



Modernity in Marriage: Tracing Marriage Patterns from the 19th Century to the Present

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Archival Scholars Research Award

Introduction

This project began as an attempt to discover when marriage, as an institution, began to shift. Generally speaking, women married at much younger ages in the 19th century than they do in the present, and I was curious about how and why this divide increased. This interest began to narrow and refine itself as my project developed: rather than focus exclusively on age, I started to become more curious about how marriage was advertised to young women and girls.

Methods and Materials

I examined materials, primarily from the Picchi Etiquette Collection, that discuss coming-of-age concerns for women, including courtship, dating, marriage, and motherhood. Materials ranged from nonfiction etiquette books to novels to Girl Scout manuals: my research took me in many different directions.

Texts

- *New Universal Letter Writer: containing letters on duty, amusement, love, courtship, marriage, friendship, trade, religion, and other useful subjects: also, forms of bonds, deeds, indentures, powers of attorney, cards of compliments, etc.* (1807)
- *Art of good behavior, and letter writer on love, courtship, and marriage: a complete guide for ladies and gentlemen, particularly those who have not enjoyed the advantages of fashionable life: containing directions for giving and attending parties, balls, weddings, dinners, etc., including the necessary preparations and arrangements for the marriage ceremony* (1848)
- *On the causes and treatment of abortion and sterility: being the result of an extended practical inquiry into the physiological and morbid conditions of the uterus, with reference especially to leucorrhoeal affections and the diseases of menstruation* (1848)
- *Hints on Etiquette and the usages of society with a glance at bad habits* (1951)
- *Ladies & Gentlemen's Etiquette* (1877)
- *Polygamy, or the mysteries and crimes of Mormonism* (1882)
- *Our Deportment or the Manners, Conduct, and Dress of the most refined society; including forms for letters, invitations, etc. etc. Also, valuable suggestions on home culture and training* (1883)
- *A Young Girl's Wooing* (1884)
- *Weddings and Wedding Anniversaries* (1910)
- *Etiquette: An Encyclopedia of Good Manners and Social Usage* (1923)
- *Always Say Maybe: A Modern Girl's Guide to Almost Everything – But Mostly MEN* (1960)
- A variety of Girl Scout Manuals (1917-1960)
- A variety of Calling All Girls Magazines (1950s-1940s)

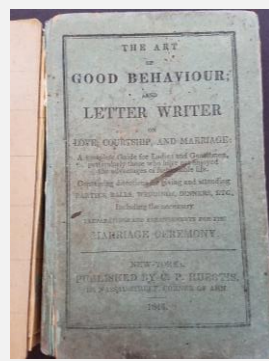


Conclusions

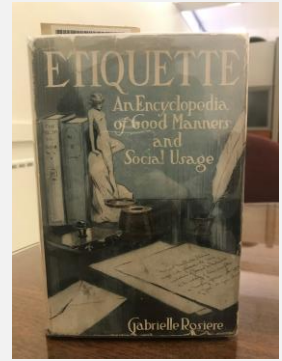
My research took new, fascinating turns nearly every day. When I began this project, I anticipated finding information about how old women when they got married, but it grew into a discovery of how marriage is advertised to young women everywhere. Marriage was talked about everywhere, in every material I looked at, and it was fascinating to see how women who deviated from this norm of marriage were portrayed.

Acknowledgements

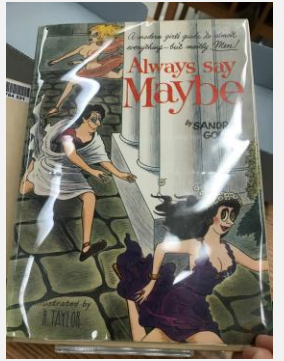
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1848



1923



1960