these quiet times when I must appear as listless. Went to my first practice 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.</p> <p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>

FEBRUARY 21	FEBRUARY 22
<p>1934 Half of this week that I dreaded as on account of its business, gone all ready and I hope to get through it with as little strain as possible. Went to Boyer Meeting tonight &amp; learned of a new family around the corner on Guttingen Street that Mrs. Miles wants us to visit. Very interesting study on the Gospel of St. John. Walked home &amp; Blanche &amp; Clifford Ramsey. Washed &amp; scarf there to bed.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1934 Saw Phi morning, noon &amp; night. These precious moments. Over to the concert given by the Choir tonight &amp; such a few in attendance that one felt almost ashamed to have brought outside talent. After the concert we stayed to play Practice "Youth Comes Tripping" and stayed too a short while watching but we were there until 12<sup>15</sup>. Stilled "The Scarlet Pimpernel" which I found in the library upstairs but did not bring it home as have not time for it now.</p> <p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>

## FEBRUARY 23

1934. Phi met me as usual this a.m. and, oh what a teasing about Margaret's sparkly earrings that I wore last evening. Saw him for a few moments at lunch time and again he brought me home at supper time. Mabel down this evening working at her dairy sweater. Instead of doing much reading we talked. And to my delight, after I accompanied Mabel part way home & returned down Blomon St. Phi again picked me up. He was very tired. Having been to Cantonville all evening.

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## FEBRUARY 24

1934 Dr. Johnson very busy all morning & I pleasantly so. Left at 1:15 p.m. & after the purchase of a few peaches avoided my way up to Saint Paul's Hill where Phil awaited me and we sped away for a short drive together out the Bedford Road and back. Phi looking better than he did this a.m. Margaret & I slept away a couple of hours before supper at which I felt refreshed & like accomplishing something. Finished "Divine Guidance". Stood in the darkness of my room gazing at floor on M. St.

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[February 25 – March 2 completely blank in diary manuscript.]

## MARCH 2

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## MARCH 3

1934 Pining, with Saturday and Phi & I drove to Bedford & back, keeping to the main road as the others are trucky this time of year. Returned home early, around 3 p.m. had a nap, then up to Mabels for supper. Borrowed his blue & white polka dress for the play. Raining hard & Phi waiting when I came out & took me for a drive down around the Lord Nelson & the Nova Scotian. Very tight & half rich with a fresh coat.

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MARCH 4

1933. Feeling very wretched and miserable with this head cold so didn't attend a.m. church service but went to S. S. calling for June on my way & introducing her to our S. S. Went to church tonight but felt very sick and shaky so was glad to hurry right home. Mam rolled up to Aunt Ruth's tonight. Didn't even try to take down the sermons in what Rand today. Must drop them until after the play.

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MARCH 5

1933. Left to Mabel's for the p.m. We partook of a delicious Turkey dinner and after some practice for tonight's music we four girls went upstairs. Wadd and I read "Tom Jones" for the rest of the afternoon. This was the first of our four Sunday evenings on the air. Saw G. for a brief walk after C. C.

1934. Still this cold causing much discomfort. Phi giving me Sun saip & treatments which help so much.

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MARCH 6

1934. Accepted Minnie's offer to have supper at her place and go from there over to the Hall. Had very tasty supper. Miss Rand there also. Phi came out to the Hall arriving about the middle of our practice. He stayed & heard us through then brought us northwards home. Received a lovely gift today of half a dozen beautiful white linen hankies. Chosen by Phi himself.

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MARCH 7

1933. Tuesday evening - out to supper at Minnie's. Mr. Kilgore there also. Afterward to Church where I played for the services after which he had never heard me play so well before. Met P. & had a little drive before returning home & retiring.

1934. Out to West End Hall again tonight for play practice. Unlike my much the previous unimagined part I have in it. My & I worked home.

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MARCH 8

1933. These days march on. Surely God does give strength and resource to go through the difficult places of life. I have felt the need for these past two months of a few quiet hours alone with my books and my thoughts but life does seem such a rush. At least p. & I are near & can be together some.

1934. What night of "Youth Comes Lapping." Phi very busy between 5 & 6 going to Int. meeting & with calls on this side. Very disappointing performance.

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MARCH 9

1933 My very irregular way of keeping these notes should make this book a puzzle perhaps to all save myself. That I should wish for one field the need of one safe and sure confidante. Got the best thrill today when I related a pair of gloves for G. Grey suede size 8. Had our evening drive together.

1934. Saw my beloved 5:15 pm and he brought us home from the West End Hall tonight. "Youth Comes Lapping" went off much better than last night. Box from Corrie arrived today & received a lovely box of white stationery from Phi. Acknowledged former by letter & letter in person.

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MARCH 10

1934. Dr. Johnson very busy this morning and the time passed quickly for Saturday & took me down to work & had a quarter of ready to give me for lunch. After leaving the office at one p.m. I returned my borrowed wig to Miss Hill. Then had my usual Club Sandwich coffee in the Oyster bar & saw & met Phi. Took a drive out around Pine Hill & stopped just beyond the building for a short while. So peaceful & quiet there with the soft blues & grays of water & sky & the snow so pure white. Then Phi brought me home. Spent p.m. putting things to rights & evening getting ready for S. B. marrow. Saw Phi at 8:30 passing by in the chair.

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MARCH 11

1934. 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 now I still love the occasional hour for dreaming. It seems that in our small, beloved Chichester 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 & thoughtfulness of my heart.

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MARCH 12	MARCH 13
1934 How my whole being craves the kind warmth of the spring sun and the wonder & delight of the newly pulsating life in Mother earth. How this cold seems to bind everything in its spell, even hearts that should be warm always with love and goodwill. Some, even the big grip, & winter must relax. What a delightful relaxation when it finally is broken & our lovely Spring appears.	19
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[March 14-15 completely blank in diary manuscript]

MARCH 16	MARCH 17
1934 Received from Phi the sweetest St. Patrick's Day Card and two jewelled Katie Klefs. Saw him morning, noon & night and he seemed so happy. After supper I started off for Maryland Hall & he met & drew me down. There an annual Children's Temperance meeting was held & awards given for many centers. Heard Mrs. Newcombe speak for the first time, also Mrs. Mearns & Mrs. Mr. Miller. Mr. W. spoke very nicely. Walked home with the girls. Glad of opportunity for fellowship.	1933 Had took Mag & I out to Bethany Church Hall tonight. John Ramey brought us home. 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. Was feeling much better tonight because I had a treatment at noon time.
19	1934 Just a short drive to Phi today as the roads were bad. Homer worked busily preparing Corine's suit to a suitable outfit for myself.
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MARCH 18	MARCH 19
<p>1933. As I &amp; 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 extraordinary encouragement was wonderful and the sight. Here on this evening I penned a short letter to Mum &amp; placed it by my window &amp; what a thrill as I gave her the signal.</p> <p>1918 Came home from Church tonight &amp; wrote the sermon right away. Started on the subject of chrysanthemums for Mum's this p.m.</p>	<p>1933 The first Sunday night on the "ice" for our minister. I thought the whole service exceptionally fine &amp; inspiring. The sermon was uplifting to me. Had Esther Ransom with me in Sunday School for the second time and what a help with the kiddies. Hope she likes it well enough to stay.</p> <p>1934 Stayed in tonight &amp; just did not have time to be attended to. Mum &amp; Nene to Jackson show at Catons.</p>
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MARCH 20	MARCH 21
<p>1933. Very encouraging remarks from Mr. Fisher about last night's broadcast &amp; how he was impressed by the sermon. It is wonderful to feel a small part of something that is being builded, with God's help by human labour and love. One can work with added zest. Had a brief half hour with J. met the Bedford Road coach.</p> <p>1934. Up to Mabel's for supper &amp; evening. Phi took me up &amp; brought me home. Met Miss Crawford &amp; Mrs. Todd - Aunt Daisy &amp; Aunt Maggie. Finished "Treasure Island."</p>	<p>1933. My dear little miss Daisy. Just opened some letters &amp; found you again tonight. I decided that from hereafter I will write to you more often. I am back from Idaho on the 20th.</p> <p>1933. Rainy blowy day. I treated me to supper at the Green denture &amp; the show "The Sign of the Cross" afterwards he &amp; I to Elstonmouth and he told me the outline for next Sunday's sermon.</p> <p>1934. Very helpful happy attitude in Prayer meeting. Fred Tolson &amp; Phi practicing piano afterwards.</p>
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MARCH 22	MARCH 23
1932. Over to Thad on the trip to Eastmore tonight. What a dear feeling of companionship and experience together. It seems like we are one.	1932. In St. Paul's Church tonight & heard Mrs. Williams' Choir sing the "Gloria". The service was very good. Enjoyed it very much and spiritual song.
1933. So Ray & Muriel walked home. Mabel afternoon & upon leaving her suit & we had a few minutes on the hill. Then I came home & he went to his collar to the party at Mrs. O. Wallace's.	1934. Finished "Blundering into Paradise". Phi out to Fred Green's to payant practice. 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.
1934. Was so glad to have the evening free to transcribe. Reasons for Courage as Phi wanted it & I had kept him waiting for it some time.	19
1935. Out to our spot on the N. 2. A and there I received my lovely B. & Had a short session of reading & resting together, then back to routine again.	19

MARCH 24	MARCH 25
1932. Went in & bought what I think is a very pretty tie. Blue & white stripes with a satin finish. Had a car Carter card for dinner.	1932. Good Friday spent at home working and reading. But my pleasure and happiness came with a trip to Dartmouth with my sweetheart in the evening. Received his Easter gift.
1933. Stayed in tonight finishing a sermon.	1933. In Saturday home together was sweet. After leaving I wandered all over town in search of a Volvo dress which I finally located Home at 6 <sup>30</sup> . Had a telephone call later on.
1934. Warm sunlight bathed the roads as Ph. & I drove & rested awhile together. He brought me an Evening Mail. Phoned him this evening. He seems very happy with things as they are.	1934. Last Sunday for Phi's pre Easter classes.
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MARCH 26	MARCH 27
<p>1932 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. does not seem very much like the Easter season.</p> <p>1933 The last Sunday of our Decadeast this time. P's evening sermon seemed like a complete poem to me. I loved it. Saw him for a few blessed minutes afterward then out to Merrill's &amp; see George.</p> <p>1934 Phi speaking at Kays Grove tonight but some impulse stopped me going at the last moment. Wrote to Connie instead.</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Easter Sunday and seemed the most beautiful one in the Church I have ever known. Flowers on pulpit &amp; platform beautiful. Six came forward. Sixth anniversary of Fred's beginning at the Church.</p> <p>1933 One of the worst snow storms of this season. Took my suit dress down to shed it. It would indeed have been a catastrophe had he not liked it. We saw each other more, never with.</p> <p>1934 Got Easter cards off to Boston and to Cos.</p> <p>1936 Phi off on the a.m. train for Mass. Saw him for a short while before going up to choir practice at Brown's last evening.</p> <p>19</p>

MARCH 28	MARCH 29
<p>Mar 30 1932 These pages stuck and misled me as dates have to be changed. De Prayer meeting broke and read it for a few moments which were very sweet. Connie in California.</p> <p>1933 Saw my G this a.m. at noon. Spent time at home washing &amp; sewing. Reminded my Spanish Lile dress. Spiced seeing P this evening but was trying to leave the patient.</p> <p>1934 To Prayer meeting. Men practicing afterward for the Pageant. Shelt. rather early walking home with Blanch &amp; Clifford but saw Phi on any way over.</p> <p>1934 Saturday. Got a letter at General delivery yesterday on the train. Looked for rain caps. Then home early for Saturday p.m. Home at 2:30 p.m.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>Mar 31 1932 End of March. Have been glad for the last two busy days at the office. Hope some firm refreshingly thinking of myself. Stayed in tonight for the first time this week.</p> <p>1934 This week has gone by so quickly. Phi to his Machine meeting tonight. Margaret &amp; I to the second show at the Casino. Good picture "I 19 am Argentine." with more puppet figures than I ever saw in my life. Its a real relaxation to go to bed without the feeling that one must be on the job in the m.</p> <p>1935 Out for a short while at 4:30 to mail some letters which Phi put in the box for me. Home to many chores. Dined with Pappas.</p> <p>1936 This is the first Sunday for Mrs. Litter Phi speaking in Lexington Library.</p>

MARCH 30

March 28  
1932 This Easter Monday busy and no holiday for either Fred or me but we 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.

1933. Out to Munnie's to see her. I took one. Then to St. David's Church to hear "The Cyprian." Home and from my window saw a flash of signal from a black-roofed.

1934. Phi speaking at the 12-3 service in Charles Street. I in all day until tonight when we saw The Papant at the Church. Beautiful moon & stars.

1936. Received another special delivery letter today written also Tuesday on the train. Saw my money order. Enrollment. Home & England.

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MARCH 31

March 29  
1932 Fred spoke at the "Commercial Club's Luncheon." Today on Sun I sat with the Chinese Ladies. Went out to Munnie's tonight. There is, always has been something in Harold's personality that attracts me as a

1934. I and I out to see little road where we rested awhile. Gave him his pin. And I received my lovely scarf and yardley powder & cream. Then home - rest of day occupied with usual tasks. Holiday Monday. This weekend has been a little break in the routine of work.

1936. Phi home tonight at 6 o'clock. Saw him around 8. Had news of Connie also little cube of soap & lovely - looks happy and rested & says he feels fine.

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APRIL 1

1932 Took Frances little gift up to her tonight & then out Fred and spent an enchanted hour with the car, ourselves and rain on the roof. This perhaps understandable only to us two.

1933. Saw G and had an hour of perfect communion with him. Then bought a new hat, wore my ivory-thick necklace. Very, very busy Saturday night.

1934. Very dull a.m. Stormy p.m. Lushington. Cantata at Church tonight. I speaking to Rose Cross Chapter, Masons, this p.m. Same sermon as a.m. Invisible Seaside. Good

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APRIL 2

1932 depressingly dull a.m. seemed to do some thing to my spirit in spite of all there has been to undigged faith & make it strong. Saw I for a short while this p.m. he patiently & lovingly tried to cheer me up.

1933. To all church services. Up to M. rances & then with G & Harlowe & had such a wretched pain under the shoulder blade that I was a regular case.

1934. Mailed my reply to the N. F. A. last night. Easter Monday. Had & I cleaned house. Up to M. rances in the evening. met Phi afterward for a short drive together.

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APRIL 3	APRIL 4
<p>1932 Gave of his letter today. How shattered my hopes. Everything seems darkened. I pray God that my will may be lost in his. Not weakly impotent but glowingly active.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932. If p and I are to continue what basis shall it be on to keep life + joy within instead of this awful feeling of thwarted plans + hopes. It seems only trust + faith can help.</p> <p>1933. These bitter groans and blinding tears that come over some casual remark. Why can't I be sensible. Spent the whole evening writing to p &amp; then burnt the letter.</p> <p>19</p>
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APRIL 5	APRIL 6
<p>1932 All the walls and paint of my little bedroom washed and clean + fresh curtains up. It has indeed been a sanctuary. Thank God for home.</p> <p>1933. How numb + cold + dead my heart seems at the mere thought of p + I parting. All the warmth + glow + gladness leave me. He spoke in United Memorial tonight.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Have new curtains to make sometime. Now, as our rooms have two windows each. Then some other necessary improvements such as a new lamp shade + some rearranging.</p> <p>1933. Saw p-morning, noon + evening. Then a quiet drive out the Bedford Road. Had two big ice cream cones. Received the Doggie Book + his wonderful poem divine hour.</p> <p>1934 Mabel down tonight. Going up + he at 11:30 we and the returned man who runs so much. I felt rather tired though I know he is harmless.</p> <p>19</p>
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APRIL 7	APRIL 8
<p>1932 How difficult it is for my feminine soul to renounce vanity. All the shop windows have such temptingly pretty things but times are dull &amp; money scarce.</p> <p>1933 J looked so happy at lunch hour and gave me his gift. A wonderful letter &amp; his Easter gift. I am afraid that my remonstrance over the phone was a hurt to his dear heart.</p> <p>1934 Wonderful ride &amp; J on our little road. It was so good, with my aching back just to ride in perfect contentment &amp; him seas.</p>	<p>1932 so my old spring clothes will have to do again especially as I got that typewriter. Wonder if J would like me better if I could afford to doll up the way Etha can.</p> <p>1934 Had speakers from Afford Group, Miss Mue Farlane, Edinburgh, Scotland &amp; Mrs Gibson, Toronto, to speak in our U.M.W. They just gave testimonies of how their own spiritual lives had been changed. Had short phone talk &amp; J in p.m. to Mabel's for supper. Saw J and had short drive to him after Church then home satisfied &amp; to bed.</p>
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APRIL 9	APRIL 10
<p>1932 Wrote a long letter expressing my very inmost thoughts to J. Sometimes it seems so easy to feel warm and glowing to him. If only I could free myself from this.</p> <p>1933 To all Church services. Spent the p.m. at home for a change which I quite enjoyed.</p>	<p>1932 Gave J his letter. Tried to get him by phone at the office this p.m. but impossible. So I'll do his home in p.m. and Mabel &amp; I stayed in &amp; read all evening.</p> <p>1933 J got the New Church drove me home this evening. And I tried my parting with the little Christ but it had to be up to Mabel &amp; the Bromfield Party tonight. Wonderful monthbook note.</p> <p>1934 Mugs I drove to St. David's Church to hear the Cantorico "St Paul". J picked us up &amp; drove us down. So dear of him. He to meeting of Men's League tonight.</p>
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APRIL 11

1932. May is so good to relieve me of Thursday night at the play. Seems I get no spare time for the reading & practising that I really want to do.

1934. Clear & Beyer's meeting & stayed to  
the Annual S. S. meeting afterward. Fred  
Thorn, as Chairman of the Nominating  
Committee presented his report very creditably  
& I felt hurt that he did not introduce his  
and list with more consideration. I had a  
wonderful list of Jesus' utterances pertain-  
ing to eternal life in P. M.

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APRIL 12

1932 Don't rehearsal of the play  
Everything going very well but the play  
lacking in the dramatic possibilities  
of the last one we put on.

1933. I did me home from work tonight.  
I did not go to the women's meeting but  
did some typewriting.

1934. Had a life giving treatment today. Received a box nicely arranged with several donations & Synonym & Anonymous dictionary in it. So cute. *Smile*

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APRIL 13

1932 As with us for a couple of days.  
Poulter's glads hand and smiling face  
kept me to stay for longer meetings as I tried  
to keep in a Christian spirit of being cheerful

1933 but for the first evening drive in the  
new car which is indeed lovely but needs some  
association. Received of Carter Booklet & beautiful  
beautiful card. How grateful I am for his love.

1934. J. & I. a Masonic meeting tonight. Had a drive this evening out the Bedford Road in the pouring rain. Was rather looking for a return from the N. S. A. today but none came.

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APRIL 14

1933 Stayed home tonight and did all those little jobs that accumulate so. Was in bed when Nine & Muey returned from the play.

1933 Good Friday. Saw neither seen nor heard you  
 full day but in that peaceful <sup>tranquil</sup> ~~tranquil~~ last night a calm  
 & peace came to me that I feel assured will endure.  
 I wanted to hear the Lord & Christ but He was <sup>too faint</sup> ~~too faint~~ <sup>too faint</sup> ~~too faint~~ all

1934. G. & I. had lunch at my favorite  
lunch counter. & I and I had our first trip to  
Kearney Road since Texas Day. Wonderful  
relaxation together. G. & I wrote a story this evening.

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APRIL 15

1932 Last night of the play "The Family Disturbance" & was there all evening for nothing. I met me & took one over & brought me home. So good of him.

1933 Saw my G this a.m. as we drove downtown together. My father's remembrance to him was such a tangle. He is so dear to me. Spent an hour & him this p.m. then out to look to buy my shoes. I'll call home tonight.

1934 Most interesting S.S. Class work in this quarterly lessons. How we got our Bible. Phil preached wonderfully this a.m. Mr. Katherine Whitten from India spoke at this evening's service.

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APRIL 16

1932 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.

1933 Happy, happy Easter Day. Amorous all day of my nearest dearest. 7 a.m. service. Church. Did evening Cantata. Then a wonderful short drive to P's. Ledges home to open my two lovely figment roses.

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APRIL 17

1932 The end of the Sabbath spent here in quietness reading P's wonderful letter. It has been a busy day but I am grateful for health to enjoy it all.

1933 Took herbie up from Bridgewater today. Came by auto. Roads very bad. Home all evening. Had my lovely roses up by me for a short half hour, drinking in their loveliness.

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APRIL 18

1932 Down to G and had a treatment tonight. How grateful I am for them and how much better they have made me feel. Now my one hope & ambition is to get a worth while work in life.

1933 Saw G at morning & noon. But with G for a little while tonight. How my whole being aches for those intimacies of love which are denied us.

1936. Left today for Hantsport to visit E. Connie. Phil took me to Wendover Junction where I got the train. Enjoyed the landscape view on my drive up. 19 Annie Mae Entsch met me at Windsor & a parcel for Connie. Annie & Paul Graham waiting at Hantsport. Out to Mrs. Graham's.

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APRIL 19

1932. Up to Mrs. Baker tonight to see Goldie who looks as changed. To come from that house out into the glory of the moon flooded night almost seemed like a direct message from our Creator.

1933. down to St. Matthews Church to Pine Hill Convocation tonight. Mr. Basil Matthews speaks. It helped to realize that he also was somewhere in the audience. Courage, I am praying for.

1936. Connie & I spent the a.m. in bed after having talked till about 2 p.m. Mrs. Graham had a lovely dinner for us. With her son & daughter-in-law Anna. Connie showed us snaps of her trip abroad. After supper had a quiet walk & talk. Then later to bed where we talked some more.

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APRIL 20

1932. To Goldie's funeral at this p.m. and to supper meeting tonight. Hoped to see J. afterward but other duties precluded our meeting. Newly resolved after that funeral service to push against wellfully trusting.

1933. I looked till today. Still waiting we were out the Bedford Road & back. I felt so strangely silent. I wonder if he noticed it. How dear and good & wonderful he is & was.

1934. Very busy day for Phil. Married treatment. I surely felt very tired tonight & finished sermon.

1935. Easter Saturday. The I to work in barn & had gifts to him very small. Two lovely ones one dropped, other was colored. But for a chat & evening.

1936. Connie & I washed & went to part of the train. Parted at next stop. Then the drive home. I had met me at station. Phil there too & a hard coupe.

APRIL 21

1932. The same round of daily duties. Lives to Choir practice tonight after which we went over "Mother Jones Day." How great a need there is for a union light that cannot be dimmed by spiritual things.

1933. East member home today. So good to be back in my own room. Little bit it is with my own things around me. I had one of those happy, sick spills today. I cannot help but <sup>think</sup> tonight.

1934. spent p.m. driving. Phil's boyhood & struggle. He has overcome early handicaps. He gave me a magazine on Journalism. Heard our first prog. chorus.

1935. Easter Sunday. Sang in choir. Had our two roses on the pulpit. Lovely services good congregation. Biggest in a.m. Grand from sermon on Immortality.

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APRIL 22

1932. Saw J. as usual at noon. Up to Mabels for supper after the day's work was ended. Left then at 8 p.m. and J. and I had a quiet hour on our little road. Beautiful clear starlit night.

1934. All happy. both Phil & I. Wonderful drive way out past where we got our Xmas tree yesterday. Keeps lingering gloriously in my mind. I spoke this a.m. on "What Jesus means to me."

1935. evening "Words that Help." We had a very interesting class period today on the translation of the Bible. I sent Mary flowers from Kew. Up until 12<sup>30</sup> reading my scribbles.

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APRIL 23	APRIL 24
1932 This morning's drive was sweet but the hours spent in the sanctuary of that quiet room this p.m. gave of the first of those two treatment at which I have profited. Washed my face after supper.	19
1934 Started a. m. sermon this evening. Didn't see Phi at lunch hour because Fred didn't have the car. Deposited \$14.00 with Canada Permanent. Met the fellow in there 19 who knew Margaret from seeing her at the 'if'.	19
19	1934 did some very necessary jobs this evening. Saw p lunch hour. Received a lovely pair of gemmetal Rainbow stockings this evening. Phi has to go to Dartmouth.
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APRIL 25	APRIL 26
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19	1934 Real spirit of fellowship at Prayer Meeting tonight. Subject The Holy Spirit. Walked home with Beale Young.
19	1936 After Endeavour last evening, which I led, Charlie talked to Margaret for an hour. Disturbingly unfair. Chuck talked to me in his own quiet interested way.
19	19

APRIL 27	APRIL 28
1933.	1933. Did not see Phil today as he was very busy. Sometimes I get lonely for his physical nearness but all the joy of knowing that the narrow hold <sup>ing</sup> promise of a sight of him.
19	I get so jealous sometimes just a smaller jealousy of even those engaged in work with him.
1934 Phil not looking well at noon. Keamed late that he felt sick spell coming on. Worked at p.m. sermon tonight. Saw him from my bedroom window.	1934 Drove a.m. drive through Apfreville.
1935 Got the little new "Lincoln Kip" today. Didn't even say a sentimental good-bye to Vallette. Just let him go in a casual way.	19
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APRIL 29	APRIL 30
1933 Saturday. Though doing my best at the office it is very discouraging. Sometimes working where there is no desire for improvement less office equipment & encouragement. Know my job has been a big consolation making up for all others. The same building houses me & my love. In to see him things in & had to start on a serious strain up to Mabel's tent.	1933 This whole space for Sunday April 30/33. Well spent day at Mabel's. Went all p.m. to Church as usual & Mr. Curwens preached. Small congregation. A great temptation for me because of his absence but I preached at United Memorial. Just before you filled me when I preached Mabel & I up on way home took us for a short drive.
1934 A deviation from our usual sat. visits today. Mugs & I went to the Capital to see George Arthur in "The House of Rothschild". Phil invited me to lunch & the show.	19
1935 Mugs & I to Capital. Phil picked us up & drove us down. Picture was "Naughty Marietta" starring Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald.	19
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## MAY 1

1932 Church as usual. Saw me over with Miss J. after p.m. service to plan for this week's conversation. Important thing to me was that p. has had one of those nasty upsets.

1923 I knelt by my bed to write contented this night because I have seen my Aired this day and all as well, between him & me. He is a dear & three appreciable this evening.

1934. Anna's C. G. T. girls had their concert tonight. Did surprisingly well, especially Pearl Young as the colored mammy.

1935

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## MAY 2

1932 He had a short drive before work out to our Medieval Castle and I told p. I wasn't going with him today. I was tremendously glad that I did for we saw each other again.

1933 Over to Anna's C. G. T. demonstration. The girls did well but how flat it seemed. I gave me a nickel to buy candy. Miss playing in concert at Bluff School tonight.

1934. Mum and I over to Margaret Brown's tonight to see her father. He stayed about an hour. Saw our wreath along with the other flowers.

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## MAY 3

1933. As we took a short drive along the Redford Road tonight I explained to p. why I didn't feel like attending the Women's meeting and he spoke as tho. he understood. I believe that 19. 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.

1934. Phi gave me the surprise he's been saving for two weeks. Got volumes on journalism.

1935. Miss and I down to a Conservatory Concert by Mr. Evan Williams & his orchestra. Heard Mrs. Cruikshanks sing. Fine music & fed very pleasing vocal.

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## MAY 4

1932. Ann and I were taking a short drive round the Farmington Road when should see pass but Marshall with a truckload on the way to Messing about. He however passed unnoticed.

1933. Saw p. a.m. noon & evening for a few moments each time. If I love him truly why should I always have this aching heart even if his ideas of honor are different from mine?

1934. Mr. Brown buried today. Phi and I decided we'd better discontinue our lunch hour moments together for an indefinite period.

1935. Very sick. Bad bilious spell. Home at 12 noon. Missed our regular Saturday hours together. Met for a minute Saturday night & Phi gave me a little Silver Jubilee pin.

19

MAY 5

1932. Something must have been accumulating in my system for I was dreadfully sick but went with Laurie down the Bay Road. Oh, that half hour at lunch time when I <sup>the pain</sup> justly took needed

1933. Put my Easter Rose leaves away in a box tonight & I feel in the sentiment of Major Pickthall's words "Gone are our days, old days, lovely & lost, & few. But the first, stay my face and awake in the olive."

1935.

To Church all day. Much better but shaky yet. Looked both sermons. Promised Mr. Stachhouse a copy of the morning one. "King George V. by the Grace of God". Work my spring coat tonight. Phil preached spellbinding at both services.

19

MAY 6

1932 This was such a beautiful little book when I started and already I have blotted and reported some pages. Does the eye of God draw such an my life book?

1933 Met Doug Riney for the first time tonight. Met May to Capital. Happier tonight but so long for my beloved. Saw him this time. Dad, getting too old to work any more. If only I could get a more <sup>remunerative job</sup>.

1934. Phil & I had a long drive out the Bay Road. Picked a few white violets at a wayside grove where the woods were sure with the promise of a springtime.

1935. Holiday. Celebrating King George's Silver Anniversary. Had only a brief phone conversation with Phil this afternoon. Saw him thru the window tonight.

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MAY 7

1932 Hunted all over the place for a lamp for Laurie's graduation present from Mugs to me. Met Mugs to a show in the evening but I stayed home & made hand lotion for my <sup>beloved</sup>

1934 To all Church services. Spent the afternoon looking over my two new books on Journalism. I know that they are crams full of helpful hints for me. Phil & I know must find it difficult sometimes to carry on with his Sunday work amid all the trials and <sup>from his pack</sup> difficulties. Saw that mayflower of difficult

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MAY 8

1932 I wonder is Laurie attracted by Mugs. If she could feel a mutual attraction between me it would be spellant but then life has a strange way of juggling our plans & hopes.

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MAY 9	MAY 10
1932 Went to the Farewell Party at Missie's and when I came in around 10 p.m. the rooms seemed to brighten & take on new life. His very presence thrills me there and there.	1932. Lawrence's Graduation day. Went to the exercises.
19	1934 Through this week's very deep that I feel I have arrived at a clearer insight into Phi's desires and wishes than ever before but felt so wrong tonight that
19	19 Margaret was young & began writing and could play I stayed at home did some sewing and went to bed early.
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MAY 11	MAY 12
19	1934. Edna showed me an ad in the Star for an office girl so answered it tonight but without much hope of a change. Saw Phi this evening and
19	had a phone conversation during hour and received the little bottle from him. Went down to Kelly's at lunch time and picked out a little morsel key case
19	for him. Studied some S. V. lesson 6 night instead of the usual Saturday morning spirit that way.
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MAY 13	MAY 14
<p>1934 Met by Phi this a.m. Later we drove a short distance out the St. Marguerite Bay Road and enjoyed the loveliness of reviewing greenery through what we called the Curved Window. Coming home he told me the story of "If Winter Comes." Later he called me on phone. Gave him his little black leather bag 19 case today. How well he looked during that quiet hour. God has given me the supreme gift of love happiness within my heart.</p>	<p>1932 I back from digby tonight and we just spent a fine moment together. Had a short social chat &amp; Merg's game tonight &amp; washed on my dress this p.m.</p> <p>1933 Es. was with me to Church tonight. I went up for a short while after Church with Mabel. Saw Ruth Wallace there.</p> <p>1934 Very tired when I left Phi tonight. Had a lovely hot bath then to bed. Merg &amp; Mabel out for a lesson in copying Braille tonight.</p>
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MAY 15	MAY 16
<p>1932 Had an accident that brought me home quickly from a.m. service. I to Boden to his grandmother's funeral. Mr. G. R. Ramsey preached this evening.</p> <p>1934 Still do not see Phi dinner hours but in the a.m. and evening hours. Recurrence of that nagging pain behind my right eye tonight. Merg out to college graduation this p.m. and to the Communionist class tonight. Phi like the dear he is brought me my second copy of the Luther &amp; Journalist. Started sermon tonight then looked over some of my past scribbles. Now 11 p.m. I must sleep.</p>	<p>1932 Saw I this a.m. and now, I was heart hungry to see him. So after the day's work it was wonderful to spend a short time in the evening with him and dear.</p> <p>1933 What a sweet morning drive. Rod's address told him about my walking with such a beautiful vision this a.m. So the presentation for Harold, at Minnie's tonight.</p>
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MAY 17	MAY 18
<p>1932. Usual routine at work. To Choir practice tonight. Mabel home with me afterwards until 11<sup>30</sup> when I washed to Windsor Street with her.</p> <p>1933. Over to Prayers Meeting. Very interesting series on the "Early C. Busch". Met Mrs. MacEwen's new little Beaudry with whom I went to school.</p>	<p>1932 My little interval of excitement at midday one of the chief joys of life. Round Waverley again tonight. Real companionship <sup>as usual goes on</sup> less none of its subtleties but rather universal.</p> <p>1933. Out for a brief drive with the car and only tonight.</p>
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MAY 19	MAY 20.
<p>1932 Surprised to find Car Hubie here from Bridgewater. Just till tomorrow. Rush to curl Car's hair trunk but didn't make much of a success.</p> <p>1933. Whitewashes at work as the office Mr. J. gone on a trip to Fredericton. Eng gone on John train to Bridgewater. Glad to get out to purchase Linoleum. This <sup>bedrooms</sup> <del>upstairs</del> till</p> <p>1934. I was a lovely drive down to turning Cove. Stood on a great rocky cliff overlooking the blue green sea &amp; saw it break in foamy spray against the jagged rocks below.</p>	<p>1932 Work - Prayers Meeting tonight. Had a drive home afterwards. Washed some on my new dress.</p> <p>1933. This seemed such a gala day. I felt free from the oppressive spirit of Mr. Johnson's perpetual pessimism. More my very best clothes for the usual sat. p.m. visit.</p> <p>1934. To Church all day as usual. Came home right after Church and got ready for whitewash tomorrow.</p>
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MAY 21	MAY 22
<p>1932 Leaving office at 1<sup>30</sup> had lunch in town then spent a perfect hour with <math>\phi</math> and he brought me home. Enamelled my bedstead and transcribed a sermon before bedtime.</p> <p>1933 Sunday with its round of sacred duties. Esther &amp; West <math>\phi</math> gave me no help to aid with my twelve small pupils. To Mabel's all p.m. Home night after the evening service.</p> <p>1934 House upset. Ceilings being white washed. Gave Phi sermon, daisies and robin song this morning.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Gave <math>\phi</math> a little verse to <math>\phi</math> along with a note. But he called up after the service &amp; as a delightful surprise we spent half an hour out together. He was quite tired after the day.</p> <p>1933 Very upset at the office today. Had the little portable typewriter today &amp; did one sermon. Mugs I sent to Frances Keates to take &amp; I did put down Lincoln in entrance.</p> <p>1934 Up to Mabel's to supper. Read "Poor Splendid Wings". Phi met me unexpectedly &amp; brought me home &amp; kept me from getting well. Gave me a new writing</p> <p>19</p>
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MAY 23	MAY 24
<p>1932 To <math>\phi</math> office where I was given a wonderful treatment. Then to Dartmouth and drove around Waverley. Home at 11 p.m. and night to bed.</p> <p>1933 Saw <math>\phi</math> a.m. noon &amp; evening. Had a long drive with him tonight. All three from Windfall Junction &amp; Fall river, such a pretty country road. The country <math>\phi</math> gave me a box of peppermint candies.</p> <p>1934 To Prague Meeting with Mugs. Mr. Johnson there. Mr. MacPherson through white washing the ceilings this evening stayed to supper.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 <math>\phi</math> up to the Gore. Worked all a.m. to Stephen &amp; Mugs in p.m. Long for an hour of quiet thought and meditation tonight.</p> <p>1924. Worked at putting my wardrobe in order washing ironing, sewing until 3 p.m. Hooped up till now, bedtime. Read some of Pilgrim's Progress. Had a <math>\phi</math> away all day. at Rodan.</p> <p>1934 Holiday - I did &amp; I did to country. Mugs &amp; I to Capitol. Phi there also. House cleaned front room this a.m. Typed sermons this evening.</p> <p>19</p>
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MAY 28	MAY 27
1933 These sweet days seem so full of activity that time for the usual deep thought seems difficult to obtain.	1934. No all church services. Quiet rest and enjoyed the a.m. session. Did not say best & take down the morning and. Did church service.
1939 From dining, looking at the very many things, then arrived to observe all the time. I suppose it is just as well to be busy for 3 years as for 9 about of time.	of best church. My small attendance no had a simple service & read the message of the day. He was so good to stay. I suppose would work up with it.
1939 I suppose it is just as well to be busy for 3 years as for 9 about of time.	1934. No all church services. Quiet rest and enjoyed the a.m. session. Did not say best & take down the morning and. Did church service.
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1939 I suppose it is just as well to be busy for 3 years as for 9 about of time.	1934. No all church services. Quiet rest and enjoyed the a.m. session. Did not say best & take down the morning and. Did church service.

MAY 26	MAY 25
1933 This morning, along with Margaret & a party of the family, some went to the beach. Had a very enjoyable time playing in the sand. But most of all enjoyed the beautiful view. I am sure that in other, I believe, didn't witness any young.	1934. Margaret and I and the morning hunting for chipmunks. Almost took my child, drinking & taking the one I was at yesterday. Took today. There was something all the week's work of life as to his of the time. Little watching. Saw the morning and evening. Am so thankful to see him looking well.
1934 Margaret & I went to the beach & stayed all day. Took a very early. Had a very enjoyable time. Took to the beach. Margaret & I stayed today at London.	1934. Margaret and I and the morning hunting for chipmunks. Almost took my child, drinking & taking the one I was at yesterday. Took today. There was something all the week's work of life as to his of the time. Little watching. Saw the morning and evening. Am so thankful to see him looking well.
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1934 Margaret & I went to the beach & stayed all day. Took a very early. Had a very enjoyable time. Took to the beach. Margaret & I stayed today at London.	1934. Margaret and I and the morning hunting for chipmunks. Almost took my child, drinking & taking the one I was at yesterday. Took today. There was something all the week's work of life as to his of the time. Little watching. Saw the morning and evening. Am so thankful to see him looking well.

MAY 29	MAY 30
<p>1932 My conception of our Church has changed but not as a better change I think. We've stopped idealizing the institution but realize that it needs demands our best work.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 As we drove thru the country road together and saw the perfect beauty of the weather that flushed the places lakes &amp; the glow we talked together of the things nearest our hearts.</p> <p>1934. Miss down to Mr. Kishpatrick about her eyes today. In prayer meeting tonight everyone surprised to see her &amp; dark glasses on. One thing for which I was very thankful was the advice she gave her concerning her ears. Phi gave us a stirring lesson tonight on Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.</p> <p>19</p>
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MAY 31	JUNE 1
<p>1932 I had such a wonderful treatment from J and we had such a wonderful communion in our epiphany of thoughts as we drove around. We really felt right that the year.</p> <p>1933. Over to Prayer Meeting and the study of the "Early Church" from Acts is so interesting. Mabel &amp; I home together in the room.</p> <p>1934 Got my little wooden box expensed 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 &amp; my books &amp; papers will be behind.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Didn't go to Prayer Meeting tonight. Stayed home and tried to transcribe part of J's last Sunday a. m. sermon.</p> <p>1933. Play practice at the Church tonight. Dad's Jordan MacKay carried on so that the practice was of little help.</p> <p>1934. Told Phi tonight that I'd like to go to Hammond's Plains tomorrow. Gave my guarantee to Mrs. Harpel tonight. After that read "If Winter Comes" till bed time.</p> <p>19</p>
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# JUNE 2

1932. Up to Mrs. Brown's for supper. Then to Chon's practice and home with Mab. Saw G for a few delicious moments at noon and tonight after work when he drove me home.

1933. Missed G on the way home. Waked after supper on my bed. G rang up & how glad I was to hear his voice.

1934. Saw Chi this a.m. & received the Mosquito cream & letter from him. He drove me home down the dirt to Hammond's Plains & I had a good view of the most beautiful view of the busy place from the fence by the

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# JUNE 3

1932. This holiday being spent with Mabel. We stayed in bed all a.m. kept house all p.m. and went to Chances to mind the children while she & Wallace went to a school home around midnight.

1933. Celebrated the holiday by staying home & working. Had the loveliest drive & thought up thru the Plains & Leesville. He left me with such tender expressions of love & his beautiful gift.

1934. Beautiful quiet day and my mind is at rest tonight. I wrote Phil briefly feeling that he understands. My neck & back aching rather severely.

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# JUNE 4

1932. Saturday a.m. Dr. Johnson away all a.m. Had a perfect p.m. with G at the office. Up again to Mabel's for supper after which Mabel, Luther and I went to the Capital.

1933. Oh, the feeling of peace & happiness to be here in the home that our loving parents have labored & sacrificed for. This endless gossip on matters of such light import is so fascinating.

1934. Came up from Bridgewater this a.m. Marys J. to Capital in p.m. Walked home through Gardens and Camp Hill. Worked on "Exploited Glory" tonight. Thus ends the weekend holiday.

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# JUNE 5

1932. At Mabel's all day. Heard Mr. Machead from Imperial speak on the Rich. Young Rules tonight. G at Imperial. I returned home directly after Church.

1933. The days seem so wonderful starting & ending them with G. Now I pray that I may have continued work near him. I pray God for that most earnestly.

1934. Two shows in succession. Went to Garret tonight to see Greta Garbo. Phi gave me a darling note & treated me to supper & the show. met me afterward & we drove our first visit this year.

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JUNE 6	JUNE 7
<p>1932. Had a wonderful treatment tonight. These certainly make me feel better. Left early &amp; he had to go to Elmwood.</p>	<p>1932. Chair supper &amp; entertainment. Had a few words to Laurie for the first time since he came down from the Gate.</p>
<p>1933. Took out play to Menquodobait &amp; night. Small house. Moonlight drive home very beautiful. Home at 2<sup>45</sup> p.m. Wish that drive could have been with J.</p>	<p>1933. Was surprised at being so wide awake today after having such a short sleep last night. Stayed in &amp; went to bed tonight. J. did bring me home from work.</p>
<p>1934. May and I to Prayer Meeting. A very good group there. Splendid study house. About the hidden year in Jesus' life. Mum &amp; Ess up to Aunt Ruth's.</p>	<p>1934. Finished up steps for Ess's birthday. Very cold for this time of year. Ess sent to Minnie to supper. On to see Phil at noon the first for some time.</p>
<p>1935. Mum fell today on the steps &amp; hurt her leg.</p>	<p>1935. Ess &amp; Hubie home - just leaving when I arrived home for supper.</p>
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JUNE 8	JUNE 9
<p>1932. May &amp; Marshall to see Altho. I over to Prayer Meeting &amp; had a drive home.</p>	<p>1932. Stayed in &amp; worked all evening. So many small jobs that I couldn't stop even to view the sky but it was very beautiful at 10<sup>15</sup> p.m. when I retired.</p>
<p>1933. Transcribing J's sermon on the Wulps. Put up new front room curtains. Rays in backyard stealing rhubarb from next door. Saw seat at Waverly &amp; J tonight.</p>	<p>1933. Annie treated her Alice Maynard &amp; I to dinner at the Green tonight. In appreciation of S. &amp; work. Met J afterward and had a lovely drive out Kearney Road. Waved Ess's hair.</p>
<p>1934. Saw Phil this a.m. Added 1/2 to my Act &amp; Camille Remained at noon. Missed Phil this evening but he came round later &amp; I saw him in the distance. Repaired manuscript for mailing.</p>	<p>1934. Mailed my hair &amp; read children's trip to the sea. Had Phil's dinner treat then we drove to Kearney Road &amp; stopped in a quiet dell where we had <sup>refresh</sup>ment.</p>
<p>1935. Phil gone to St. John for a conference &amp; the church men over there. Went out to Simpsons then back to Gethsemane St. where I got white shoes #2.48</p>	<p>1935. Mr. Grammer from St. John preaching at North Street today.</p>
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JUNE 10	JUNE 11
<p>1932 That unforgettable drive to Ingram. postscript every other happening of the day. Such a brilliant almost <sup>beauty</sup> sunset. The two close together in all that</p>	<p>1932 Had a wonderful Saturday p.m. with p. Feel more of a childlike faith and trust tonight than I have for months. An assurance that God will not fail me.</p>
<p>1933 Saturday &amp; came right home from the office. Heard his voice by phone. Car Hubie back home. Felt wonderful assurance of our immortality as I looked at the western sky tonight. Very hot</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>1934 Down to the Old Ladies Home this p.m. to play for their service instead of Margaret who could not with sleep. And took no time &amp; brought me home</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>

JUNE 12	JUNE 13
<p>1932 Children's day Programme at Sunday S. excellent. I shouldn't feel as relieved not to teach. Perhaps a little change would bring me back with more enthusiasm for the work.</p>	<p>1932 Hot day. Over to Dartmouth tonight. p works as hard. How my heart aches for some reassurance of his love. I suppose it is the cat abuse in me makes me positively ache to be just</p>
<p>1933 So busy, starting to knit a white hat which I shall probably never wear. Very little work at the office these days.</p>	<p>19</p>
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<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>

JUNE 14

1932. 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 I should choose it so. Perhaps time will <sup>bring</sup> it to.

1933. Went to prayer meeting. Mr. Russell Rainey led. I met me afterward, after the meeting of teachers, & took me out the Bedford Road for a spin.

1934. Fred so good to me. Brought me a great box of summer papers, short hand tablets today. Very welcomed for the supplies was good.

1935. Phi has his lovely new summer lawn suit. The woolly tweed looks so becoming and the cap of matching shade is perfect.

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JUNE 15

1932. Beautiful warm day. Large attendance at prayer meeting tonight. Home in the gloaming alone yet not alone for beauty surrounded me and heavenly comforted me.

1934. Those days alone in the office gave me an excellent opportunity to have my lesson prepared for Sunday as no last minute rush this week-end. If only I could arrange it so always. Somehow my life seems crowded, very crowded & things I love to do must go undone.

1935. Was so rushed & late getting thru work & lunch to meet Phi & he had been annoyed too in the office this a.m. so we were both a little overworked & irritated.

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JUNE 16

1932. didn't attend Choir practice tonight. Stayed home and did some of the everlasting washing and mending. I seem like such an awful failure to myself and am as far as material standards go.

1934. I met me this a.m. as usual & again after lunch and we went out to our quiet nook on deer, deer, old Deaneys Road. How wonderful it was just to rest and relax and spend that quiet time together. Home for a short rest before supper, to read the Mail & proud from Fred. Quiet evening.

1935. Phi back in his pulpit & started a series of sermons on Morning & Evening. I tried to take both morning & evening sermons.

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JUNE 17

1932. Saw P from 5 to 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 seeing that sometimes jingles.

1933. In to see Phi for a few moments at noon then he brought me home. Worked all p.m. Slipped out for a drive thru Lucasville with him just at dusk the house I love.

1934. Mr. Wallace & Mr. Elzy exchanging pulpits tonight. Had useful p.m. at home.

1935.

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JUNE 18	JUNE 19
<p>1932 Had our usual Saturday chat and visit. Then met Mabel and some uptown with her. Worked hard tonight preparing for tomorrow.</p>	<p>1932 Summer slump evident for the first time this season in tonight's service. Sunday seems such a full day now I seem to miss the holiday spirit that is at hand.</p>
<p>1933 Woke up intensely upset this a.m. In all day which is a very rare occurrence for me on Sunday. Had the rain pelted tonight. Read the spring Classics.</p>	<p>1933 My how sick I was today, what agonizing pain behind my eyes. I shouldn't have bothered I with myself in that condition for he has the strain of the day work's effect.</p>
<p>1935 Out for a few minutes at dusk &amp; saw Bob. He had on the new orange tee and looked very immaculately groomed. Had a little drive up around the Reservoir and then home again.</p>	<p>1934 Had the whole evening to myself as did Mr. Elgys sermon for G. Kept me occupied for a couple of hours. Then I bed.</p> <p>1935 A rather depressing mood captured me today as I went to the Garrick tonight to see "Roberta".</p>
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JUNE 20	JUNE 21
<p>1932 I believe gave me this night &amp; its beautiful drive around Waverley as a recompense for the fact that we cannot see each other on the morrow.</p>	<p>1932 It is my hope and belief this night that I am coming into a healthier and yet more loving inward attitude toward this own perplexing problem of my inner life.</p>
<p>1933 G gave me a wonderful treatment today for which I feel particularly grateful at this time. Bed ok, but lonely tonight. He is off to West with his family tomorrow.</p>	<p>1933 Mugs I skollled along Robt. Street to the Gardens &amp; then thru to the Capital. Saw "The Little Women" good show all through. But terribly heated. Guess it must always be.</p>
<p>1934 Sometimes the office seems unbearable. I need to feel I am creating something worthy but seems to be a dead job for me there. Went P.M. Margaret Brown talked afterwards then I met home.</p>	<p>1934 Holiday. Haven't seen or heard from G since last evening. Howson transcribed his "Continuing Christ". Also wrote and copied "Heather Prices".</p>
<p>1935 Two weeks tonight since Mum fell on the stairs &amp; injured her right leg. It's healing slowly.</p>	<p>1935 Holiday - 21 of June. Didn't see Phil all day. Mugs I to Capital in evening. My first Shirley Temple movie.</p>
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JUNE 22	JUNE 23
<p>1932. How glad that I did not let anything interfere with my noon visit. I really needs one as I need him.</p>	<p>1932 One of those wretched sick spells but it passed quickly. And the hours and a half of wakefulness during the night provided time for necessary reflection</p>
<p>1933 I back. Met me this a.m. He has a nice sunburn &amp; caught 63 trout. He seems to have had a very happy, contented day. I must learn that my place in this life is only</p>	<p>1933. What a perfect day. What a wonderful drive. thru Kenney &amp; Old Road. Stopped at Sandy Lake. Then around thru Swift Cove road to Hartmouth. Home here by boat.</p>
<p>1935. Phil &amp; I spent our lunch time together at Herring Cove. Kippered Snacks &amp; whole wheat bread &amp; coffee sure tasted good eaten together. Had our 19<sup>th</sup> first sunning of this season together. Home about 4 o'clock. Phil took me to Robertsons store before we parted for the day.</p>	<p>1935. Lovely Sunday. Phil preached this a.m. on Sunrise &amp; Received the confession of his cousin Mary at end of service. Baptism tonight.</p>
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JUNE 24	JUNE 25
<p>1932 Three evenings can be filled usefully &amp; constructively. When I cannot be with him I would rather be working quietly along</p>	<p>1932 Thank God faith and hope seems stirring in the depths once more. These Saturday p.m.'s have helped them revive.</p>
<p>1933 Sunday. Spent the p.m. with Mabel and after Church she was waiting for me, we took a walk. Then home, bath some supper &amp; to bed.</p>	<p>1933 Mother and I down to visit Cousin Martha in the Old Ladies Home. She lives there with her pictures and memories but has a wonderful mind.</p>
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JUNE 29	JUNE 28
<p>1932. (cont) Suburban Roadhouse, Tanager all tomorrow a.m. then to Bagin fishing and with cotton and mail.</p>	<p>1932. Bligh &amp; May had their usual tonight. It came off very well. Speaking at Central Hospital. Had a very good time.</p>
<p>1933. Climbed up to the forest tonight. When I was 5 years old. The forest is right back home again with a view.</p>	<p>1935. I and S had a little dinner tonight. Tonight went through Karam's the old road. Had our first afternoon today.</p>
<p>1935. The second of the day for taking our own lunch and instead of eating in town. Prepared ourselves to eat chicken and canned fruit salad with dessert coffee from Kaituma. The first visit of the road trip was from of leaving the road Saturday as being finished in the way some of today.</p>	<p>19 19 19</p>

JUNE 27	JUNE 26
<p>1932. Am afraid that I rather disappointed today when I should have shared him after the absence every demanding back of Sunday.</p> <p>1933. Stayed at home and George Elliott Saw Maria tonight. Good a day time No doubtfully enjoy this in a day off of 4<sup>th</sup>. I and S brought in some</p>	<p>1932. I have very difficult to control today. I was very disappointed for the evening when I should have shared him after the absence every demanding back of Sunday.</p> <p>1933. All we played and I thought tonight. Beautiful little ball. The first ball I ever had. Home at 4<sup>th</sup> a.m. When going up was very beautiful.</p>
<p>19 19 19</p>	<p>19 19 19</p>

JUNE 30	JULY 1
<p>1932 <sup>Went to Bridgewater this p.m.</sup> This evening in spite of a growling thunder storm we had a long lovely drive under the heavily clouded sky. Memories are sweet, sweet &amp; precious &amp; help us to face life as we live it.</p> <p>1932. Holiday. Did the usual washing &amp; pressing this a.m. Home all p.m. To the Church tonight in order to make preparations for tomorrow's lesson. Saw John. He was sick all day.</p> <p>1934. Phi &amp; I down to the beach at Jack Redoubt. Wonderful there with blue flags at our feet and the blue ocean just beyond. Warm sunshine made it a perfect summer day.</p>	<p>1932 This day brought me a wonderful precious gift. I am golden, never to be forgotten, treasured hours with my p. How sweet that evening meal together &amp; the companionship of those hours, gift of p.</p> <p>1932. Congregations rather diminished in Church on account of the holiday. Ravee back home &amp; in Church. He &amp; I sang. Phoebe was home after Church tonight.</p> <p>1934 First Sunday of united services of North Street and Knox Presbyterian Churches. Excellent attendance at both services of which Phi has charge for this month.</p>
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JULY 2	JULY 3
<p>1932 Saw p for a few moments at noon. Exchanged greetings to. Ravee to Bangalore &amp; back with Fred. Afternoon and evening filled with work. Wrote to p just before retiring.</p>	<p>1932 Miss's first Sunday at Bridgewater. Good services, splendid sermon at our own Church. Spoke to Mrs. Kenty tonight. Saw my beloved only at a distance. How my heart aches for him.</p>
19	19

[July 4 - 5 blank]

JULY 6	JULY 7
<p>1932 Over 6 P.M. and Choir practice afterward.</p>	<p>1932 Spent a wonderful hour with my new document box. Packed each precious letter in as carefully and touched reverently for they are the <sup>a many important self</sup> dearest expressions of</p>
<p>1933: Here on the grassy slope by <math>\phi</math> we had our third "Picnic" lunch. Buttered nut loaf, coffee and canned fruit salad. Phi's providing and how delicious it tasted. Resting afterwards. Then foot treatments, then the drive back to the city.</p>	<p>1934. After having some lunch we went out around the St. Lufts love road and rested in a pretty quiet place. Back to the city at our usual time.</p> <p>19 Had studied my S.I. lesson each in the week as was relieved of that. Attended to providing some fresh laundry for myself.</p>
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JULY 8	JULY 9
<p>1932 Mums Birthday tomorrow but I gave her my soap, hankies &amp; powder tonight. Took the little file proof document box to <math>\phi</math></p>	<p>1932 If all the times I've spent with <math>\phi</math> this p.m. was the most perfect communion I have ever known and I have an inward assurance that much will grow with time</p>
<p>1933 In to <math>\phi</math>'s office after wash today but how strange I feel. Cannot capture that old feeling of peaceful serenity with him. In love always demanding. Could not sleep till 11.</p>	<p>1933. All day at church services. <math>\phi</math> seemed stranger &amp; distant today as perhaps I did to him. Up to Mabels tonight. Spent "Harbor Rights" for the first time. Up there all night.</p>
<p>1934. Second Sunday of Union services. S.I. attendance not too bad. Was unlike my usual self this p.m. for was restless. Done some after church tonight.</p>	<p>1934 Phi tired today from the mental strain of yesterday's speaking. Gave me a wonderful treatment at noon time</p>
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JULY 10

1932 Thought it very good to have 10 in my SS class three of whom were visitors. Wk with Mabel all p.m. She here after Church and we visited & talked in the twilight.

1933 Down from Mabels in heavy rain storm this a.m. I round the corner waiting for me. Saw him after work this p.m. Finished "Lead Kindly Light"

1934 Earl Herb arrived up at supper time. Loaned Hebbie "Peace in the Heart". Saw Phi morning and evening. His mood of depression had a reaching effect on me.

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JULY 11

1932 Still poor at the office. but a tonic 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.

1933. Round the Waverley Road with a tonight & how beautiful that road is sometimes when I am tired I guess of thanks I'm glad. And our situation afflicts me so.

1934 Earl & Mugs & Hebbie to Bridgewater. Hebbie gave me Sweets & Lilies & loaned me Shadows on the Wall. Went to Prayer Meeting & did my best to keep Phi from running Mugs & Hebbie.

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JULY 12

1932 Very dull day for work. Look this evening off from sewing & just did nothing in particular. I called around 8<sup>30</sup> presumably about some C. E. details.

1933 Margaret & I over to Prayer Meeting & afterwards I picked me up & took me for a drive. Beautiful sky & sunset. Mugs home when I arrived & she finally heard from John.

1934. Bright day I've ever had at the Johnsons. Men off the British ship Challenges. Stayed in town to lunch couldn't see Phi & kept him waiting until 5<sup>45</sup>. Lunched at the hotel.

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JULY 13

1932. Buis at the office today but felt rather discouraged until I met me coming home tonight. To Prayer meeting & had a short drive up around Rockhead afterwards.

1933 This terrible feeling of instability in life. I know I'm satisfied just as things are but oh, how my heart yearns for all & how I yearn for home life.

1934. Saw Phi this a.m. Down to see him this lunch hour, we had a lovely drive & a paper time as far as the old Florence hotel & he waved me from the car at 2 p.m. Pretty good for one day.

1935 Phi & I tried an unexplored (by us) spot today out near and had lovely lunch & time together.

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JULY 14	JULY 15
<p>1932 No Choir practice. Down to the office to give a treatment for that awful cold. Sent him home early to get a good night's rest.</p> <p>1933 Trying to knit a white hat. Mabel calling at the office for me tonight prevented me from seeing Fred. And tonight he is waiting but I cannot go out.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Jim cold a good deal better but he still feels miserable</p> <p>1933 Had our first drive out to Jack Redoubt for a long time this p.m. Beautiful, beautiful view. Gathered some daisies &amp; buttercups for the Church tomorrow &amp; then took them to the Rectory.</p> <p>1935 Out the Redford Road to see a patient and I went along &amp; we had a beautifully peaceful satisfying little drive together.</p> <p>19</p>
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JULY 16	JULY 17
<p>1932 Had such horrible unreasonable blues today. Not a patient in all a.m. Had casual visit to J. He gave me those dear elephants on my neck. Called him at 7 p.m. May home.</p> <p>1933 He exchanged pulpits with Mr. Elzy of Eastonville tonight. Mabel over after Church. I pushed me up as I was returning from accompanying her home. May &amp; I talked about Tommy long after we</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932. Good Church services. Larger crowd in a.m. J's sermon splendid. Up after Church to see him. Saw his study. So glad for this informal visit to his home &amp; him alone.</p> <p>1933 Have wanted &amp; wanted to type my story "The City of God" but really haven't had time yet. I just love to do them but the Sundays sermons take up every spare minute.</p> <p>19</p>
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JULY 18	JULY 19
<p>1932 Connie Smith's wedding. Up to the house afterward for a little visit &amp; g. Had treat of ice cream. Left the wedding cars with him. Saw Mary for first time tonight.</p> <p>1933 Speaking as rather thinking of Church Wash &amp; g. as discouraged sometimes for I do not seem to have the energy that enables Phi to keep eternally at it.</p>	<p>1932. Off from work early. Helped Mary select amethyst ring at Berks. Mine. Mary &amp; I to picnic. Mary &amp; I there. Spent a few moments later with g. as he was fixing to leave.</p> <p>1933 Saw Phi after P.M. and we got to talking about ourselves. First we drove thru Springfield. It grieves me so that he apparently cannot understand just what this continual caution means.</p>
<p>19</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1933 Venetian night on the Arm. Mary &amp; I, by tickets presented by Mr. Johnson, saw the marvellous spectacle from the grounds of the Washington Boat House. Home at 11:45. Weather for Week Week not very nice.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>

JULY 20	JULY 21
<p>1932 The perfect ending to this day was those moments of communion in our street &amp; had brought some delicious ice cream. Then he walked home with me.</p> <p>1933 Saw Phi as usual today. I don't believe he cares anything about my inner state as long as we are in life and he himself is happy. He never had had any sympathy for the real thing.</p>	<p>1932. The end of a week of aloneness. I met him coming over the citadel and how sweet those few steps with him. How glad &amp; grateful I am for these few days of relaxation for him.</p> <p>1933 Busy on a sermon "Nearer My God to Thee". It is a beautiful one. Took me considerable time to transcribe and copy. Not quite finished yet.</p>
<p>1933 Phi &amp; I again taking lunch of his providing old &amp; our new little spot. Saw the great appearance of blue sky &amp; blue water. Hope spread to the north. Little yachts &amp; white sails racing along the beautiful ocean. Saw the jammer boat for Week week.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>



JULY 22		JULY 23	
1932. I went to the Church with Mr. Stachurski. Building in around the main entrance. One very handsome by Joseph.		1932. Spent our usual hour alone. Had lunch to the three together. When a question of last in continued objection I must be there and God's help in such times.	
1933. I was a wonderful long drive about 8 hours. Stopped in an open field. I had a running then lay in the shade. I turned my happy. Preparation for Sunday taught		1932. No all Church services. Numerous but very good small. They appear to be of the old. Architecture. Major I had who is to be. The well with. Much of the church. I got me in the little	
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JULY 24		JULY 25	
1932. Saw I at the office after 8 hours. we stopped home together over the street in the room and by tonight.		1932. Monday night and among the end of July. Let some Sunday. I made an effort to get the work for things are quite well at the office.	
1933. Saw Geo went today. He was last this evening. I was separated that they in the hall. in a state of some all evening. When night I had. I was in with just the same in the same way.		1933. I had a job for when we were ready in town. This a.m. gave me a wonderful breakfast of some time. Some time I have thought. Stayed in the night. started service. Waiting for the day 8.30.	
19		1934. Living and a confusion in the office of the old me home from P.M. I was in the house. Nothing was over my parents to look	
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JULY 26	JULY 27
<p>1932. In all evening &amp; bulking I tried make a warm quilt for Kinsae. So many sewing jobs to do but will get at them in time.</p>	<p>1932 Out at 8 after P.M. and received a big surprise a lovely new quilt. It is beautiful but how oh how can I do so I long to start using it soon.</p>
<p>1933. Over to Ventry to see the Johnsons picture slides. Learned of Mr. Miles very serious condition. Were very white but for the first time. Loves love &amp; love Phil.</p>	<p>1933. I decided today that he must go to the funeral tomorrow. Gave me a beautiful gift. I spent a wonderful hour tonight fondling &amp; receiving his letters &amp; gifts.</p>
<p>1934. Still utterly isolated from Phil today. Such deep grief. Cannot help but pray that that awful pain may be taken away. Shivered up Sunday sermon.</p>	<p>1934. My last night of being 31. Thank God it was free from the awful inner turmoil of the last two nights. John Shepherd spent the evening visiting with me.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>1935. Phil's out to the rocky beach at 10. Lunch of egg sandwiches &amp; peach or coffee. Afterwards to J.B. 10.30. Beautiful cool sunny invigorating day.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>

JULY 28	JULY 29
<p>1932. My Birthday. Such a lovely one &amp; several nice surprises. Supper at Minnie &amp; Fred's. Betty cake Minnie had made all for me. It seemed like a little girl's first party.</p>	<p>1932. Wrote two little poems lunch boxes. Read them to J. on our trip to Westmoreck tonight. Had lovely drive home around Waverly.</p>
<p>1933. J. &amp; Milton to Mr. Miles funeral. Called May up at Bridgewater. Said she was surprised. However he took me down town this a.m. Shooked him for my lovely gift.</p>	<p>1933. J. and I found a sweet quiet dell on the Lincumville Rd. today and enjoyed an hour's quiet visit &amp; talk.</p>
<p>1934. Phil's I &amp; our work on Sept to Oct. Rd. Lovely Birthday Poem &amp; Cards gifts to J. &amp; J.B. But I was sad &amp; Phil couldn't help but notice. Everyone too generous &amp; gifts.</p>	<p>1934. Minnie gave me such a pretty and treasure as a Birthday gift &amp; a beautifully worded card. To all church services.</p>
<p>1935. Lovely birthday again. Gifts from all the home folks. Minnie &amp; Fred, Frances Gachelin. Out to Fred's &amp; Minnie's to supper. Walked up to Church &amp; Knox.</p>	<p>19</p>
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[illegible][illegible]

<p>1935</p> <p>Saw 5 more briefly this a.m. Suffered a          cold going away this p.m. no dirt on hat as ever          washing you me all the while. Saw him tonight for 1st          time. I felt much better after his visit. m. sat          1933. He made very good dinner this a.m. sat          then Spring field. just got it to begin a rainy day          at 11. I hope then the he with the good crops          today. Had a dinner around 11.50 tonight. Found many          1934. Had two more very interesting at          the office. Spent a short time at P.M. the          evening. Saw him as usual during the          day.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>1935</p> <p>Saw 5 more briefly this a.m. Suffered a          cold going away this p.m. no dirt on hat as ever          washing you me all the while. Saw him tonight for 1st          time. I felt much better after his visit. m. sat          1933. He made very good dinner this a.m. sat          then Spring field. just got it to begin a rainy day          at 11. I hope then the he with the good crops          today. Had a dinner around 11.50 tonight. Found many          1934. Had two more very interesting at          the office. Spent a short time at P.M. the          evening. Saw him as usual during the          day.</p>
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AUGUST 7	AUGUST 8
1932 Saw C at the office after meeting & he gave me a good treatment for that aggravating pain in my right side. Then home through the quiet darkness of the night. 19	1932 Lying all day. Felt very sore and miserable. Fred drove Mue & I downtown this a.m. & I thereby missed J who however called me later. As this wasn't how I wish we could be together. 1933 Said Good-Bye to Phi at suppertime. Gave him his necktie, Hamburgs & pasties. Fred, Mue & I out to the Ringalbs this evening picking berries. 19
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AUGUST 7	AUGUST 8
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9 General Trust Bldg  
 Haligarth, N.S.  
 Convention  
 Aug. 8-12, 1936  
 Dr J. L. Wallace  
 Burt's Corner  
 New Brunswick  
 mailed  
 Not later than Wed. am.

AUGUST 9	AUGUST 10
<p>1932 Have been busy these days getting caught up with all the sermons I was back in. Lunch Room waits from a very sweet. Received cash order from Mail office today.</p> <p>1933 Off this a.m. I woke suddenly at 5:45 a.m. the time I later learned that they were speeding out the Bedford Road. All the family to the country - but Mums tonight.</p>	<p>1932 No Prayer Meeting. Went down &amp; had a thorough treatment &amp; a little drive afterwards with J. Come home very sleepy. But Gums sing &amp; gave to J to take to her.</p> <p>1933 Mr. Johnson back this a.m. Received word from Phil in a.m. mail.</p>
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AUGUST 11	AUGUST 12
<p>1932 Convention opened tonight. Rain simply poured all evening. Saw my J at lunch hour and to speak to briefly. Mayor John in today for an hour at office.</p> <p>1933 Dismissed at the office for there is nothing much doing. Wrote my last letter to Phil tonight.</p>	<p>1932 Got my dress &amp; nightie on my 15:00 ride at the Regal. I away to Mrs. Parker's funeral. Mayor John to lunch at The Green. Close to Convention meeting tonight. Mr. Grant K Lewis's speaker.</p> <p>1933 Starting our two weeks vacation. David brought us all out to Hammond's Plains today. So thankful to be removed from the grasping greedy selfish environment for a while.</p>
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AUGUST 13	AUGUST 14
<p>1932 The poem I sent to the Canadian Home Journal, with such hopes, returned. It makes me feel such a failure in life. God grant me courage to go on in the midst of defeat.</p> <p>1933 Spent this a.m. in the pasture &amp; worshipped there truly &amp; gratefully. Ray cut under the trees this p.m. Must that Eva has a baby girl born on Thursday last.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Taken to work by J. Rawie in to the office for a few moments. I did come too late when I had almost given up hope. An hour spent with him this p.m. on Kearney Rd.</p> <p>1933 Lovely fine day. Picked quite a few berries. Hlahey showed this evening. Covered a tin cube with brilliant bits of colored paper as I so often have wanted to do.</p> <p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>

AUGUST 15	AUGUST 16
<p>1932 End of Convention here yesterday. So many kind appreciations of my little p.m. talk. I off to Boston this a.m. Am going to miss them terribly. Out to see Minnie tonight.</p> <p>1933 Warm, cloudless day. Shilled with awe &amp; wonder of the abundance in nature. Aunt Martha spent this evening with us.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Made a new resolution to try to adjust my life so that unnecessary things &amp; waste of strength may be eliminated. Must try to conserve &amp; utilize all resources on my two directions.</p> <p>1933 Recalled from pasture this a.m. by Mum with news of Mr. Mack's sudden death. Nine, Glad &amp; Fred out tonight.</p> <p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>

AUGUST 17	AUGUST 18
<p>1932 Wrote to J. didn't go to P.M. How quiet this week seems but that constant gnawing pain in my side makes me glad of a respite from work.</p> <p>1933 Very warm day. Mr. Mack buried this p.m. day departed quietly. Sunshine &amp; country scenery very soothing to tired nerves.</p> <p>1934 My room seemed so desolate &amp; lonely tonight. I do not know if Phil put that away or not. Got packed up to start on vacation tomorrow.</p> <p>1935 Mueg &amp; I to town with Fred. Supper at Lowhues &amp; show at Capital. Saw Phil for third morning. Thirst time for two weeks. Came in home &amp; had some reserves &amp; Margaret.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Feeling very sick and miserable with headache and believers. I longed for P's physical presence this p.m. But I have, in my heart, the assurance of his love.</p> <p>1933 Time for Phil's arrival home very near now. Down to pay my ceremonial visit to Aunt M. tonight. Wrote "Love's Gift" this p.m.</p> <p>1934 Saw Phil for a very short time when he drove me home at Church level. Then Fred brought us out here to camp. No pay for these holidays.</p> <p>1935 Mueg &amp; I quietly home all day. Showed to the Plains to take Mueg out and bring sled &amp; Fred home. Phil gone to Rhudson today.</p> <p>19</p>

AUGUST 19	AUGUST 20
<p>1932 Had a note from Mueg from West. Got today so copied the poetry she wanted &amp; sent it to her. Spent the evening in sorting &amp; sewing odds &amp; ends.</p> <p>1933 Folks from home out. Mueg's Connie's letters received. Went in to town &amp; along about 6<sup>th</sup> heard his dear voice by phone. Received the lovely gifts a V.</p> <p>1934 What a wholesome attitude of mind this pleasant country atmosphere imparts to those who seek its abode. Wrote to Phil.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Mr. 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.</p> <p>1933 Phil brought me out early this a.m. so I didn't get wet in the rain. Aunt Rutha up to see Mrs B. Thompson this p.m. Mueg &amp; Glad back home tonight.</p> <p>1934 Mailed my letter to Phil. A strange lowering sky today followed by a severe rain &amp; thunder storm tonight. Started my paper covered box. Stamp paid at 11.</p> <p>19</p>
19	19



AUGUST 21	AUGUST 22
<p>1932 Two wonderful letters from J yesterday a.m. Did not go to Church at all today. Stayed in the whole day. Wrote to J after supper. Same in eye since last Sunday night.</p>	<p>1932 I felt a terrible physical let-down this a.m. but kept going all day. Spent the a.m. in town, p.m. getting things together &amp; right after supper I had brought us out fire to the Plains.</p>
<p>1933 Very wet but spent the a.m. in the pasture &amp; found some Luscious berries. Wrote to J tonight. Aunt M. up.</p>	<p>1933 Big apartment - Election day! Was called for &amp; brought back again after voting. Aunt M. up this evening. Wrote to Cas &amp; Margaret tonight.</p>
<p>1934 Received the sweetest doggie card in the morning mail, no word on it but from Phil I know. Alice paid us a short visit this p.m.</p>	<p>1934 Had a short visit &amp; suppers from Phil. Later on the home folks out. Arthur down for a short while. Read in the Elsie book of W. Smith &amp; Mrs. M.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>

AUGUST 23	AUGUST 24
<p>1932. Aunt Mattie up all last evening no after she left wrote to J. Spent today cleaning &amp; tidying the bungalow. I did &amp; did not tonight.</p>	<p>1933 Letter from J today and what a lovely surprise. Being out here with the smiling face of nature gladdening us very cheering &amp; invigorating.</p>
<p>1933 Very hot all day. Wrote briefly. Phil, Dad &amp; Mine out tonight. Ruted this p.m. How I wish I could see Phil.</p>	<p>1933 Envelope card &amp; sweetest words on it from J. Heavy rain started at 6 p.m. Roof leaking slightly. Started Phil's Birthday Card by printing my very best of all.</p>
<p>1934. Big picnic supper for Uncle Sam MacBachman at Aunt Mattie's. Met Dorothy Parker &amp; Gordon Nares.</p>	<p>1934 Have been peckish berries off &amp; on all week. Had a lovely morning under the warm sun today. Feel its beneficent influence on my mind.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>19</p>



AUGUST 25	AUGUST 26
<p>1932. Have been working hard at my quilt. Plan to finish it while here. Were quite surprised to see Shred &amp; Dad again tonight. But very glad to have them.</p> <p>1934. Shred &amp; Dad out working all p.m. Went to Phil's after supper. Uncle Wells Aunt Sarah at Aunt M. The two of them &amp; Aunt Bertha here &amp; see us later.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932. What a blessing for downcast spirits this week of sunshine &amp; country. It has been. I only in the city's wash &amp; hurry my soul says here that calm &amp; undisturbed.</p> <p>1934. This holiday Sundays so different from the usual ones. Made blueberry pan pie. Uncle Ellis here in p.m. Uncle Will at night. Beautiful moon Shred out.</p> <p>19</p>
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19	19

AUGUST 27	AUGUST 28
<p>1932. All Aunt Bertha's family &amp; Uncle Ned out. All of us met &amp; celebrated Uncle Ellis' Birthday with ice cream, gingerale &amp; cake. Uncle Ned came up &amp; had a nice talk with Mum.</p> <p>1934. Dad worked all day at his car. I mailed a letter to Phil this morning. Shred &amp; I found a small bush near berry patch &amp; was back to the old Melvin place the pot commenced to leak.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932. Dad tired today. Spent an hour or two after dinner down at Aunt Bertha's talking to the in-laws. Dad in home tonight. The beginning of our 2<sup>nd</sup> week.</p> <p>1934. Perfect day. Shred in to Wiley this p.m. This is the twilight hour I love. Mum preserving blueberries &amp; the pot commenced to leak.</p> <p>19</p>
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AUGUST 29	AUGUST 30
1932 I have lazy days conducive to reading late into the night and how I've profited by these hours spent reviewing ancient history has to be the finest conclusion of the century right	1932 Have been thinking all day that George Rome tonight. Aunt Martha & Mrs. Elmer MacEachern & "Bluffy" up for a short visit tonight. Little piece of this & m.
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19	19

AUGUST 31	SEPTEMBER 1
1932 Had a minute's chat with Elsie. Saw Sun's eclipse through smoked glass. All home folks out tonight. My darling & I took all the way out here to see her & had a few minutes	1932 Saw Uncle Will & talked with Ruth for the first time for years. P.M. spent in the Hammond. Met & after supper and went to Portsmouth with her.
1934 Last day out here for me this year. Something beautiful in the penicillin autumn day and this has been. Set in the kitchen tonight and read in The Clara Book the romance of Ontario's early days.	1933 Saw Oli at noon & this evening. Mabel & I out to Frances Kinty's tonight. Wallace brot. see home.
19	19
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SEPTEMBER 2	SEPTEMBER 3
<p>1932 In to town this a.m. Met Clyde Hartin who drove me in from Morris Mills Sat 9 p.m. saw him &amp; he drove me all the way out here. Had I appreciated it at the time?</p> <p>1933 Mr. Johnson off to Fredrickton. In to see Rhi till about 4 p.m. then home. As. Paul. Mummy &amp; I have her &amp; visit one tonight. Made my heart ache for companionship.</p> <p>1934. Mugs &amp; I alone. Rhi here &amp; me alone for sleepers. Then to church afterward.</p>	<p>1932 Slipped down back of Caird Butch's thus all the tangled underbrush. I must p. line meeting so short it seemed like barely heart &amp; lung, &amp; in fact, I spent the</p> <p>1933. Sunday passed as usual. My last Sunday. I hope to leave to take the junior school. Rang Rhi up after Church.</p> <p>1934. Babes day. Mugs &amp; I worked all day Rhi called on us in a.m. Out to Parole in evening. Saw George Wilcoff's baby sister.</p>
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SEPTEMBER 4	SEPTEMBER 5
<p>1932 These two weeks have been a godsend in the opportunity for 14 days out of the whole 65 to follow my inclinations &amp; do as I pleased.</p> <p>1933 Babes day. Saw Rhi for about an hour this p.m. He borrowed a little Chiv. roadster we had a short drive. I feel so lonesome tonight. No one to call if I am</p>	<p>1932 Left my little country haven of greenery &amp; sunshine for vistas to come back to the routine. Pray dear God keep the loneliness I have visioned in my heart true.</p> <p>1934 Rhi &amp; I over to Prayer Meeting tonight on Daylight Savings Time. I couldn't help feeling angry that our time had been wasted for no one else turned up. Others going on standard time.</p> <p>1935 Dear M. X &amp; I gave him my little gifts a shirt, knife and book. Glad that he seemed so happy. Could not see each other in the evening.</p>
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SEPTEMBER 6	SEPTEMBER 7
<p>1932 Dr. Johnson away from the office all day so I cleaned up. How good of f to meet me this a.m. &amp; give me the opportunity to have the joy of a moment with him.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Hour &amp; P.M. tonight. In my arrival home Ramin was here to bid us farewell as he leaves on the a.m. train for Rochester. Ramin is so wise &amp; fine.</p> <p>1934. Stayed in and sewed tonight. Changed &amp; fixed the sleeves and vest in my Spanish silk dress - like it very well indeed now that that job is completed. Have most of my dresses in good condition for the winter.</p> <p>19</p>
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SEPTEMBER 8	SEPTEMBER 9
<p>1932 driving around the Waverley Road tonight I told f about Ramin &amp; the difficulty he experienced in the attitude of the West Gore people.</p> <p>1934. Took my lunch down to the office today &amp; had it quietly there. Later met Phil who had the dear little new Plymouth Roadster and we had a lovely drive out the St. Margaret's Bay Road. Newcomer he is highly pleased with it.</p> <p>1935. First Sunday for full services in the Church. Phil had just one service as there was a visiting minister at night.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932. Mother's stay in the country shows in the rested look in her face. Good for her to be away from the exacting work of meal getting &amp; running a house.</p> <p>1934. Back to my S. S. Class &amp; enjoyed teaching them. Much of my fear of teaching has been due to my own lack of preparation &amp; am afraid. Heard, being a Mabel all afternoon, of her new friend Mrs. John Payne. Home right after the evening service. Mum home.</p> <p>19</p>
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SEPTEMBER 10

1932. Had a sandwich at noon in the office, then down to see J and we lived in the perfectness of Lewis' atmosphere for a little while. My only happiness in

1934. Dr. Johnson gone on vacation and I have the office all to myself. Have busied myself about cleaning round the office and typing. Phi gave me his typewriter which afforded me an excellent opportunity for work on his last Sunday sermon.

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SEPTEMBER 11

1932 Back again into Church routine for the winter. Am glad of my P.S. class. I love the contact with children. Has something in my heart responds to them.

1934 Continued work in a.m. In to Phi's office today at noon. The days pass so quickly yet I seem to be accomplishing nothing. My dream's hope of homelife is gone. Yet my heart has a strange courage I never knew before.

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SEPTEMBER 12

1932 Round to Dartmouth with J. Had my heart's response for the open acknowledgment of our love but that cannot be. I have accepted. I will be here.

1934. Finished Phi's last Sunday p.m. sermon "The Place of Music in Worship". Cleaned up all the Lab. Saw Phi morning & evening. He drove Mabel & I home after P.M. round Fairview & thru the slush village road.

1935 Why should I feel so hurt over a trivial remark of Phi's. I had probably been very thoughtless and careless in many ways that may have hurt him.

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SEPTEMBER 13

1932 J & I Moncton with Slave Marshall. Left at 1 a.m. got home at 2 the next a.m. Had took us to the hangar. Tonight. Perfect moon lit autumn night. Beautiful.

1934. My day alone passed quickly. Typed "Mary's Dream" & "Reminiscence". Went in to see Phi lunch hour & he gave me a wonderful treatment. John & Slave in to see me & showed me all their snaps this afternoon. Mabel coming at 5 disturbed our evening home drive together.

1935 Such tears and anguish that even the thought of separation from Phi causes. My very heart's life is mingled with his eternally.

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SEPTEMBER 14

1932 Have been very tired this week. The effort to go on doing what I must do seems to exhaust so much strength. I long for the quietness of the country.

1935. Phi & I each had our dinner separately in town then met and drove out the road by the lake which supplies 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.

This has been a week of emotional turmoil for me but thank God I am coming out with a braver, stronger attitude toward life.

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SEPTEMBER 15

1932 <sup>not</sup> to Prager cemetery. I felt so tired that I had a hot bath and went to bed. Such a welcome need to spend one evening just doing nothing.

1934 I had his very own new roadster today & we went down to Berring 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.

Admired the sea little red ear.

1935 Sat quietly in Church today listening to Phi. Have decided to take no more sermons unless he requests it.

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SEPTEMBER 16

1932 met J and went around Waverley to Dartmouth with him. He felt badly about home conditions and we had a serious and rather upsetting talk.

1933. All of us but Muriel to the country to pick cranberries. J brought me home dinner hour & gave me a beautiful gift a bottle of fragrant perfume.

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SEPTEMBER 17

1932. Ired home tonight studying. I was typing sermons as our work was carried in thought.

1933 I thought I got J's sermons pretty well today. Home immediately after Church. Ired to soothe my lonely feelings by picking at the piano!

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SEPTEMBER 18	SEPTEMBER 19
<p>1932. So sick. Came home from work in the middle of this windy, rainy a.m. am beginning to think there are just the periodic symptoms of nervous trouble.</p> <p>1935. 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. Received a lovely little Patti &amp; Moore creme powder compact today. Spent a short while tonight on my mat which is nearly completed. Later read "A Prince of the Captivity."</p>	<p>1932. Saw J at lunch time. We must be so tired after the work of Sunday with those wonderful sermons &amp; all. Had Mrs. Stein to have a confidential talk tonight.</p> <p>1933. J met &amp; teased me this a.m. about seeing Mary last night. Somehow his teasing affected me. Just know as why I cannot explain but I couldn't go out &amp; had to sit.</p> <p>1935. Lovely sunny warm Thursday. It began on a little road off Young Avenue &amp; Phi and together we spent a little time at its close on the lovely loved little road off Kearney. Took a try in Phi's box of tickets. Tore off Sheila and paid 12¢.</p>
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SEPTEMBER 20	SEPTEMBER 21
<p>1932. Mum Home from Bungalow. Made no resolution to forget all the past except its experience, and love and have faith and hope.</p> <p>1933. Over to Prayer Meeting. Mrs. Johnson there with white boxes. Came right home. Read some of Magnificent Obsession. Good book.</p>	<p>1933. Met J early tonight and we had an hour together in communion out on our still, quiet Kearney Road. Then he took me to my S.F. Room so that I might clear &amp; clean it up for Cathie. Said good bye to my work with the Beginners &amp; am anticipating that with the Intermediates.</p>
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SEPTEMBER 22	SEPTEMBER 23
<p>1933 Why should I be shaken to the core of being by these injustices committed by man which I am powerless to change. Mr. Johnson's piousness fills me with biting indignation for others even more than for myself. Yet I am helpless. Saw G. morning &amp; said Goodnight to him by phone.</p> <p>1934 Down the St. Margarets Bay Road to a little sheltered waterside haven. Rested there. Both very tired. Slept strengthened &amp; invigorated for our return to duty.</p>	<p>1933. Almost wonderful treat today. Altho it was with trepidation that I accepted of invitation to lunch at the Nova Scotian, yet on my way to meet him there I threw aside those feelings and experienced such joy &amp; pleasure to be with him for a few hours in such an atmosphere of beauty &amp; beguery.</p>
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SEPTEMBER 24	SEPTEMBER 25
<p>1932 Spent till 5 p.m. with G. Wonderful time but oh, the hurt to think another might be his choice. Gave me his confidence this p.m. about Ruthless MacArthur.</p> <p>1933. G. preached as tho he were divinely inspired today both services. The fire is in him and how my own inclination responds. Pray God that his deep need may be answered.</p>	<p>1932 Had rather a poor night but God has given me peace today. My love is sure and steadfast. If that I am inwardly assured. Whatever comes I feel God is with me.</p>
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SEPTEMBER 26	SEPTEMBER 27
<p>1932. Saw J. lunch here and he read me another note from Nathaniel MacL. I must teach him by my confidence &amp; faith that I rely on his manhood &amp; courtesy.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 All these difficulties that come are hard to live thru triumphantly but with each one patiently borne comes a renewed assurance of spiritual depths from which to draw.</p> <p>19</p>
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SEPTEMBER 28	SEPTEMBER 29
<p>1932 Pouring rain out tonight so am making some typewritten copies of rules for my. Will some work on transcribing summons after that.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Over to Dartmouth tonight. 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 <sup>God's angels helps when I try to stop.</sup></p> <p>1934. Way down in our little roadside grove, almost to Herring Cove. Stopped there for awhile then continued driving down a new, untried road. Until we came to a small village, Bear Cove. Then round about for Nfld again. Spent the evening at my usual tasks &amp; S.S. lessons.</p> <p>19</p>
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SEPTEMBER 30	OCTOBER 1
<p>1932 Such an interview this p.m. with a certain woman (can I degrade that noble turn) It made me so stirred up inside that I am afraid it reacted on <sup>with him</sup> my telephone conversation.</p> <p>1933 What a glorious autumn landscape! Phi &amp; I saw this Saturday p.m. as we drove through the Lucasville Road. Stopped at our spot for a real &amp; rather serious chat.</p> <p>1934 To all Church services. Must I out driving after Church in Marshall's car but I didn't enjoy it. Seemed so less worth while than other things I might have</p>	<p>1932. Saw Phi this a.m. and his eyes looked as if he hadn't slept all night. Went to Bungalow all p.m. preparing Chamberlain's. With great ceremony managed to meet at twilight.</p> <p>1933. Promotion Day in S. L. Harwell the Requirers Class. I had Intermediates. Heard from my dear one by phone this afternoon. Love him so.</p> <p>1934</p>
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OCTOBER 2	OCTOBER 3
<p>1932 Such a Sunday I have rarely experienced before and yet I am sure now. Phi could know how mentally disturbed I am. Spent this p.m. with Mat. When Phi had a note from me tonight.</p> <p>1933 Am afraid I was so upset about Dr. James Kinty calling me at the office in reference to Mary's promotion, that I described that Phi with proper consideration.</p> <p>1934 Finished last Sunday's a.m. sermon with carbon copy for Mr. Stickhouse. Cut up some coat pieces for quilt.</p>	<p>1932 Saw Phi this morning. Something warm lifted from my heart &amp; my spirit. Full lighter in spite of the awful suspense of the last few days. Cleaned my room tonight.</p> <p>1933. Got 1 letter up home this p.m. so stayed home instead of going to the C. C. supper. Phi there. He brought me home by way of Kearney's Old Roads, tonight.</p> <p>1934. Slept well all day until five o'clock when entrez-vous black spots &amp; dybbies. Present from P. Hankins &amp; dinarini in tin box. Lay in a heavy stupor all evening.</p>
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OCTOBER 4	OCTOBER 5
<p>1932 Saw Phi this a.m. and again at noon. What a time of mental torture this past week has been for us both. Received Ed's letter today. Mabel down this evening.</p> <p>1933. Phi's goodness never failing to me. He brought me home at one o'clock. Went to Exhibition with Ed. Spent a wonderful hour with Phi on our Pleasantville drive tonight. Still more.</p> <p>1934. I told me about their class last night. Got mud under my socks today. gave me a wonderful treatment. Brought me home for me. called for Shudi's shoes. Mug brought up success.</p>	<p>1932 Thank God for these early a.m. communions. Just a few moments of His presence is a joy and blessing.</p> <p>1933 Was late getting off work tonight but Phi caught me where half way home. Started the sermon "Triumph over Trouble" tonight. Had a wonderful treatment today.</p>
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OCTOBER 6	OCTOBER 7
<p>1933 Very rainy in heavy showers all day. This evening, coming from the office &amp; not expecting to see G as I was late what a joy to have him drive up by 12. And then our little drive home, his presence which he was so dear about and a short telephone conversation completed our communion for today. Sleeping tonight.</p>	<p>1933 How the rain poured today but after my lunch at Kinkys (provided by dear G) and where I saw Dorothy Reganston, we, her &amp; I betook ourselves to our spot and there with the rain beating upon our shelter we rested &amp; refreshed ourselves in mutual love and surrender. This love is not a light pleasant one but deep &amp; strong an unbroken passion of endurance.</p>
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OCTOBER 8	OCTOBER 9
1933 First Sunday as teacher of Intimacy I exchanged with Mr. Warr of Charles St. tonight. I mused the reminder received in today's services about keeping gratitude in our hearts, alive. While tonight's services ministered to spiritual needs I miss I just dreadfully, however that may be my love would never wish to be a clinging, binding thing to him.	19
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[October 10 - 13 blank]

OCTOBER 14	OCTOBER 15
1933 Saturday, the afternoon on which we feel that a few hours of relaxation and delightful companionship may be ours. He looked so tired when we 19 started out but some life seemed to have returned to his eyes before we began our homeward trip. The autumn woods even their falling leaves, are gorgeously beautiful.	1932 After leaving p. today I got my new jersey dress. Like it for its practicality. Now have clothes enough for the winter if I should be out of work for awhile.
19	1933 Spent the afternoon with Mabel. Somehow it seems that I miss the opportunity for quiet meditation on the experiences that Pete and I have shared together.
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OCTOBER 16

1932. Took the Junior Sunday School today. Oh realization as I look back the at times all humanity has seemed to feel me utterly God has supplied my need

1933. I am afraid that I grieved him tonight by mention of going to the Grosvenor Park. I really don't want to go anywhere without him as it was no secret to stay

1934. Oh night twice, oh exquisite joy. Saw "Barrett's of Wimpole Street" at Capital tonight. Phi sat in row back of us. But Mother's me home. Heavenly have seen that to him

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OCTOBER 17

1932. Word today that Eunice Wright died last night. She had everything to live for. Why couldn't I have gone instead. I wonder if it would be the solution of all this unrest

1933. Phi has given me so much that there is a feeling of belonging together and completely to him. Indeed it has always been as I must believe that God has a purpose for our lives.

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OCTOBER 18

1932. Over to Dartmouth with a lot felt very uneasy. Oh, this longing for him to do something but in spite of his declarations he never will. What does the future

1933. Night of the annual business meeting at the Church so I stayed home and finished up last Sunday's sermons

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OCTOBER 19

1932. Half holidays for Citizens day at the Exhibition. I spent it cleaning up my Class Room at the Church. Washed and ironed my Cretonne Curtains.

1933. Phi gave me a beautiful sparkling necklace tonight and oh how bereaving his eyes looked. These enforced separations try us greatly at times.

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OCTOBER 20	OCTOBER 21
<p>1933 Saw Phi after work. And this has seemed a week of long, lonely nights for I have not spent any of these hours with him. And however he tonight he is out 19 working and battling with life's deep problems. Mabel down visiting and I walked home with her. Mugs along to Fred's party. Tomorrow I shall see Phi.</p> <p>1934 Raining dull day but the roads are traversed with the illusion of sunshine so glimmering rich the autumnal colors. Phi's &amp; I to our old spot on Lucasville road.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1933 Today though our minds were troubled with some of life's problems, closer personal ones, Phi's &amp; I drove around the beautiful Waverly Road. Perhaps some day 19 I may attempt to describe its wonder and beauty. Parted with my dear one at 3 p.m. but heard his voice again by telephone. I pray hope a change of scene for a few hours may not hurt.</p> <p>1934 Annual programme at Church today. Stayed to Christian Endeavour tonight. Norman I have led.</p> <p>19</p>
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OCTOBER 22	OCTOBER 23
<p>1932 Felt very downcast today even while with G. If it were not for actual necessity I'd far rather hunt for a new job than be hurt &amp; bewildered by constant complaints.</p> <p>1933 Phi to town today. Tonight I did enter into his gates with thanksgiving &amp; into his courts with praise. Heard Mr. S. MacPhail this m. &amp; Mrs. Mearns tonight on What is life.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 All day at North St. My class of 14 divided today as the oldest were promoted. Rather tired to part with some who had entwined themselves round my heart.</p> <p>19</p>
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OCTOBER 24	OCTOBER 25
<p>1932 Received a letter from J. this a.m. took it down to share with S. Al. if I would only grant me his loyalty &amp; fidelity. But his burning passion is to pursue the way</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 So Box Social at the Church. Mrs. Alice W. lost my Butterfly Box. Wore my green dress for the second time. Read brot letter from H. M. Mugs me home in his car. &amp; read me a</p> <p>1934. A very rainy day. Not busy at office. Wrote to Ess. Margaret &amp; D. out to Stalhousen gym to hear noted pianist Benno Moerewitz. Phi gave me a little scroll this evening with my ticket price inside. Dear of him. He also picked me up &amp; brought me home after the concert. Then took Mugs Alice &amp; D. out.</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p>

OCTOBER 26	OCTOBER 27
<p>1932 Bot a mus tie for J. today. Large Prayer Meeting tonight. Walked home alone under the quiet sky. My life feels the need of more time spent on spiritual things.</p> <p>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. Spent the after supper hours transcribing spiritual ones</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Spent an unforgettable night with J. on the old road. I feel to be his completely but the grief and heart to know that he wants me in his life only as a sort of extra</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p> <p>19</p>

OCTOBER 28	OCTOBER 29
1932 g to Shubertacade & funeral. saw him only for a moment. Cut out Muriel's apron & transcribed Mr. Huddleston's sermon tonight	1932 To work on the street car this a.m. called p. on the phone to say good morning. Doc Johnson doing his best to cut my all ready fairly reduced salary. Spent p.m. with p.
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OCTOBER 30	OCTOBER 31
1932 Saw Watt Bullock in Church this a.m. He looks the same as ever. No one can hold a candle to p. Up to Mabel's today. Left her home in bed tonight with a nasty cold.	1932 Monday again. These days are bright with the joy and hope of even a few minutes companionship with my beloved.
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# NOVEMBER 1

1932 In walks November. Surely I'd be the happiest mortal alive if only I had the prospect of a steady, reliable job and being near p. Hanson. There must be some slight trials I suppose.

1933. After Prayer meeting Lou & I red + I stayed in the Vestry & decided on the play & cast that is to be put on first. Decided on "Youth comes tripping."

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# NOVEMBER 2

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

19 Saturday Nov. 2, 1933. Received a lovely little gift today. A case small enough to fit in my purse containing tweezers, manicures & nail file and it is so cute & handy. I had my hair permanently curled on the ends at Miss Fells today. The first venture to the Nine Mile River to bury Mary Macdonald. Went out for a few minutes Saturday night & see him in the rain.

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# NOVEMBER 3

1932 Again spent the evening at home. Finally made Annie's yellow butterfly. Now I love to work with pretty colors and fine fabrics. Aside from reading, it is one of my greatest enjoyments.

1933 Up to Mabel's for supper & spent a delightful hour later with Treasure Island. Had never read it before.

1935 Sunday. To Fred's & Minnie's in p.m. to "wrap up" grabs. After Christian Endeavour went to Elsie's & Edith's with the others. & placed articles for the Bazaar. First time I had been to see them since they moved to Henry St. Mung & I had to walk home with the car keys.

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# NOVEMBER 4

1932. This day eventful chiefly because I ran out late this evening to meet my Sweetheart for a short visit.

1933 Phi & I for a long drive around through Peasville & the old Cobblestone Road. Spent most of the afternoon driving. Got up my Sunday school lesson to C. Office this evening.

1935 Saw Phi's new suit today. He had grand luck in pulling Humson's Magic cards. One lucky one settling holder to a prize & another giving free chance on ticket for 1919 Phi to Lumberburg this p.m. in connection with his Lodge work. Each had treatment at noon hours.

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## NOVEMBER 5

1952 Wanted to transcribe my ghost hand  
notes tonight but helped Mary make an evening  
jacket. Refused Frances Kieley's last minute  
invitation not for the evening.

1933 Church leaves me cold. There is no  
enthusiasm in my heart for any of its  
functions. Has become a great effort to  
attend and to teach a class any longer.

19 Nov. 4, 1935 - Monday

Saw Phil a.m. & evening. Got his  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> x Had a half hour to him

tonight before he went to Easton with  
or I to the meeting. Went a short  
distance over the road he is to  
travel tomorrow.

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## NOVEMBER 6

1992. 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.

19<sup>th</sup> M<sup>o</sup> Feb at 5<sup>30</sup> p.m. we drove until 6<sup>30</sup> p.m. + then 9 m<sup>o</sup>t. Near we saw the just showed the Capital: "Barkley square" made a profound impression upon me.

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## NOVEMBER 7

1977. A rainy drizzly night. A major half  
hour spent with my beloved before he left  
on the night train for Digby. I am so glad  
that it is only for a week.

1933 down to a dental assistants meeting tonight & which none of the others showed up. My own persecution however was having this meet & drive me home had two <sup>pages</sup> of violence

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## NOVEMBER 8

1933. Mabel down tonight. Poor Mabel. She seems to miss the mark of her desires so. But she has such a splendid mind and is very attractive when she fires herself up.

1935 Now displays meaningfully I feel the need tonight for the "boat that will not let me go". Phil's will let me go for that desire of his which is stronger than any other thing in his life.

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NOVEMBER 9	NOVEMBER 10
<p>1932. Put in real festive mood tonight for I arrived back from Rugby this a.m. Spent some time dressing this evening trying to look nice &amp; was rewarded for that I looked particularly nice.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932. Had a nice drive down to French Village with p. We were driving all the time and talking but am afraid he found me rather dull for I felt tired.</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 11	NOVEMBER 12
<p>1932. Anniversary Day. Worked all a.m. Had a long nap in the p.m. and oh joy, after a call from p. joined him at the Infirmary Place and we spent an hour &amp; a half in the fairyland of each others company.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932. How I love p. I don't believe that he realizes how typically saved all the sweet dreams of girlhood and longing of young womanhood for the One Man. I am glad, glad for him. Wish he were free.</p> <p>1933. Still very strained and tired tonight for was out all day spending the afternoon at Mabel's. How I long for my dear ones around about me tonight.</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 13	NOVEMBER 14
<p>1932 Church services beautiful especially the prayer this a.m. Tonight's service very inspiring. Just had a few good night words over the telephone. Typed all afternoon.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932. How I love quiet hours spent alone in reading or in close companionship with uncle but a very near &amp; dear one. Just best to his actual presence are these hours.</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 15	NOVEMBER 16
<p>1932. Out in the quiet night with a for a precious hour. It seems so difficult to get out for even a short time without explaining all one's absences.</p> <p>1932. Prayer meeting was just splendid tonight as are all our divided services. I make Bible scenes so real that one can visualize them happening.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932. To Minnie's for supper, to P.M. Sunday School meeting. Home to find Ess &amp; Debbie who came up tonight, in bed. May Ann &amp; I in big room &amp; drove me to Minnie's</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 17	NOVEMBER 18
<p>1932 Es + Hubie to Casino. Spent a couple of hours with last Sunday night's sermon. My life seems full, very sweet to me, even tho outwardly it seems I am restricted.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 How pleasant after the days work &amp; 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 sanctified walls.</p> <p>1933 With p at 1<sup>30</sup> + as the roads were rather slippery we just drove &amp; drove out the Windsor road. He gave me the "Shakespeare" piece. Wonderful! He was just as well as a preacher.</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 19	NOVEMBER 20
<p>1932 Another Saturday. Another perfect Ann added to the growing chain of golden hours. Another precious memory for the inner treasure chest.</p> <p>1933. I preached on "Hidden Treasure" this a.m. Saw him near to before church. He &amp; the choir out to Rockingham tonight + we had Mr. Duppre his young man's choir in ephraim.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>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</p> <p>1933. I gave me a wonderful treatment today. drove me home tonight. But he looked rather tired for he has been working hard.</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 21	NOVEMBER 22
<p>1932 I was disgusted &amp; angry &amp; myself. Spent a few hours driving &amp; got spoiled them by my silly arguing on something I know nothing about &amp; that doesn't add to one's inner life at all. I should be quiet.</p> <p>1933 Still passing time and we together. How I pray it may continue. Stayed in town to lunch, saw J. Received two lovely boxes of May cards &amp; a writing case from him. And we had our quiet drive</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Well as badly today &amp; staying till 9 a.m. made me such a night that I couldn't go near J. office until noon hour. He came up to see me for a little while later. But we both</p> <p>1933 Over to Prayer Meeting tonight. I wonder if Phil knows the courage it takes to even attend church services there any more. Annie called me up &amp; we had such a long talk. Late about 10 p.m.</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 23	NOVEMBER 24
<p>1932 To P.M. J gave a really inspiring lesson. He walked home with me and how sweet those little walks and talks together can be.</p> <p>1933 Received a wonderfully helpful treatment today. Have had much intermittent pain for the past week although my head has been clear &amp; free from sensations of heaviness.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Went to Church to read over our Xmas program. During the quiet walk home road my thought wandered to J. &amp; how my love for him is the deepest &amp; truest &amp; best of me.</p> <p>1933. Belief in the Infinite &amp; casting one's self out upon that Power is a wonderfully inspiring faith. Saw J. at lunch and the evening hours heard his voice by telephone.</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 25	NOVEMBER 26
<p>1932. Today's motto one that I feel I especially need. "If initially you encounter frustration endeavour, endeavour repeatedly."</p> <p>1933 Had a couple of hours drive &amp; go out the St. Margaret's Bay Road. He looked under my window at 8<sup>30</sup> p.m. If there were only a ray of hope with which to pursue the darknesses of the future.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Very rainy wet Saturday. Spent an hour or so with G in the office. Am finding my greatest pleasure in what I can contribute.</p> <p>1933 Was able to get both sermons today. Shortened the 2nd one Power &amp; Ideals for tomorrow's "Star". Three Sunday evenings after Church when I can't see him are spent in quiet reading &amp; meditation.</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 27	NOVEMBER 28
<p>1932. Think I got 2 sermons well today if I transcribe them properly. Mabel read more of "Digger" to me this p.m. Saw G for a few minutes after the service. He seems contented &amp; happy.</p> <p>1933. Got Huber up today. Bought 10 perfect frames &amp; started to put pictures in them from my little S.S. pictures. Tonight. Saw Phil at lunch. He and he brought me home this evening.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 A still, frosty day with brilliant sunshine. Busy enough so that one doesn't have time to interrupt concentration on work. Saw G morning noon &amp; evening. He all worked home &amp; home tonight. Wrote to Marion S.</p> <p>1933 Stayed in again tonight. Tried to wave Cici's hair. Was surprised that Huber that my story "Land of Hearts' desire" good.</p> <p>19</p>
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NOVEMBER 29	NOVEMBER 30
<p>1932. What should come up to meet me this a.m. but the little chariot driven by G. I know he is glad to have it back. He has no idea about seeing that I get so many plans with</p> <p>1933. Phi made me a grand present but up of two &amp; a half dozen of wonderful opalies in the shell. He only put a very few of them for which I felt ashamed. Did not go over to Prague meeting tonight</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Instead of venturing out into the rain &amp; wind to go to Prague meeting tonight I stayed in &amp; typed sermons. I wonder was I disappointed at my absence.</p> <p>1933. Woke up with a fearful pain back of my right eye &amp; such nausea at 5 a.m. Worked all day however. I gave me two treatments &amp; got me fixed up for a short drive with him between 8 &amp; 9 this evening</p> <p>19</p>
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DECEMBER 1	DECEMBER 2
<p>1932 Big big surprise for me as I stepped out the door tonight. There round the corner was a chariot and I was driven in state to the Victory for practice &amp; over to Eastman with</p> <p>1933. Phi and me as usual and G. &amp; me home from work. He planned to study tonight. Mabel came down &amp; she brought her family work &amp; I finished the bulletins on my smock.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Stayed in and finished up a sermon. And trying to get all my Xmas presents together early so that if the worst happens there will be some time just to enjoy the presents</p> <p>1933. Spent all p.m. in Phi's office. Gave me such a wonderful treatment. Learned of Mrs. Vileoff's death, also of Minnie's Aunt En dying somewhere. Phi is working hard this night in preparation for tomorrow</p> <p>19</p>
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DECEMBER 3	DECEMBER 4
<p>1932 My such a busy day but in it were two hours of perfect bliss. These spent with my f. Los said even to write about it. Had some Jonas shopping &amp; was busy all night.</p> <p>1933 Had my class in basement for full 8 periods. Also a call from Ohi this p.m. He preached on "The Pearl of great Price tonight a companion sermon to The Hidden Treasure. Glorious men illuminated clouds in the sky."</p>	<p>1932 To all Church services. The note of the Jonas mission thru all the services. How I love its pagantry. Shaking, darling note from p. tonight.</p>
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DECEMBER 5	DECEMBER 6
<p>1932 Outstanding appearance of this 24 hours. That quiet walk in Windsor St. at 12<sup>30</sup> a.m. The golden moon &amp; quiet stars shining so surely. Passing his window in the wee hours.</p>	<p>1932 I waiting for me round the corner this a.m. Saw his new flying cabinet at noon. Over to the concert put on in the Vestry by the C.G. &amp; T. girls tonight.</p>
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[December 7 - 14 blank]

DECEMBER 15	DECEMBER 16
19	1933. Wonderful drive with Phi out the Truro Road way to Fall River. Just enough snow on the road to make the going good with chains. Got my little spruce tree & after supper Mugs & I fixed it up & set it on the table in the front room window. Kate saw & heard Phi passing my window.
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DECEMBER 17	DECEMBER 18
1933 This a.m. I spoke on the "Incarnation" & this evening on the "Spirit of Christmas". Had a quiet afternoon, all to myself & enjoyed it wrapping up of Xmas gifts. The privacy of my room is as dear to me & as essential at certain times. Saw J. very briefly after his wonderful sermon tonight. How I long that we might be together now.	1933 Saw Phi at lunch time. Went to have supper & Annie at Nellie's new flat on Beech St. Phi met me and took me out & then afterwards met me and took me to the church where we had a short practice for our Class pageant. Then home and to bed.
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DECEMBER 19	DECEMBER 20
<p>1933 Phi met me as usual but we got stuck driving in the snow on the road. However with much difficulty &amp; effort we arrived in town 9<sup>15</sup> am.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1933 Phi sick &amp; I did not know it all day for I did not get in at noon. Prayer Meeting tonight. Received by mail a book &amp; friendly note from Frances Reutig.</p> <p>19</p>
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DECEMBER 21	DECEMBER 22
<p>1932. Only six to Prayer Meeting but G. gave us a wonderful account of the real Saint Nick. How his countenance lights up and his eyes shine to a divine light as he speaks.</p> <p>1933 Phi met me this a.m. as usual. Stayed in town &amp; treated myself to Club sandwich at the "Club". Mr. Travis gift of Apples to Mr. Tolman, Miss Miller me arrived too.</p> <p>1934. Arrived home to my dear baby tree tonight which Phi had cut himself for us. There was Meg's big tree from Uncle Bill lying on the sidewalk.</p> <p>19</p>	<p>1932 Had a few minutes with G tonight before prayers practice but am afraid I was not a very cheering companion. He needed me to be that for he was very tired.</p> <p>1934 We had our Xmas together today out the road near by the place where my baby tree came from. What a beautiful day.</p> <p>19 had a satisfyingly happy time. Gloves <sup>slacks</sup> to stockings, powder compact, little vanity case and the fun of having our Xmas together.</p> <p>1932 during a short run out tonight I saw Phi and we had a quiet drive together. Tomorrow Xmas Sunday in the Church.</p> <p>19</p>
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DECEMBER 23

1932 I brot me home from work but he isn't feeling well at all. He planned to go to Alstonworth tonight. I wrapped last minute gifts and made final preparations for Xmas.

1933 Xmas & Phi in his office. B. Cutty book etc. Beautiful floral card. Saw him for a few moments tonight. Had his new velvet hat. Very becoming.

1934 Christmas sermon or carols. Special programme in S. L. 118 attended.

1935 Monday a.m. took my little gifts to Phi. Monday evening received his. L. Star dust Hales Whithering Heights. 28% Later out to Lou's with a parcel. Saw Phi's had a little quiet drive. This was really our Xmas.

DECEMBER 24

1932 I met me this a.m. but he was so sick it made my heart ache. In spite of that we opened our Xmas parcels together after work. What a disappointment for him since these activities.

1933 Christmas services in Church. Pageant tonight. Exchange of gifts home today. Mabel over after Church.

1934 The night before Xmas. Ess & Herbie up this p.m. Ess completed my little tree. Out in tonight. Present from Mr. Tolson. Sugar cream & bowl.

1935 Xmas Eve. Ess & Herbie here. Ried over. Mabel & Esther here. I went up to Frances for few moments. Phi drove in there and back.

DECEMBER 25

1933 I sick with grippie. What a light sunno withdrawn with his absence from Church. Christmas pageant went off very successfully tonight.

1934 What a pity I have failed to record 1933. Xmas with him. This 1934 was a happy time. All the family including Ess & Herbie together. 30% tree. 17 lb. turkey. went from Phi the brief made me very happy. Spent all day at home. In evening wrapped a. l. class gifts. Then wrote some lists of sentences Herbie wanted to send away. All the gifts save his under the Xmas tree. So bed very grateful and happy.

1935 Xmas day. All of us home together. No visitors except Norman at dinner hour. Phi late in p.m.

DECEMBER 26

1932 Christmas Monday. What a blessing this quiet day at home has proved especially as it brought me a few moments between 5.30 and 6 p.m. with my beloved.

1933 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.

1934 Working routine today this it wasn't busy at the office. Ess & Herbie gone back to Bredgwater again today. Over to Class tonight. We all seem to be too tired to concentrate on study. Nellie Macdonald had her new fur coat (ideal) Mabel not feeling up to the mark but over for a while.

1935 To work. Very quiet. Nice to be free from the hum of activities for a day.

DECEMBER 26

Dec. 25, 1933  
Monday Xmas Day.  
Phi called & we went for a short time at noon.  
I went up to see Thomas Mubelle and say Hello.  
Mubelle & Louise tonight.  
Very beautiful Xmas.

1933 g. all  
sumo with  
Church. Ch.  
successful  
1934 Wt  
record 19  
This 1934  
family  
309 tree  
Phi the  
Spirit al  
wrappe  
1st som  
evante  
save 4  
To bed 2  
1935  
together no record  
at dinner hour. Phi late in p.m.

1932 Christmas Monday. What a blessing  
in this quiet day at home has proved  
y especially as it brought me a good moment  
between 5:30 and 6 p.m. with my beloved.  
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& Hubie gone back to Bridgeview again  
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all seem to be too tired to concentrate  
on study. Nellie Macdonald had her  
new fur coat (ideal) Mabel not feeling  
up to the mark but over for a while  
1935 To work. Very quiet.  
Nice to be free from the hum of  
activity for a day

[Note attached to December 25 page.]

DECEMBER 27

1932 Dr. Johnson home sick. Wrote two  
letters today & enjoyed the hell in the  
ceaseless activity down to practice with G. & J.  
Giles & later p. took me for a drive & showed me all  
the Xmas decorations.  
1933 Just couldn't go to Prayer  
Meeting tonight because sometimes  
I dread the disciplining myself  
to go places where there is a  
definitely antagonistic personality.  
So just stayed at home &  
tried to fill my mind with  
contented, harmonious thoughts.  
1934 Annual Xmas Tree. Nice supper  
& programme. Nice tree, beautiful gifts.  
Large attendance. Phi picked Mueg &  
up & gave us a lift on the way over.  
1935. Edith alone & Mabel here  
this evening. Mabel starting her  
crocheted bedspread. Mueg brought  
card table today.

DECEMBER 28

1932 Again alone all day. Tried to do  
some writing this p.m. I met one & brought  
me home. Over to Prayer Meeting tonight &  
saw p. again for a brief drive.  
1933. Very cold weather for us  
coldest in 25 years. 5 below. Xmas  
tree tonight. I met one on the way over  
& later on the way home. Lovely of  
Joan & I. I remember one with  
the Bathalto & Pearl & the hankie.  
Received a nice chicken & note  
from Aunt. Jane to Mother.  
This is very pleased to give gift of book order.  
1935  
Saturday. Had dinner in town as usual  
dined home. Bought neck of black dress  
Mueg out to Leonardo tonight. Got Es's scarf  
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DECEMBER 29

1932 Wonderful hour spent with G on our little road. Both of us rather tired as we just quietly sat there drinking deep of the quiet beauty of the coming night. G. S. P. must stay later on.

1933 Extremely cold. Phi had very difficult time starting the car this a.m. Dinner hour while waiting for a street car he came in search of me & I stayed in town to lunch & went into the office & had a treatment. Up to Mabel's for supper & to stay the night. Read Plato & R. L. S. & other authors.

1934 Phi and I out on the little road by Birch Cove. Perfect hour there, undisturbed by blowing elements. Had my new compass.

1935 Solos in Church today. Gloria sang "O Holy Night" very pleasingly. Muddled in Christian Endeavour.

DECEMBER 30

1932 Saw G. briefly but for such sweet moments today. In tonight. Plan to retire early & make up some last sleep.

1933 Still very cold 10° below this a.m. Phi & I for long drive out the Waverley Road and we were talking very seriously. Later he came to see me & so I ran out & said him for a few minutes on Macara St. I have wanted so, so to feel that he is as absorbingly mine as I am his.

1934 Sort of a slump in S. I today but not bad for the Sunday after Xmas. New year sermons. Splendid ones.

1935 Fairly busy at office.

DECEMBER 31

1932 Goodbye 1932. Your last hours are slipping happily, peacefully, far me, away. You gave me those wonderful hours with G today. <sup>1933 May</sup> <sup>coming days</sup> His divine spirit be with me unceasingly through you.

1933 Spending the last day of 1933. Spent in Church with G's spirit. Home quietly after to church & awake until the New Year was ushered in. A measure of peace & confidence has been given about Church association & fellowship. <sup>prayer</sup> <sup>prayer</sup> His spirit will light the onward path.

1934 At work all day. Up to Mabel's tonight. Quiet time. Phi drove me up & bot me home & we had a quiet little drive around the city together. Didn't hear the old year out.

1935 Saw Phi after work for five minutes in the evening. Received a N.Y. card & note and - V. E. b. x

MEMORANDUM

1933 Tuesday Aug 15/33. They closely studded with brilliant sparkles of glittering stars and, arching from the southern to the northern horizon this white path of the Milky Way. Seems one very near to the Creator of Nature's Beauty.

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MEMORANDUM	MEMORANDUM
1936 - Events of Interest in January. Masonic tickets brought lovely Toilet Set, silver dishes and reg & Phi & me.	19
First bought a new Philco Radio. Started my first knit sweater. Bought & obtained my new cabinet.	19
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